

The Uganda Crisis, 1966: should UPC apologise to Buganda or should Buganda engage in serious introspection?

by Yoga Adhola.

In the London Evening Standard of February 25th 1966, Professor Amii Omara-Otuunu of the University of Connecticut in the USA urged UPC to apologise to Buganda (or Baganda). (Gombya, H 2015) Professor Amii Omara-Otuunu's demand stems from two deficiencies. One, lack of certain facts and information on his part about what happened between Buganda and the UPC government in the 60s. Secondly, the type of historian of which Professor Amii Omara-Otuunu is; he is a traditional (as opposed to a scientific/materialist) historian. Traditional historiography (as opposed to scientific/materialist one) cannot bring out the issues that were involved in the events of 1966. (Slater, H. ; Bernstein, H & Depelchin, J 1978) Being a traditional historian, Professor Omara-Otuunu lacks two essential tools of analysis which would have helped him bring out certain salient aspects of what happened in 1966. A major tool missing in Professor Omara-Otuunu's analytical arsenal is the theory of modes of production. The mode of production can be viewed as a combination of the productive forces of society together with the social relations of production at a specific level of social development. Mankind has known several modes of production namely primitive communalism, the slave mode of production, feudalism and capitalism. And every mode of production has a base and a corresponding superstructure.(1) Further the base ordinarily determines the superstructure and one mode of production cannot have or operate on the basis of the superstructure of another.

Had Professor Omara-Otuunu embraced the theory of modes of production, it would not have been difficult for him to realise the fallacy in his statement that ".....when the British colonialists first arrived in Uganda and went about making various agreements with the then powerful Buganda kingdom, they marveled at the then system of government that they saw being run by the Buganda kingdom which was in all purposes not very different from that here in Westminster. "If the British could marvel at this federal system of government that they had not seen anywhere else they had been in Africa, why didn't we become proud of it and embrace it?" This argument is fallacious. Britain was at the capitalist mode of production, on the other hand, Buganda was at the tributary mode of production; there is no way Buganda would produce something equivalent to Westminster as the professor avers. Such a statement is equivalent to arguing the impossible that the tributary mode of production of Buganda could acquire aspects of the superstructure of the capitalist mode of production then obtaining in Britain.

The other tool of analysis which Professor Omara-Otuunu lacks, and which would have shed light on the events of 1966 for him, is the theory of national-democratic liberation. Chairman Mao taught that struggles take place in phases. Uganda went through the phase of the anti-colonial struggles which run from 1900 up to 1962. And now we are at the next phase--that of national-democratic liberation. This will run for another 100 years or so. (2) By national-democratic revolution we mean revolutions which seek to end national and colonial oppression as a means of laying a basis of further struggles. Further, it seeks to eliminate other forms of oppression which arose either before colonisation or after it. It also seeks to eliminate feudal and other pre-capitalist relations as well as establish new nations. As defined this far, these revolutions seem similar to those of formerly colonial countries like the United States of America which achieved independence in the earlier epoch (before monopoly capitalism); but there is a difference. While the independence of the US was led by the bourgeoisie and gave rise to bourgeois democratic revolution, that of countries like Uganda is not led by the bourgeoisie, is taking place in a different epoch and gives rise to national-democratic liberation instead. (Brutents, K.N.1977:148-154; Lowenthal, R. 1963; Hudson, Peter 1985; Filatova, Irina)

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Apart from relying the theory of modes of production as well as national-democratic liberation, there is strong empirical evidence against this talk of the British marveling at the system of government which was supposedly not that different from the one in England. This is totally false. In his book, "Infancy in Uganda", Ainsworth tells us of how Kabaka Suna was traveling on the shoulders of a bearer as Buganda kings always did. The bearer stepped on some cow dung and tripped, nearly dropping the Kabaka. Fearing to accept the fault of endangering the Kabaka, the bearer lied, saying it was human feces that had caused the near accident. Such waste had no place on the path. Suna believed the bearer and executed three 300 Bakerere (the residents of the area). (Sagan, Eli 1985:163) This kind of cruelty by Kabaka Suna was not unusual in the Buganda of those days. Grant who traveled with Speke also tells of an officer of Mutesa who was given a slave in return for services he had performed. Not satisfied with a single slave, the officer had the audacity to ask for more. The Kabaka viewed this as impudence on the part of the officer. The officer was cut into pieces. Grant tells us: "His limbs were carried away openly, while the trunk was wrapped in cloth." (Sagan, Eli 1985: 163; Grant1864: 230) To this Grant's account of cruelty, Speke adds that Mutesa himself, having learned how to shoot from Speke noticed a woman being led away to some punishments, fired at her and killed her outright. He was demonstrating what a good shot he was. Lest we think Grant and Speke were making up horror stories, we also have the testimony of Linanat that Mutesa, having boasted to him of his aim, "...levelled his gun deliberately at one of his female attendants and blew her brains out." (Sagan, Eli 1985:163; Long, C.Chaille: 1877: 40)

Professor Lwanga Lunyigo, himself a Muganda also records that in 19th century Buganda violence and brutality were rife. The killing of people at the bidding of the Kabaka was captured in the expression: "*Namunswa alyaku nswaze* (meaning the queen feeds on her own ants).(Lwanga Lunyigo 2011) Michael Wright the author of a book about the civil wars in Buganda between 1888 and 1892 observed: "The Baganda know how to die, no tears, no regrets" (Wright, M 20) According to Professor Rowe, when Kabaka Sunna was reprimanded by Ahmed bin Ibrahim (the first Arab to visit Sunna II court in 1844) over the wanton killing of his subjects, Sunna defended himself thus: "I have no other secret for keeping my subjects in awe of me and in preventing conspiracies." (Rowe, J.A. 49) The result of this kind of conduct was that: "For more than two decades the fierce and violent ruler had impressed his will upon the Baganda and extended his political influence beyond the borders of his country. He was the object of respect, fear and certainly hatred." (Rowe, J.A. page2) Kabaka Ssemakokiro (1797-1814) introduced a succession practice of killing his brothers and uncles with even a remote chance to the throne. His successor to the throne, Kamaanya (1814-1832) felt very insecure and killed his own sons to supposedly prevent them being used by dissident chiefs as possible candidates to the throne. In his book, "Bakabaka be Buganda", J.L. Katenda also tells us: "Mutesa I killed many people, about 2000, for no apparent reason" (Katenda, J.L. 2004: 68) About the same Mutesa, Reid tells us: "Once it is reported, he (Mutesa I) came upon one of his young women walking along a passageway within the palace. Seizing two spears from a servant, Mutesa suddenly thrust these through the young woman's breast and sauntered on." (Reid, R. 2002: 40"

Having disposed of the false assumption that Buganda was somehow like Westminster, and utilising the tools of analysis we have enumerated above, this article will first seek to record the events that led to the revolution of 1966 which abrogated the 1962 constitution and also abolished the monarchy in Uganda as well as ended the federal system of governance. After that the article will place the events leading to the revolution into context. The article will then concluded by arguing that rather than UPC apologising to Buganda, we think Buganda needs to do some serious introspection.

****Events leading to the 1966 crisis****

The immediate events leading to the 1966 revolution can be traced to the loss in the referendum on the "lost counties" in 1964. The "lost counties" were those counties which had been awarded to Buganda for helping the British subdue the Banyoro. The loss was very painful to Buganda (Hancock, I. 1970) and from that point, we are told by Professor Mutibwa, Mutesa began the hunt for allies outside Buganda. "That was why Mutesa and his advisers, who included influential people such as Prince Badru Kakungulu, his uncle and the leader of Uganda Muslim Community, worked out plans which would get them political friends outside Buganda while at the same time controlling their sub-state. In this lies the plan of their coalition with Grace Ibingira, the UPC Secretary General, who was working on recruiting allies to join and penetrate the UPC with the aim of outvoting Obote. The Baganda faithfully joined the UPC en masse, and strengthened Ibingira's group which consisted of all those leaders who came from families that possessed traditional authority in the colonial system, who now ranged themselves against Obote's leadership of the UPC. Such leaders included men like as Nadiope (Kyabazinga of Busoga and the Vice-President of Uganda and UPC), Matia Ngobi and George Magezi. Mutesa saw the rift between the Right and the Centre of the UPC, and he decided to exploit it." (Mutibwa, P.M. 89-90) More pointedly

Mutibwa tells us: "The political dispute between Obote and Ibingira and his supporters centered around the control of UPC and ultimately the very leadership of the country in terms of the political and economic ideologies that were to be followed. Obote claimed - not without justification - that Ibingira's group, which included the President, Sir Edward Mutesa, and the Buganda government at Mengo and which also counted on the support and assistance of the Army Commander, Brigadier Opolot, wanted to remove him from power and that plans to this end were in an advanced stage by the end of 1965. No one, let alone Ibingira and his supporters, has denied that they wanted to see Milton Obote and those who believed in socialist philosophies removed. Their only regret is that they failed." (Mutibwa, P. 1992: 38)

Initially the alliance worked on enlarging the Annual Delegates Conference of the Uganda People's Congress, the organ which elects the President of the party, in such a manner that the resistance to national-democratic liberation would be in the majority. (Obote, A.M. 1968:20) For this, a scheme which Professor Mazrui appropriately named the "Trojan Horse" was contrived. As many Baganda as possible were to be "herded" into UPC. To effect this, in July 1965 Edward Mutesa, the Kabaka of Buganda and President of Uganda convened and chaired a meeting of Kabaka Yekka at which it was decided that KY members should join UPC in large numbers. Once in the UPC, they were to use their numerical strength to change the leadership of the party. To spur the Baganda into joining the UPC, members of the Cabinet who were part of the plot deliberately leaked to the press cabinet resolutions on the plan to call surprise elections. In the leakage it was pointed out that the impending elections could affect the reelection of Mutesa as President of Uganda, unless the Baganda were in a commanding position within the UPC. As expected the leakage alarmed the Baganda, and they enlisted as members of the UPC in large numbers.

While all this was happening, in the absence of Obote who was out of the country visiting the Far East, Grace Ibingira as Secretary General of UPC convened an executive meeting of the party to consider proposals to increase the number of representatives from Buganda to the National Council from 3 to 18. (Obote, A.M. 1968: 23) Although this proposal was resoundingly defeated, it was tabled again for discussion in the first week of October 1965 when it was once again defeated. When it became clear that the "Trojan Horse" stratagem could not work, Obote's opponents resorted to attempting an outright military coup. Scheduled to take place on Independence Day (9th October, 1965), clear evidence of it first got revealed on 7th October, the day when five incidents which initially appeared coincidental, but which were later found to have been orchestrated, occurred.

First, Obote in his capacity as Prime Minister received a letter from Mengo (Mutesa) informing him that a group of left-wingers (Communists) were intending to overthrow the Government on or about 9th October 1965. The letter requested the Prime Minister as head of Government to issue a statement condemning any such plot. The second incident was an allegation made at the end of a Cabinet meeting by Grace Ibingira that he had uncovered a plot to assassinate several people, including himself, during the Independence Anniversary celebrations. The third was a letter written to the Minister of Internal Affairs by Daudi Ocheng, a Kabaka Yekka Member of Parliament, and copied to the Prime Minister, requesting Obote to send a senior Police Officer to take a statement from an unnamed person regarding the activities of Idi Amin, Deputy Commander of the Army. In the letter Daudi Ochieng observed that upon taking the statement, the Government should suspend Amin from the Army. The fourth incident was a report by the Commander of the Uganda Army, Brigadier Shaban Opolot, delivered to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Defense. In this report Opolot stated that he had received information that the Baganda were plotting to assassinate him and that soldiers from the Congo would attack Army Headquarters during the Independence Anniversary celebrations. The object of this report -which was investigated and found to be false - was to create confusion and panic so that the coup could be carried out. The fifth aspect of the conspiracy regards the activities of Major Katarwa, the brother of Grace Ibingira, who was Commandant of the Army Training Wing stationed in Jinja. On 7 th October 1965 Katarwa went to Kampala on a secret mission. On his return to Jinja, he contacted a number of officers, including two who were on open charge and therefore not on duty, to draw arms and report to Brigadier Opolot at Army Headquarters in Kampala. However, much as these officers reported and "virtually took control of the Army Headquarters", the army refused to carry out their orders and the intended coup failed.

The failure of the October coup plot did not discourage the plotters but rather it spurred them to make a more daring attempt. The major move in this attempt was made in November 1965 when Brigadier Opolot arranged for two units of the Army to exchange barracks. (Obote, A.M. 1968:23) The intention of this change was to remove the army unit stationed in Jinja, and which had refused to participate in the coup attempt the previous month. However, according to the regulations then in force, such a change could only take place after notification has been issued six months in advance and with the approval of the Chief of Defense Staff Committee composed of

senior officers and chaired by the Minister responsible for Defense. Brigadier Opolot was violating all these regulations. The notification was made on 28th November 1965 in a secret letter to the Commanders of the two units, and the changeover was to be completed by the end of December 1965. The Chief of Defense Staff Committee knew nothing about the change, and the Ministry was not informed although the secret letter was said to have been copied to the Ministry. (Obote, A.M. 1968: 23) The secret leaked out and Obote ordered Brigadier Opolot to follow proper procedure.

Then in December 1965, Mutesa placed orders for heavy weapons with a Kampala firm. The arms were to come from Britain. On this Obote was later to write: "We have letters from a British firm which show that the firm was not happy with the orders on the grounds that the weapons ordered were too heavy for an individual and that the firm had always dealt with Governments only. One of the letters from the Kampala firm states that President Mutesa had placed the orders on behalf of the Uganda Army and that, although the Kabaka's Government was to pay for the arms, that only meant that the President, in his capacity as the Kabaka, was to have the first trial of arms before handing them over to the army." (Obote, A.M. 1968)

The next move was made in Parliament on 4th February 1966. Daudi Ocheng', a Kabaka Yekka Member of Parliament moved a motion: "That this House do urge the Government to suspend from duty Col. Idi Amin of the Uganda Army forthwith pending conclusions of police investigations into allegations regarding his bank account which should be passed on to the appropriate authority whose decision on the matter should be made public." (Obote, A.M. 1968: 24-25)

The circumstance under which this motion was moved is very revealing. Prior to the movement of this motion, at a UPC Parliamentary Group meeting on 31st January 1966, it had been agreed that when Daudi Ocheng tables his motion about the Gold Allegations against Idi Amin on 4th February 1966, it would be rejected by UPC Obote had told the Parliamentary Group that he would be leaving for a tour of northern Uganda soon after the meeting and would not be around for the debate and the vote on the Ocheng motion. In contravention of this, some 15 minutes before Parliament assembled on the mentioned date, the Cabinet was hastily assembled and the earlier decision of the Parliamentary Group reversed. All UPCs were then required to vote for the motion. The cabinet which met on 4th February and decided to reverse the position of the UPC Parliamentary group was dominated by the Ibingira faction, which included the ministers who were later detained. Also half of the members of the Cabinet were absent. Curiously, the three members of the cabinet whom Ocheng's allegations were targeting were not present. And those absent included Onama, the Minister of Defense, who should have been there by virtue of the fact that the Ocheng allegation concerned his office. We should also point out that the cabinet meeting was held when it was clear there would not be time for Obote to be contacted nor, even if he could be contacted, for him to come in time for the debate and vote on the motion. Another point to be noted is that the UPC Members of Parliament only learnt of the changes from the floor. This created a lot of confusion among them.

During the course of introducing his motion, Ocheng' took liberty to cast aspersions on the credibility of Obote (the Prime Minister), Felix Onama the Minister of Defense), and Adoko Nekyon (the Minister of Planning). The three officials, Ocheng' alleged, had improperly obtained ivory, gold and money from Congolese rebels. Daudi Ocheng' asserted that within 24 days since 5th February, 1965, Amin had banked a total of 340,000 Uganda shillings - at that time definitely a very large sum of money. The context in which these allegations were being made was the situation in which the Government of Uganda was involved in covert operations to aid the rebel government led by Gbenye which was fighting against the newly installed government of Congo (Kinshasa) then headed by Moise Tshombe. The Congolese government had retaliated by bombing villages in the then West Nile District of Uganda. (Mujaju, A.B. 1987: 484) The bombings were well known in Uganda, and Ocheng sought to take advantage of it to arouse anger and outrage in the country by cynically portraying the money as a kind of war booty which should have been reported to the government but which Amin had improperly put to his own personal use. Presented thus, Amin needed to be investigated. The object of this motion, however, was not so much to seek investigation nor was it to seek a vote of censure on the officials mentioned; rather, it was two-fold. First, it was intended to provide the premise from which Amin could be temporarily removed from the post of Chief-of-Staff, where he constituted a stumbling block to the planned coup. Secondly, the motion and the discussion consequent to it was to create what The Guardian newspaper called optimum conditions for a coup. (Mujaju, A.B.1987: 499) The accuracy of this observation is borne out by the fact that at the Cabinet meeting to discuss the motion, "those Ministers who had sought to achieve their objectives on 4th February did not support the subsequent appointment of a Judicial Commission of Inquiry into the allegations."(Obote, A.M. 1968: 26) This is because they had merely wanted action on immediate suspension of Amin.

As all this was happening, Obote maintained his cool and continued with his schedules as usual. The previous November he had promised but not fixed a date to tour the northern region in January or February of 1966. The date for the tour was fixed in January, and he left Kampala on 1st February. While Obote was still on the tour, a contingent of well-armed soldiers was on 7th February sent to arrest him in northern Uganda. Unfortunately for the mission, a secretary at Army Headquarters heard about the mission and told her brother who immediately went and alerted Obote of the plot. When the contingent arrived at where Obote was, they found him under heavy guard. The contingent was disarmed. The only thing they ended up doing was to deliver their cover message which was that Opolot wanted Obote to go back to Kampala and call the Defense Council to settle the case against Amin for allegedly plotting to kill Opolot. In response to this, Obote told them to tell Opolot that a Defence Council meeting to handle the matter would be held in Arua. Opolot never responded to this proposal. (Akena Adoko 1970: 58-59) On 8th February Army Headquarters, presumably under the direction of Opolot, instructed Jinja Barracks to send recruits to Kampala under the rationalisation that they were going to protect the capital. Specific troops had been recruited and prepared for this mission. However, whether by design or by default, Brigadier Okoya who was in charge of the Jinja military outfit sent the wrong troops.

This matter of wrong troops was reported to Mutesa that same day. "The Uganda army is bad; it supports Obote. If you want to bring changes, you may need to try other armies," he was told. (Akena Adoko 1970: 60) Following this advice, Mutesa the following day called two people: the British High Commissioner and the Chief Justice, Sir Udo Udoma (a Nigerian). He requested the British High Commissioner for military aid and the Chief Justice for advice on how to fire the Prime Minister, Apolo Milton Obote. As ceremonial president, Mutesa had no powers to do these things. About the approach to the British, Professor T.V. Sathyamurthy, the author of the encyclopedic book, "The Political Development in Uganda", had this observation to make: "But the Kabaka's approach to foreign emissaries was born more out of foolishness than craft. For, it was the strongest card in Obote's possession when it came to delivering the final blow." (Sathyamurthy, T.V. 1986: 434) In an attempt to vitiate the seriousness of this request for foreign troops, on 4th March 1966 the Private Secretary to Mutesa issued a statement in which he contended that the request was precautionary. To this Obote responded: "I have noted that it is now being explained that these were precautionary requests. The fact remains that there was no provision whatsoever in the Constitution for the President to make such requests." An attempt was made to justify this serious matter by allegations made in Parliament on 4th February that there were troops being trained in secret with a view to overthrow the Constitution.

Obote returned to Kampala on his own volition on 12th February and, in his own words, realized "the situation was very serious." (Obote, A.M. 1968: 25) He immediately ordered the troops back to their barracks, and sought to discuss the situation with Mutesa, the then President. He also convened an emergency meeting of the Cabinet on 14th February at which he called on the Ministers who had lost confidence in him, and had believed in the allegations by Daudi Ocheng, to resign. Nobody resigned. Three days later, Obote left for official duties in Nairobi, returning on 19th February when he learned of a circular by Brigadier Opolot to all army units directing them to go for field exercises. In this circular, "Opolot actually stated that because the situation had been normal throughout February 1966, and because for some period of months the army had not done field exercises, February 1966 was the most suitable." (Obote, A.M. 1968: 26) Obote found these astounding observations curious to, say the least, for the period mentioned had been turbulent. He ordered cancellation of the exercises and later took what he termed "drastic action". The drastic action was the detention of the five ministers: George Magezi, Mathias Ngobi, Balaki Kirya, Dr Lumu and Grace Ibingira, who were involved in the plot to overthrow the government. The detention of the five ministers completely upset the strategy of the anti-national-democratic forces and set the stage for a confrontation which would result in a national-democratic revolution. With Ibingira out of circulation, the leadership of the anti-national-democratic forces reverted to Kabaka Mutesa. However, lacking the political acumen of Ibingira, Mutesa was like a "rudderless ship moving from blunder to blunder" and playing right into Obote's hands. Considering the situation unveiled by the detention of the ministers as requiring drastic measures, Mutesa took steps to arrange for a military takeover. For this he enlisted the support and participation of Brigadier Opolot, and also sought military intervention by a foreign country, suspected to be Britain.

The events of 23rd May 1966 were very ominous. Earlier in the day three saza (county) chiefs who had plaid the leading roles in the Lukiiko resolutions calling on the Uganda government to remove itself from the soil of Buganda by 30th May 1966 were arrested. Much as their role in the passage of these resolutions could have been treated as treasonable, they were not arrested for that. They were instead arrested because of "...the untoward activities undertaken by them before the debates on the motion. untoward activities undertaken by them before the debate on the motion in the Lukiiko. Immediately they were arrested nearly every part of Buganda Region was in a state of disturbance. Roads were blocked; bridges destroyed; Police stations were attacked —

some burnt out with Policemen inside — and at some of these stations chiefs and mobs took possession of Police firearms. White men became a particular target. Some were badly beaten, but only two died. A number have been permanently maimed. Action on expatriates could not be explained at the time, but now we know that it was ordered from Mengo because Sir Edward was rather annoyed that his request to the British Government through the High Commissioner in Kampala for military assistance in the month of February, 1966, was not acted upon by Her Majesty's Government. Harboursing this as a cause against the British, a plan was made by him and his advisors at Mengo that at some suitable moment action against the UPC Government would include action against the British citizens in Uganda. It was their hope, according to the documents we have, that serious action against the British in Uganda would force the British Government to send British troops to Uganda for the purposes of protecting British interests and nationals." (Obote, A.M. 1968)

The same day a military vehicle taking supplies to the Presidential lodge at Makindye was shot at by ex-servicemen; some of whom got apprehended. Those arrested had in their possession modern weapons which they alleged had been distributed to them at the palace in Mengo. Then at around 9.00pm, there was another report that police stations had been overran by mobs led by chiefs. It was in the context of the events of that day that a cabinet meeting was called to review the situation then unfolding. That cabinet meeting took the decision to declare a state of emergency. Immediately after the cabinet meeting, Obote went into consultations with the Army Commander and the Inspector General of Police. The two security officers advised Obote that an army unit should be sent to investigate the allegations of the presence of arms at the palace. In compliance with this advice, the Army Commander sent 40 men (including officers) the following day. When the unit arrived at the gate of the palace, it followed the directives it had been given i.e. deposited themselves at the gate for ten hours. Meanwhile those in the palace, who were armed and numerically much stronger than the army unit, thinking it was a battle went on shooting at the gate. It was not until 4.00 pm that the unit gained entrance into the palace. By then the Kabaka had left the palace. (Obote, A.M. 1968) (3)

****The historical context****

The account of the events leading to the 1966 revolution we have given alone should be enough to dispel the call by made by Professor Omara Otuunu for UPC to apologise to Buganda. However, the issues get even clearer when placed in the historical context of the processes which were set off by the colonisation of the area we now know as Uganda. Colonialism we should remember was the imposition of the capitalist mode of production in the area. Before the imposition of the capitalist mode of production, the mode of production in operation in Buganda was a tributary mode of production.(4) The second point that needs to be borne in mind is that in the initial period of its imposition, the capitalist mode of production did not have the wherewithal to operate. It therefore 'subsumed the labour process as it finds it, it takes over an existing labour process, developed by different and more archaic modes of production.....the work may become more extensive, its duration may be extended, it may become more continuous or orderly under the eye of the interested capitalist, but in themselves these changes do not affect the character of the labour process, the actual mode of working." (Marx, K. 1977: 1021; also quoted in Hahn, D.R. 1992: 88)

This is/was done through a process called articulation of modes of production. That is to say the modes of production which had been operating up to the point of colonisation are articulated to the incoming capitalist mode of production. This stems from a realisation "that capitalism can never immediately and totally eliminate the preceding modes of production, nor above all get rid of the relations of exploitation which characterise these modes of production. On the contrary, during an entire period it must reinforce these relations of exploitation, since it is only this development which permits its own provisioning of goods coming from those modes of production or with men driven from those modes of production and therefore compelled to sell their labour power to capitalism in order to survive." (Hahn, D.R. 1992: 13; also cited in Forster-Crater 1978: 47-78). What we then have is a process which Charles Bettelheim captured very well when he said that the pre-capitalist modes of production are "both undermined and perpetuated at the same time in a process he called "conservation and dissolution". (Alavi, H. 1982: 175 ff 6) The process of undermining and dissolving certain aspects of the pre-capitalist modes of production did/does lead to the eradication or transformation of both the pre-capitalist modes of production as well as the tributary mode of production.

We shall give a few examples of the process of reformulation of the pre-capitalist superstructure. The first major tinkering with the Buganda superstructure was the deposition of Kabaka Mwanga and his replacement by his infant son. Mwanga had put up very spirited resistance to the British. The British realised the power of the

monarchy in the mobilisation of the Baganda. To deal with this problem, the British exiled Mwanga and placed his infant son on the throne. Then came the famous 1900 Uganda (strictly really Buganda) Agreement. One of the major effects of this Agreement was on land. Prior to this agreement, all land in Buganda was the property of the Kabaka who then bestowed possession of plots of land. The 1900 agreement, signed by a small group of Buganda elites and the incipient colonial administration, apportioned the land. The Kabaka, other members of the royal family and county chiefs were granted control of 8,000 square miles and the remaining approximately 9,000 would be controlled by the colonial administration and called Crown Land. (West 1972: 17) The effect of this agreement was a reduction in the power of the Kabaka to distribute land as well as evict tenants. The agreement also ensured that the powers of the new elite in Buganda was based on control of the land rather than connections with the Kabaka.

In the late 1940s we had the remarriage of the Namsole, the widow of Daudi Chwa. Traditionally the widow of the Kabaka never remarried. Presumably this was to eliminate possibility of the widow giving birth to a commoner who would then claim the throne. The widow of Daudi Chwa had an affair with a commoner called Kigozi and got pregnant. She informed the Katikiro and expressed interest in getting married to Kigozi. She was supported in this by the Katikiro, the Anglican church as well as the colonial authorities. The Baganda never liked it and it became a serious political issue. It was debated in the Lukiiko and the widow was stripped of her royal privileges. Be that as it may, matters were not the same again.

By 1953, the decolonization process which had begun with India in 1947 was fast catching-up in Uganda. Yet much as the British desired Uganda to become independent as one country, as early as 1949 it had become clear that Buganda was set on a course of separating from the rest of Uganda. (Apter, D.E. 1961: 261 ;) And so, to proceed with the decolonization of Uganda, the British found it necessary to reverse the separatist tendencies of Buganda. Partly to oversee this reversal, Sir Andrew Cohen was appointed Governor of Uganda. Before becoming Governor of Uganda, as head of the Africa Division in the Colonial Office, Sir Andrew had presided over the rapid political advance of the colonies in West Africa and was responsible for the relative democratization in other colonies. He arrived in Uganda as Governor in January 1952, and, after a quick intensive familiarization with the situation, took steps to weaken the forces leading Buganda to the path of separatism.

In March 1953, together with the Kabaka of Buganda, Mutesa II, Sir Andrew issued a joint memorandum on constitutional development and reform in Buganda. Among other reforms, two political changes were announced: 60 of the 89 Lukiiko (Buganda Parliament) members were to be elected, and the Kabaka agreed to consult a Lukiiko Committee before selecting his ministers. (Low, D.A. & Pratt, R.C. 1960: 317-349; Low, D.A. 1971: 106) These two reforms were bound to dramatically democratize politics in Buganda, and therefore greatly weaken the entrenched position of the neo-traditionalists who were holding the reins of power. The doors to office and responsibility were also being opened to those elements in Buganda who were opposed to both British colonial rule and the neo-traditional chiefs and ministers, in one word the Uganda nationalists from Buganda. The other intended effect - and perhaps the most significant - was to begin the process of facilitating the atrophy of the Kabaka and other tribal institutions.

The bait launched by Sir Andrew seemed well swallowed by both the Kabaka and the Lukiiko until everything was thrown overboard by a speech made in Nairobi by Oliver Lyttleton (later Lord Chandos), the Colonial Secretary on 30th June, 1953. The speech alluded to the possibility "as time goes on of still larger measures of unification and federation of the whole of East African territories." (Low, D.A. & Pratt, R.C. 1960: 323) Reacting to the speech, the Kabaka wrote to the Governor that "the statement of the Secretary of State for the colonies is bound not only to shake the foundations of trust amongst our people but will badly damage the good relations which hitherto exists between Buganda and the British." (Low, D.A. & Pratt, R.C. 1960: 324) To this, the colonial authorities responded with assurances that the Kabaka dismissed as far weaker than previous ones. The Kabaka also made two demands: (a) that the affairs of Buganda be transferred from the colonial office to the foreign office; and (b) that a timetable for Buganda's (not Uganda's) independence be prepared. Clearly these two demands were intended to begin the process of detaching Buganda from the rest of Uganda. As the Kabaka was to argue, "the policy of developing a unified system of government along parliamentary lines must inevitably result in Buganda becoming less and less important in the future." (Low, D.A. & Pratt, R.C. 1960: 325)

There was no way the British were going to accept the dismemberment of the colony. After long and patient-wearing negotiations intended to persuade the Kabaka to drop the demands, the Governor presented the Kabaka three conditions upon which cooperation with the British was to be based. When the Kabaka rejected these conditions, the Governor withdrew British recognition from Mutesa as provided for in the 1900 Agreement and

deported him to Britain. The Kabaka returned to Uganda in 1955. By this time independence was fast approaching and Buganda soon found itself thrown into a crisis with regards to its superstructure. The colonial administration had through the system of indirect rule maintained the tributary superstructure operating in Buganda separate from the rest of the colony. Although the superstructure was undergoing change, the change was happening without very fundamental occurrences. There was, for instance, a semblance of nobody apart from a few British colonial officials being above the Kabaka in status. How was this to continue after independence when selection to leadership of the Uganda nation would be by election rather than by birth as it had always been in Buganda? How was the status of the Kabaka of having nobody higher than the Kabaka in status going to be operational with a head of the new state elected by the people of the whole country? This question formed part of what Terrance Hopkins has termed the Buganda Question. In her words the Buganda question is: "What place should Buganda, its ruler the Kabaka and its people the Baganda, occupy in the emerging national society?" (Hopkins, T. 1967: 251)

The next context we are going to place the events of 1966 in is the struggle for national-democratic liberation. The struggle for national-democratic liberation in Uganda began in earnest at the UPC Annual Delegates Conference held in Gulu in 1964. At that point the struggle took the form of the contest between John Kakonge, who represented the forces of national-democratic liberation against Grace Ibingira who represented the forces against national-democratic liberation. Being a traditional king, Mutesa was to find common cause with Ibingira and the two forged an alliance to resist national-democratic liberation. When Ibingira got detained, Mutesa assumed the leadership of the resistance to national-democratic liberation. He did a very poor job if it and ended up precipitating a situation which brought about the national-democratic liberation.

We also need to mention the issue of social identity relations. Social identity has been defined as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group (or groups) together with the value and emotional significance attached to that membership." (Tajfel, H. 1981: 254) The social identity which will concern us here is the nationality (or tribe as some would like to call it). Just like other social identities, the nationality satisfies the human need for people to self-identify themselves as well as socially locate and moor themselves. It satisfies the human need to identify with others in a shared culture. As Cohen puts it: "The need for identity does not, standardly drive people to seek to achieve an identity, and that is so for two reasons. The first is that people do not usually lack identity: they receive an identity as a by-product of the rearing process. The right thing to say in most cases is not that people are motivated by their need for identity, but they are motivated by their identity, for which they have a strong need, and the motivating power of identity reflects the need it fulfills. Quebecois do not have a need for identity which drives them to become Quebecois. Since they are raised Quebecois, their need for identity is readily satisfied. Quebecois are motivated not to acquire an identity but to protect and celebrate the identity they are given." (Cohen, G.A. 348) The protection of respective identities arise because identities have tendencies of oppressing other identities. This is what gave rise to identity politics in the middle of the last century.

"Identity politics' came into vogue in the late twentieth century to describe a wide range of political struggles which occur with increasing frequency and constitute one of the most pressing political problems of the present. The range of political activities 'identity politics' refers to comprises struggles over the appropriate forms of legal, political and constitutional recognition and accommodation of the identities of individuals, immigrants and refugees, women, gays, lesbians, linguistic, ethnic, cultural, regional and religious minorities, nations within existing nation states, indigenous peoples, and, often, non-European cultures and religions against Western cultural imperialism. The forms of recognition and accommodation sought are as various as the struggles. Feminists, gays and lesbians demand formal and substantive equality and equal respect for their identity-related differences, in opposition to dominant patriarchal and heterosexist norms of private and public conduct. Minorities seek different forms of public recognition, representation and protection of their languages, cultures, ethnicities and religions." (Tully, James 2003: 517)

We have been told by Professor Kiwanuka that the Baganda as an identity started becoming dominant in the region from around 1600. (Kiwanuka, M.S.M 1975) Up to that point the Kingdom of Bunyoro-Kitara (2) had been the most powerful nationality in the region. As a result of Bunyoro-Kitara's preoccupation with an attempted secession on her western borders, a situation, which rendered her eastern frontiers relatively undefended; and Buganda's recovery over a period of time, Buganda was able to accumulate adequate military strength with which

to effectively launch an offensive against Bunyoro. (Kiwauka, M.S.M. 1975: 19-30) Being rather limited, these advantages only enabled Buganda to recover her previously lost territory. However, in due course, from the reign of Kabaka Mawanda (1674-1704), as a result of annexing the tributary of Kooki from Bunyoro, Buganda acquired immense advantage. These territories Buganda had acquired had very important consequences: "until then Buganda had been very short of iron and weapons, and had to buy their iron from Bunyoro. Now, however, Bunyoro had lost not only the rich reservoir of technical knowledge of smiths of Buddu and Kooki." (Kiwauka, M.S.M. 1968: 607) Controlling these strategic factors, and given the fact that Bunyoro was involved in formidable domestic problems, Buganda went on to defeat Bunyoro battle after battle, and consequently eclipsed Bunyoro as a dominant power in the region. This dominance was to last unchallenged until the eve of the colonization of Uganda, when during the reign of Omukama (King) Kabalega, Bunyoro regained her military strength and began recovering her territory. This recovery did not last long. The British who were seeking to colonise the Nile valley arrived and went into alliance with the Baganda. In the course of the two centuries that this dominance lasted, the Baganda, on one hand embraced an acute sense of nationality chauvinism, and the nationalities dominated by the Baganda developed deep resentment of the Baganda. This was further compounded when the Baganda were used both as mercenaries to subjugate the other nationalities as well as initial colonial administrators. (Adhola, Y.)

Introspection*

We earlier argued that Buganda (or the Baganda) need to engage in some serious introspection about the events of 1966 themselves. A number of Baganda are already doing so. A good example is Professor Mutibwa. He wrote: "The Baganda as a nationality have tended to ignore the role that they and their Kabaka played, which led to the destruction of their kingdom. As already noted, they have en masse - and not without reason - placed all the blame for their woes on Milton Obote, and their curse will for ever rest on his head, in whatever foreign land he may reside. But however much the Baganda may attract and eVe'n deserve the world's sympathy, there is much more to be reckoned with than Buganda's anguish. In his book, "The Desecration of my Kingdom,"[^] Sir Edward Mutesa has left his own testimony on the events that led to his own and Buganda's downfall. No full biography of Mutesa II has so far been written, and a detailed and authoritative account of these events is still awaited. When it comes to be written, his role will certainly emerge as one among the most important - fatally so, because in many ways Buganda's disaster and indeed that of Uganda as a whole can be traced to the misguided leadership and unfortunate activities of Sir Edward himself and his lieutenants in Mengo."

"Mengo's naivety was only made worse by Mutesa's controversial character, and by the Baganda tradition that made little allowance for the Kabaka's servants and ministers to clash with him openly on important issues. Mutesa was surrounded by counsellors who told him not what he should have heard but what they believed he wished to hear.

Statesmanlike advice was not to have been expected from people like Ssebanakita, James Lutaya and Sempa, representatives of the old guard who were always at Mutesa's elbow. He detested and no doubt avoided younger men who felt they had nothing to lose in offering frank counsel on how matters affecting Uganda as a whole as well as Buganda should be handled. That Mutesa's shortcomings became the source of Buganda's and Uganda's tragedies may be unpalatable to many Baganda, but has to be understood. This needs further elucidation."

Professor Mutibwa also tells us how Mutesa had just no clue about politics. "We shall never know what plans Mutesa really had for Buganda, and the country as a whole in assuming the presidency, but, judging from the way he bungled and confused the issues during the 1966 crisis and certainly from his obvious failure to provide leadership at that critical time, it is not unreasonable to conclude that he had no plans for either Buganda or Uganda, the two constituencies for whose welfare and survival he had been born and elected respectively.

"He should also have been well aware of the difficulties of serving, in a purely ceremonial office (as President) when all effective powers are in the hands of your would-be adversary. One may sympathize with Mutesa, understand his motives, and agree, that Milton Obote perhaps sincerely meant all his actions to be for the good of his people, but the path to hell is paved with good intentions, the private hell in which he passed the rest of his life in exile in London had at least some paving stones of his quarrying."

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reside. But however much the Baganda may attract and even deserve the world's sympathy, there is much more to be reckoned with than Buganda's anguish. In his book, "The Desecration of my Kingdom", Sir Edward Mutesa has left his own testimony on the events that led to his own and Buganda's downfall. No full biography of Mutesa II has so far been written, and a detailed and authoritative account of these events is still awaited. When it comes to be written, his role will certainly emerge as one among the most important - fatally so, because in many ways Buganda's disaster and indeed that of Uganda as a whole can be traced to the misguided leadership and unfortunate activities of Sir Edward himself and his lieutenants in Mengo.

Just like Professor Mutibwa has done, we believe, the Baganda as a whole need to engage in very deep introspection. They need to realise that with the imposition of the capitalist mode of production, Buganda was not going to remain the same. They should realise that when the British imposed the capitalist mode of production in Buganda, the capitalist mode of production not only came with its corresponding superstructure but found the tributary mode of production with its corresponding superstructure too. In the initial stage of the imposition, because the incoming capitalist mode of production did not have the wherewithal to run the economy, the British authorities resorted to leaving the two modes of production to obtain side by side in a process which has been called articulation. This took the form of what goes by the name "indirect rule". That is to say the tributary mode of production was being articulated to the capitalist mode of production. However, while the two modes of production were allowed to exist side by side, the pre-capitalist modes of production was being displaced gradually in a process which Charles Bettelheim captured very well when he said that the pre-capitalist modes of production are/were "both undermined and perpetuated at the same time" in a process he called "conservation-dissolution". (Alavi, H. 1982: 175 ff 6) We have already recounted how this process had gone on up to 1966. The 1966 becomes just a continuation of the process of the superstructure of the capitalist mode of production displacing the pre-capitalist superstructure. Museveni's so-called restoration of the monarchy is nothing but taking advantage of the residual attachment to the monarchy for his politics against the political parties. The truth of the matter is Mutebi's *kabakaship* is nothing compared in potency to that of his father.

Finally, the Baganda need to look into themselves as a formerly dominant identity. In this respect the Baganda need to look at the experiences of other formerly dominant minorities and compare those experiences to theirs. We have pointed out that Buganda began being a dominant power in the region from around 1600. That is by the time of the arrival of the colonialist, the Baganda had been dominant in the region for about 300 years. The Muslims of the Indian continent had been dominant for about 700 years before the British arrived in that part of the world. Professor Wright who studied identity problems of former dominant minorities tells us that the Muslims "..... will help to explain the difficulties which the India National Congress, has had in integrating many Muslims elements into the "mainstream" of national politics, as well as to explain the failure of Pakistan to accommodate its Bengali "subordinate mass subjects" in 1947-1971" (Wright, 58-59). What Professor Wright describes of the Muslims in India is exactly the same with the Baganda in Uganda. In the run up to Independence the Baganda were a major stumbling block, trying to get a guarantee of their special status in Uganda which they had enjoyed over the years. This was granted to them as a federal relationship with the rest of the country. They also demanded that nobody should be above their king in status. This was granted by having their king become ceremonial president. Notwithstanding all this, as we have already indicated, the Baganda began to plot against the government and it was that plot which resulted in the 1966 events. The Baganda need to realise that had their king, not involved himself in plots to overthrow the government in 1966, most probably the events of 1966 might not have occurred. And even if it had not happened, given the operation of the fact the capitalist mode of production which colonialism imposed is displacing the tributary mode of production which obtained in Buganda before colonisation, there is no guarantee that, UPC or not, what happened in 1966 will not happen again.

NOTES

(1) Base and superstructure are two linked theoretical concepts developed by [Karl Marx](#), one of the founders of sociology. Simply put, base refers to the forces and relations of production—to all the people, relationships between them, the roles that they play, and the materials and resources involved in producing the things needed by society.

Superstructure, quite simply and expansively, refers to all other aspects of society. It includes [culture](#), [ideology](#) (world views, ideas, values, and beliefs), [norms and expectations](#), identities that people inhabit, social institutions (education, religion, media, family, among others), the political structure, and the state (the political apparatus that governs society). Marx argued that the superstructure grows out of the base, and

reflects the interests of the ruling class that controls it. As such, the superstructure justifies how the base operates, and in doing so, justifies the power of the ruling class. (<https://www.thoughtco.com/definition-of-base-and-superstructure-3026372>)

(2) I get this 100 years' estimate from Fidel Castro. When addressing commemoration meeting held at La Demajagua, October 10, 1968 he said: "What does October 10, 1868, signify for our people? What does this glorious date mean for the revolutionaries of our nation? It simply signifies the beginning of one hundred years of struggle, the beginning of the Revolution in Cuba, because in Cuba there has only been one revolution: that which was begun by Carlos Manuel de Cespedes on October 10, 1868, the revolution our people are still carrying forward." (Woddis, J. 1072:188) The struggles Castro is talking about began one morning when Carles Manuel Cespedes delCastilo, a planter and slave owner unilaterally freed his slaves and made the declaration of Cuban independence from Spain on 10th October 1868. On the morning of that day he also called on the slaves to join him and his fellow conspirators in a war against Spanish colonialism.

(3) According to Professor Mutibwa, the battle was stiff: "Although Mutesa, assisted by his lieutenants equipped with Lee-Enfield rifles put up a stiff resistance and the Amin forces were obliged to call in a large contingent of reinforcements, it was not to be expected that Mengo could hold out for long against the Uganda army." (Mutibwa, P.M. 1992: 39) Eventually, after twelve hours of fierce fighting, the Uganda Army established control. The Kabaka had escaped from the palace.

(4) Ugandan analysts tend to describe the mode of production in Buganda then as feudal; however, the mode of production was strictly not yet feudal. It still lacked certain features of a full-blown feudal society. One should rather call it tributary. (Amin, Samir 1980: 50..)

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