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STATE POWER AND SOCIAL CONFLICT IN POST-COLONIAL AFRICA: THE CASE OF UGANDA (1)

The development of state power under conditions of underdevelopment and dependent development is a problematic of central importance to the study of Third World politics. Not all the countries of the Third World manifest, in the post-colonial era, a clear alignment of interests which can be defined as pertaining to a ruling class which inherits or takes control of state power from the colonial authorities at independence (2).

Post-colonial Africa offers a variety of patterns of change in the structuring of the state and the control of its power. The spectrum describing the modalities of the post-colonial state in Africa ranges between two poles:

1. At one end are the few cases of societies which have emerged as a consequence of national liberation struggles (more or less partial, or truncated in character) and offer examples of well-developed instruments of (more or less centralised) state power; these states are compelled, by the very nature of the social forces that brought them in to existence in the first place, to function in a general atmosphere of relatively well-developed political and ideological consciousness of different segments of the mass of the people (3).
2. At the opposite end are a relatively large number of societies in which the state has emerged as the instrument of a weak, fragmented (or divided) ruling class (which inherited power from the colonial government, not on the strength of a popular movement or political struggle rooted in a mass-based political organization, but rather as a result of power being handed over by the departing colonial authorities in the form of a 'negotiated settlement') in a condition of acute instability.

Between these two poles are societies in which political power is concentrated in state structure more or less responsive to pressures and cross-pressures generated by classes (or segments of classes) at different levels of political consciousness and activated by conflicting interests.

During the last three decades a number of independent African states have frequently experienced military coups which continually expose the

weakness of the 'state' as the political instrument of a ruling class, and therefore point to a generally low level of development of 'classes' and class consciousness in African societies. The case of Uganda is of special interest to students of neo-colonial state because of the 'democratic promise' that its nationalist movement was believed to hold for its future as an independent nation.

A large number of societies were brought together by the colonial power within the ambit of a single country. This was done without regard to the degree of compatibility that may have existed between their traditional socio-political system. Acephalous societies of north-western and northern Uganda (which have more in common with the societies of the southern Sudan or eastern Zaire than with those of southern Uganda), societies in which traditional political authority patterns were clan-based, and societies in which political power was pyramidally exercised, were squeezed together within the borders of a single administrative policy which was given the name of Uganda.

Their experience of each other under the aegis of the colonial power was such as to emphasise inter-ethnic divergences and contradictions (for which the colonial authorities conveniently invented the pejorative 'descriptive' rubric of 'tribalism' - a phenomenon that had not been known to exist in the inter-societal relationship of Africa before the 19th century) at the expense of common aims, and to skew political and economic demands emanating from different segments of the population along the lines of 'pork barrel' politics. Administrative fusion under the aegis of the colonial power was accompanied by political fission which was subsequently mirrored in the Ugandan nationalist movement.

By the normal 'indices' of development - e.g., the general level of education; administrative experience and sophistication; availability of qualified skilled, semi-skilled and unskilled labour/person power; development of various professions; simultaneous development of cash crop and subsistence sectors in the agrarian economy; level of urbanisation etc. - Uganda at independence (1962) qualified as one of the less under-developed societies of the east and central African region. A carefully balanced constitution - which had as its aim ensuring a modicum of popular participation in politics, elected power à la the Westminster model, bureaucracy derived from a Whitehall mould, and a pattern of decentralisation designed to take account of the different levels of socio-political development to be encountered in a polyglot country - sought

to underpin the authority of those who inherited state power.

Yet, within eight years of bestowal of independence, the entire edifice of political authority literally disappeared from the scene, yielding place to a phenomenon which was novel in its horrendous distortion of the state by a predatory military which succeeded in lumpenising politics at almost all levels. It has taken 15 years of untold suffering by the people and five years of sustained national liberation struggle at last to set in motion a political process by which the rot that had set in at the very heart of the instrument of state power might be stopped; a degree of public accountability might be restored; and a sociologically comprehensible characterisation of the forces wielding authority and representing different class or group or segmental interests might become possible.

In this essay, I shall attempt to address the question of the relationship between the changes of structure and function which the Ugandan state has undergone since 1962 and the conflicting socio-economic forces at play. This discussion is grounded in a brief introductory historical discussion of the characteristics of the 'colonial state' in Uganda, a characterisation of the nationalist movement in Uganda, and a critique of the main sociological interpretations of Uganda's transitions - from colonialism to independence - without specifically taking issue with particular authors or interpretations: and, from civilian rule to military rule and its anarchic (or semi-anarchic) aftermath. Against the backdrop of such a discussion, I shall attempt to suggest a few possible future directions that Ugandan politics might assume in the wake of the momentous developments that have taken place in that country since the beginning of this year.

I.

Colonial rule in Uganda was based on an artificial distinction between Buganda and the other kingdoms. Although the British authorities regarded the kingdoms as a whole as superior and providing a model of administration, the edifice of 'Indirect Rule' was constructed on the model of the Buganda system of administration which was imposed on non-kingdom societies in which traditional political structures were somewhat more diffuse in character and 'democratically' (as opposed to 'hierarchically') organised. This, in effect, meant that Buganda which was the victorious kingdom in the south became the heart of colonial power in Uganda; all other regions of Uganda (including the vanquished but more or less equally hierarchical

policy of Bonyoro and the traditional kingdoms of Ankole and Toro) were treated as underdeveloped by comparison with Buganda.

For nearly 30 years the colonial authorities conferred enormous economic advantages on newly created strata of society in Buganda through such devices as the distribution of mailo (literally, 'miles' of) land, thus giving the ruling elements of the Buganda society a new socio-political identity which they could express through the Kabaka and the Lukiiko. The upper echelons of the Buganda chiefly hierarchy (i.e. the saza and gombolola chiefs) thus became a significant landed class, rightly characterised as constituting the kulak element in the political economy of colonial Uganda (4). The development of rudimentary political consciousness in the other three kingdoms and in the numerous societies of Uganda without kingdom or analogous structures (as in the case of the Basoga peoples), was delayed until their economies showed significant development under a colonial policy which promised a modicum of diversity in the spheres of production and commerce.

By 1930, as influential elements in other regions clamoured for the attention of the colonial government and competed for resources for stimulating production, the Buganda elite was able to exercise considerable political and economic pressure on the colonial government through their chiefly hierarchy. As they were in no position to sustain such pressure over a long period of time, some friction developed in the relations between the Gadanda chiefly hierarchy and the colonial government. The pre-eminent position occupied by the Baganda in the colonial state was progressively eroded, roughly from the '30s onwards, as the 'feudal' expectations of the first generation of colonial chiefs led by Sir Apolo Kagwa were torn asunder by the contradictory forces represented on one side by a return to mass populism in local politics with the Kabaka as its centrepiece (5), and on the other, by a rising generation of educated Baganda who were anxious to 'modernise' Uganda's political institutions and system of production.

The colonial state or, rather, the Ugandan state under colonial rule was thus predicated, at one and the same time, on the primacy of the political institutions of Buganda in particular and of the mass of the Baganda population in general and on the necessity to bring the economic and political aspirations of the Baganda into conformity with those of Uganda as a whole. A profound contradiction lay beneath the surface of this twin objective of the colonial power. No wonder then that a state with its political power controlled within such a narrow nexus, and the economic

capacity of the country as a whole (especially in the sphere of production) running ahead of that of the most favoured part of it, was vulnerable to pressures originating in the form of a rather unique interplay of forces.

Perhaps it would be appropriate to draw attention to the fact that Britain entered the colonial game in East Africa during a phase of expansion of its strategic (as differentiated from its economic) sphere of influence; as such, Uganda's value as a source of surplus to be transferred to the metropolitan country was only of secondary importance to the colonial power. In the absence of a militant nationalist movement (invariably, a phenomenon which accompanies exploitation and expropriation of the colony's surplus on a large scale by the colonial power), there was no need for the colonial state, that arched over the Buganda kingdom and the wide variety of traditional political structures encompassing Uganda to develop its coercive capacity to a specially marked degree.

In this respect, the colonial state in neighbouring Kenya stood in sharp contrast to Uganda's colonial state. The objective fact of Uganda's state structure, during the colonial period, being left 'under-developed', was to have consequences of portentous significance for the civilian political elements that inherited power at independence as a prelude to undertaking the task of structuring the post-colonial state of Uganda.

A brief discussion of the characteristic features of the Ugandan nationalist struggle will throw light on some of the dynamic features of the relationship between Uganda's weak state structure and the incipient class forces which attempted to gain control of it and shape it into an instrument through which the interests represented by the ruling elites might be realised.

II.

During the late '30s and '40s, as well as during the early '50s, Ugandan nationalism was confined, almost exclusively, to political and social changes that were taking place in Buganda. Although an early form of political activity consisted of the formation of trade unions of one kind or another, the main thrust of progressive popular opposition during the earlier stages of the nationalist movement was directed not against the colonial power but against the bakungu hierarchy (of appointed chiefs).

These opposition forces, which were based in the rural populace (and especially those elements of it (i.e. the bataka) which had been displaced from power at the onset of colonial rule, and with the emergence of parallel

hierarchies supported by the Protestant and Catholic churches), assumed the form of a succession of organisations by the *bataka* representing the less privileged sections of the Baganda peasantry.

The aim of the agitation was to drain power away from the Baganda oligarchy which had usurped the Kabaka's power in collusion with the colonial power. The demands raised by the *bataka* related to the restoration of the customary rights of the broad mass of the Baganda peasantry to protection, security of tenure, and other rights which had been drastically attenuated as a consequence of the policies of the *bakungu* hierarchy as well as of the radical changes that had occurred in the structure of landholding and in the economy as a whole. The *bataka* sought to achieve their aim of reverting to values prevalent in Buganda in pre-colonial times, on the one hand by augmenting the political influence of the Kabaka, and on the other by making him duly accountable to the populace in his traditional role as *Sabbataka* (6).

These forces of Buganda traditionalism subsequently (i.e. during the late '40s, '50s, and '60s) developed into Baganda nationalism (until the '50s, it was virtually synonymous with Ugandan nationalism), separatism and neo-traditionalism in overlapping configurations. Even though they were in opposition to the chiefly hierarchy on political and economic questions, they were at one with them (and also with the Kabaka) in the pursuit of the common aim of preventing any dilution of Buganda's privileged position within Uganda.

The efforts of the colonial power to integrate the different parts of Uganda (including Buganda) into a unified political system as equals by widening the sphere of representation and inching towards a future marked by regional autonomy and inter-regional parity in economic, financial and political matters, gave rise to sustained and united opposition from all the political forces in Buganda - the Kabaka, the *bakungu* hierarchy, and the successors of the *Bataka* movement. During the interval between the end of World War II and the exile of the Kabaka (1953 - 55), the Buganda-based nationalist movement and the colonial power were locked into a struggle over what became known as the 'Buganda factor' in Uganda.

Uganda-wide nationalism was still of recent provenance when the colonial power decided to phase Uganda into independent nationhood. Within a brief span of seven years (1955 - 62) Uganda's independence became a subject of discussion between representatives of Uganda-wide nationalist parties (with a very small 'committed' popular following and practically no

organization), Buganda-based political organizations (with a leadership which had been emasculated by a war of attrition in which they had engaged against the colonial power, but was still well entrenched in the traditional policy of Buganda which had strong roots in the mass of the population), and the colonial power.

During the negotiations leading up to independence the principles of federation of post-colonial Uganda were to be compromised in a constitutional regime which would provide for the retention of certain privileges by the Baganda. By 1960, the Baganda were content to barter away their 'nationalist' ideology of the '40s and '50s for a few concessions ensuring a continuation of their privileged position in Uganda after independence. They were pushed into the margin as mere spectators of the nationalist agitation, the centre of gravity of which had by then been shifted to other parts of Uganda (and, especially, the north). All Uganda-wide nationalist parties were viewed with equal suspicion in Buganda where the chiefly hierarchy had already lost its credibility during an earlier decade (7).

The main socio-economic force in Buganda which had some awareness of its 'class' identity, though far from being politically class-conscious, consisted of the beneficiaries of the *mailo* system and their descendents. Its position became ambiguous in view of the fact that political organizations reflecting its interests were in favour of the restoration of the Kabaka as a powerful force and against sharing power with non-Baganda nationalists in a united and 'fused' Ugandan policy. Their populism was only skin deep. The mass of the Baganda population, for its part, was loyal to the Kabaka but profoundly distrustful of the 'Lukiiko' chiefs (8).

A segment of the educated Baganda constituting a miniscule proportion of the total population, however, identified itself with the objectives of the new nationalist parties and was opposed to a return to Baganda traditionalism; it enjoyed no popular support in Buganda whatsoever. Baganda-led efforts to establish populist parties with a Uganda-wide following foundered for lack of mass support in the heartland. There was thus a sense of profound alienation in Buganda from the course of Uganda's history leading up to independence.

There was no 'class' force in Buganda willing to play a dynamic part in presiding over the transition from the colonial state into a post-colonial nation-state. Instead, the *kulak* class, looking backwards into the past, put itself in a defensive position - a political orientation hardly conducive to sharing state power in the post-independence era. To present it as a

Janus-faced force simultaneously looking towards the past and the future and as capable of forging 'class' alliances with other rising ruling petit bourgeois forces located in different parts of the country, as some analysts have claimed, is to fall into the familiar academic trap of sociological 're-ification' (9). In the event, the emergence of Kabaka Yekka (KY) as a popular political party confined to Buganda, carried no more than peripheral significance for the unfolding of socio-economic forces seeking to control the Ugandan state after the end of colonial rule.

If KY was only partially representative of 'class' politics in Buganda, and of no more than marginal relevance to the constellation of socio-economic forces that would be needed to take political control of the state in order to establish a 'developing' and 'viable' pattern of post-colonial development dependent on the former metropolitan power and its Western allies, the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) was, objectively speaking, even more vulnerable. Unlike KY which enjoyed the support of the mass of the Baganda people, UPC (10) was not widely popular among the non-Baganda masses, and its immediate political influence was more urban than rural in character.

Even as early as 1960, there was a certain artificiality about UPC; it had not grown from roots already present in the political soil; nor, indeed, did it sink roots amongst the general populace of Uganda after establishing itself. In the ideological sphere, even although it set its face against a return to 'tradition' or 'feudalism', it had no clear and positive alternative to offer which could capture popular imagination and win support. It exuded a faint aroma of an 'all things to all persons' organization, in which local and district level leaders with a modicum of education seemed to be on the make, taking the name of the people as a whole. They did not represent the interests of a well defined or even incipient 'class' with specific economic and social characteristic and political ambitions. The rise to dominance of UPC, Uganda's main nationalist party, therefore, took place in a virtual political vacuum.

III.

The colonial power's attempts to bring about a fusion between Buganda and other parts of Uganda into a single state were based on an artifice in the form of an alliance between KY and UPC. A coalition between two parties (led by UPC), ceremonially headed by the Kabaka as head of state under a federal constitution, emerged as the panacea for the tangled

political problems posed by Uganda on the eve of independence. The control of power of the new state of Uganda - in its post-colonial and neo-colonial phase - was thus handed over to a coalition between two political organizations which happened to be political parties only in name.

KY was a creature of the chiefs who could be relied upon to manipulate the electoral machine; UPC which had no political organization or base worth the name could rely on negative support from the non-Baganda electorate based on widespread anti-Baganda feelings. Thus, the two political parties, divorced from one another's constituencies, were able to pool their political resources into a fragile alliance capable of winning the elections and paving the way for the transfer of power in 1962. The state of Uganda was bedevilled, from its very birth, by a fracture running along the political divide between Buganda and the rest of the country.

Unlike neighbouring Kenya, for example, where, at independence, political power passed from the colonial authorities to a rising 'class' of Kenyan petit-bourgeois and comprador bourgeois elements (already faced by the opposition of increasingly politically conscious segments of the urban working class and intelligentsia of Kenya), Uganda at independence, came under the control of political forces which only insufficiently and with notable lack of clarity represented the interests of 'classes in society in control of "productive forces"'.

At the same time, unlike TANU in Tanzania, which not only gained control of the power of the neo-colonial state but also consolidated itself as a national political party (TANU/CCM) with a more or less clear ideological orientation, UPC failed to complement its control of the neo-colonial state of Uganda with developments within its organization calculated to impart to it not only mass popularity cutting across societal divisions but also a capacity to reconcile conflicts within it between the incipient ruling class of Ugandan petit-bourgeoisie and their following based in differences of religion, region, societal identification etc.

The departure of the colonial power was thus marked not by a fusion of the 'class' base of political power represented by the Baganda kulak 'class' and the 'producing' peasantry in other parts of the country, but by an atmosphere of mutual suspicion among the different 'ethnic' communities or 'tribes', stemming from a combination of political insecurity and economic jealousy between the regionally divided segments of the producing 'class' (11). No wonder, then, that the 'Buganda' factor continued to dominate Ugandan politics as much after independence as during the last three

decades of colonial rule.

The central feature of the Obote (Mark I) administration lay in its efforts to isolate Buganda from the political mainstream of Uganda by pursuing policies calculated to appease and flatter significant sections of the elites in other parts of the country. These policies resulted in failure on two levels:

1. By isolating the Baganda 'kulak class' from exercising a share in the control of the power of the state as an integral part of an Uganda-wide ruling petit-bourgeois class, the Obote (Mark I) government weakened the state structure and alienated the Baganda people as a whole.
2. By neglecting the task of building UPC as a mass organization anywhere at all in Uganda and by appropriating to itself the task of satisfying the interests of the dominant elites of the various communities in the country, an already weak Ugandan state stretched itself way beyond its capacity to produce results.

Each successive strike against the Baganda led to a further debilitation of the new state of Uganda. By 1966, the civilian government was forced to enlist the help of a section of the armed forces (12). During the interval between the overthrow of the Kabaka and the overthrow of the Obote (Mark I) government, the ruling party (representing the interests of only a fragment of the dominant 'class') lost what little vitality it had had before and was surrounded by a political vacuum into which the military under Amin stepped.

It is important to note that the military in Uganda did not inherit a 'strong' state or even a 'state' with vaguely defined contours. It usurped the authority of a government which, by its ham-fisted policies, had bankrupted itself of whatever little popular support that it might otherwise have enjoyed. The control of power of the state exercised by the UPC government was devoid of either 'class' or of 'mass' content. Here again the contrast between the Ugandan and the Kenyan post-colonial states on the one hand, and between UPC and TANU on the other, is striking (13). When the coup d'etat did occur, popular jubilation was focused not so much on the incoming regime but on the overthrow of the Obote (Mark I) government.

IV.

In this analysis, emphasis has been placed on the absence of a coherent class force representing the interests of the producing sections of the

society (in Uganda, this would consist pre-eminently of the commercial agricultural sector, and to a lesser degree the manufacturing/extractive sector). This is not to deny that those who held power in the past (or, for that matter, those who hold power now in the enormously changed circumstances of NRA's victory) saw themselves as performing the role of national representatives of a ruling class or even the mass of the people.

But, in whatsoever manner they may have visualised their role or the role of the ruling party or the role of the military (as the case may be), in objective terms, they contributed to the fragmentation along 'ethnic' lines of a potentially dominant 'class' capable of taking control of state power along 'ethnic' lines rather than to a process of amalgamation or annealing between the various segments of the elites which were often at loggerheads with one another in the context of the normal functioning of the state itself. Instead of enabling the 'producing' class as a whole to realise its political and economic aims the Obote (Mark I) regime simply spawned small cliques of wealthy individuals who made their fortunes by exploiting what the state had to offer (virtually in the form of large hand-outs). Growing unpopularity at the hands of the masses and disenchantment (for different reasons) of various fragments of the producing 'class' with the ruling party in control of the power of the state lay at the root of the 15 year hiatus that was to follow the overthrow of the Obote (Mark I) government (14).

If the Ugandan state under the control of UPC failed to acquire a distinctive 'class' orientation or characterisation, under the military, the 'Second Republic of Uganda' reflected the primacy of a new phenomenon that was gaining hold of the state structure. For want of better terminology, we venture to characterise the role of the Ugandan military during Amin's term in power as one of 'lumpenising' the state and the politics underlying its functioning.

The unleashing of indiscriminate bloodletting within the army and the civil population, the rise to prominence of Nubi mercenaries (15) underlining the marginalisation of all ethnic groups of Uganda within the armed forces (a process which was diametrically opposed to what was needed - namely, the incorporation of all ethnic groups into a single whole) (16)), the de-politicisation of the society, and the systematic subversion of the economy by a rising 'lumpen' class (if 'class' it should be characterised as (17)) of 'magendo' (= corrupt) petty compradors, constituted the main achievements of the Amin regime.

The bankruptcy of political power and the loss of 'civilian' muscle during

Obote's (Mark I) regime was followed by a decade during which the Ugandan state was reduced to new depths of anarchic corruption under the heels of a marauding military force led by a lumpen-dictator with a fascist political bent who, for a time, seemed to enjoy unreserved support from important sections of the country. After a brief flirtation with the Baganda, whose feudal susceptibilities he attempted to humour (before he turned the screws on them to an extent even worse than during the Obote (Mark I) regime), Amin launched on a series of quixotic and highly destructive measures which had the effect of undermining the productive power of the economy.

The centrality of the Baganda under British colonial rule gave place, under Amin's tyranny, to a new centrality in the configuration of political forces as they affected the army. The depletion of the ranks of the Ugandan armed forces, as a result of ethnic massacres (more accurately, a series of genocides) carried out by the regime, was followed by the induction on a large scale of former Anyanya or Nubian fighters of the southern Sudan and Simba rebels of eastern Zaire on whose personal loyalty and ruthlessness Amin could count.

The introduction of the 'Nubian factor' into the forces in control of the power of the Ugandan state was Amin's distinctive contribution; during the last quarter of the 19th century, the colonial authorities had entered Uganda from the north leading Nubian troops which wreaked havoc on a number of districts including the kingdom of Bunyoro. But, whereas British colonial power used the Nubian troops strictly for 'pacification' purposes, Amin co-opted them into the echelons of those in control of the post-colonial state of Uganda. This constituted a dimension of lumpenisation of crucial importance to Uganda's under-development.

Another important result of the entry of the Nubian element was simply to sideline the 'state' in two related ways: firstly, those who were engaged in production simply reverted to subsistence cultivation, switching off production for commercial purposes (18), because they were well aware that any surplus produced would be expropriated by brigands hired by the state to intimidate, terrorise and plunder them; second, the instruments of the state became expendable and were simply set aside whenever the military imagined that they might put bureaucratic or judicial or any other obstacles in its way (19).

V.

If the coup of 1971 knocked the petit bourgeois ruling ideological stuffing out of the Ugandan state, Tanzania's military intervention leading to the overthrow of Amin exposed the extent to which even its skeleton had become distorted during nine years of misrule by a lumpen military force. The emptiness of the Ugandan civilian political forces as at 1979 was underlined by the fact that none of them had virtually any links, from their exile in far-flung places throughout the world, with the Ugandan populace.

The Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) was a hastily summoned gathering of largely self-proclaimed representatives; its 23 different constituents were at odds with one another (20). Of these, UPC was the only organization which (apart from DP) could even remotely claim a political past of any real significance; and, only the Patriotic Front and its incipient guerrilla force (21) led by Musaveni could lay claim to some contact with the people inside Uganda during the period of Amin's rule.

It is not surprising that, when UNLF took power in the vacuum left by Amin's ouster, all the old antagonisms between the various elite fractions of Uganda re-surfaced with a veneer; any possibility of this political misnomer (i.e. UNLF), undertaking the task of building bridges between the state and the people or even putting the grasp of effective political power within the reach of a class of producing petit bourgeoisie, rising Phoenix-like out of the ashes of a decade of military tyranny (preceded by at least five years of corrupt misrule by a civilian government), quickly faded. Those who imagined themselves to be left-wing and anti-imperialist in their commitment merrily colluded with arch-reactionary elements in order to keep common rivals at bay; a succession of governments emerged during the two years (22) that intervened between the overthrow of Amin and the Ugandan election of 1980. None of the symptoms of the general economic malaise and fear inherited from the Amin period let up. Conditions of life for the ordinary Ugandans were made even worse by direct interference of imperialist countries in the spheres of economic policy-making and political control of the levers of state power (23).

The emergence of UPC as a dominant force on the basis of an election, widely regarded as unfair (24) if not deliberately rigged, was a foregone conclusion under such trying circumstances. Both the abrupt removal of Lule in 1979 and the return of Obote to head the Obote (Mark II) administration served as reminders of the intractable nature of the 'Buganda problem', with its roots going back to the '40s when the colonial power

embarked on the task of creating conditions conducive to the political coherence of the different parts of Uganda.

Even though Obote's second stint in power was not, and could not be marked by a return to one party rule, it resulted in incalculable suffering on a large scale, for the mass of the people, given the political situation in Uganda, without registering improvement in any of the various aspects of political, economic and social degeneration which Uganda had experienced under Amin.

The impact of the Obote (Mark II) government on the Ugandan state was such as to exacerbate its weakness even further, for the following main reasons: 1. The control over Uganda's economic and budgetary policies was effectively taken out of the hands of the government; the IMF representative in Kampala exercised a dominant influence in these spheres, as the regime was totally dependent on the Western world for aid.

2. Even although sizeable segments of the Nubi soldiery had been removed from it as an institution the army never really recovered its discipline. It continued to unleash terror on innocent rural population in an indiscriminate manner (25). During the four and a half year period of the Obote (Mark II) administration, the morale of the military sank low, its predatory tendencies intensified, and its frustration against the emergence of NRA under Musaveni's leadership with the Luwero area as its base led to large scale genocide attacks against the civilian population.

Throughout Obote's second administration, there was no sign of a 'class' emerging on the surface of Uganda's political scene - from under the continued depredations of the 'magendo' elements, or under the patronage of IMF-supervised economic policy - which would, at some future date, be in a position to take control of the power of the state through appropriate political organizations; nor, indeed, was there any room for a re-emergence of a petit bourgeois class of non-producing elements capable of exercising control over the state structure (26).

Obote's political inheritance (1980) and the legacy (1985) that he left behind were thus identical in character. They took the form of a state deprived of its capacity to govern, which came under the helm of representatives of no particular definable group or class in the Ugandan society, but of rapacious and corrupt individuals at the mercy of predatory lumpen elements constituting the soldiery and black marketeers belonging to

the magendo sector of the Ugandan economy.

VI.

National liberation politics would thus appear to be the only way to emerge from such a ruinous political condition. As in a number of other similar instances, the National Resistance Army (NRA) developed some ideas (though not stated in any systematic fashion) about the Ugandan state structure that should replace the existing post-colonial version of it. NRA's vision, to be sure, is not a 'class' vision. But its politics are not linked to a commitment to create some form of 'socialist' society either. Under these circumstances, given a breather in the form of a decade or so of 'peace time' political development (27), 'class' forces and 'class' based politics can be reasonably expected to rise to the surface.

Apart from efforts to rehabilitate those who have suffered during the last five years in the southern and southwestern parts of the country, the policy of the new government seems clearly to be one of emphasising the unity of all the different peoples of Uganda rather than one of emphasising a southern (or 'Baganda') or a southwestern/western (or, say, 'Banyankole') factor.

The readiness with which the peoples of eastern and northern Uganda seem to have accepted the new government constitutes an early indication of the high degree of legitimacy that its policy of reconciliation has already gained in their eyes. There is thus a fund of goodwill upon which the regime can draw, and, for the first time since 1966, a fund of goodwill and trust which the political leadership of the country has earned in the course of a liberation struggle even before winning the spurs of state power.

In the medium run, however, certain internal contradictions can be expected to emerge amongst those who are wielding power in Uganda. It is interesting that, under the present arrangements, the National Resistance Council (NRC) should be formally enjoined to act in consultation (if not in co-ordination) with the National Resistance Army Council (NRAC). Even although a number of elements in the broad-based NRC were sympathetic to NRA, and had been more or less implacably opposed to the politics of murder, pillage, and physical liquidation of opposition practised by the Amin and the Obote (Mark II) governments, it is clear that, by its very nature, NRC is a far less coherent or homogeneous body than NRAC (28).

At the heart of the forces presently in control of state power there is thus a potential contradiction between the NRA mainstream on the one hand,

and on the other, politicians with varying degrees of affiliation to NRA (29). NRA is a fighting force with a very large complement of incredibly young soldiers (30), a number of them orphaned by the cruelty of armed thugs under the Amin and Obote (Mark II) governments. A powerful motivating force in the shaping of these elements into liberation fighters was a sense of idealism and political consciousness which they will not easily give up.

On the other hand, those political elements that have entered the government which cannot be regarded as having any serious exposure to the 'liberation' content (in an ideological sense) of Uganda's recent struggle, must be assumed to be experienced in the art of wheeling and dealing, or at least to wish to indulge in it if a suitable opportunity were to arise. Having been trained in the techniques of threading their way through the maze of some corrupted version or other of parliamentary political practice and of politicking in exile, they may well be tempted to see in office-holding, in contemporary Uganda, an opportunity to reap material rewards on a personal (individual) basis or on behalf of those elements in society whose interests they may claim to represent (31).

It is useful to remember that, in the long run, national unification and reconciliation can vary in significance depending upon whether it is rooted in a political structure (i.e., the state and the ruling party of the government exercising state power) controlled by a ruling class or by the people as a whole. In Uganda, the transition of a potential ruling class from a 'class in itself' to a 'class for itself' has been repeatedly vitiated in the past by internal contradictions which have taken the classic form of those in control of state power (not being instruments of a 'ruling class') taking the law into their own hands as groups of individuals (most notably as groups of military or armed robbers and those running magendo rackets) pillaging the society at large and robbing producers in the society of their wealth (32).

The only chance for state power to be brought into alignment with the party in control of it reflecting, albeit in a belated realisation of its role, the interests of a potential ruling petit bourgeois class, was missed during the last six months of the Obote (Mark I) administration. This was mainly because UPC had proved itself to be incapable of striking roots either among the population as a whole or among the producing petit bourgeoisie (which, at the time, was dominated, by and large, by the Baganda kulaks).

UPC's impotence as a ruling party reflecting the interests of a ruling

class led to its downfall and to the usurpation of state power by the military. During the interregnum between the overthrow of the military regime and the liberation of Uganda by NRA, a political coalition was cooked up which represented neither the broad base of the population nor any recognisable segments of the society. It was a club consisting of exiled politicians and place-seekers wheeled into positions of power by force of circumstance.

The Ugandan state, which had not yet established its political character, thus fell into the hands of elements which were part-comprador, part-feudal, part-petit bourgeois and a handful of self-seeking and adventurist left opportunists who were out to exploit the situation for their own ends. As we have already noted, the return to power of an ideologically repentant Obote, ready to do the bidding of imperialism abroad and army partisans at home, did little to alter the chaotic condition of the country.

Uganda's liberation represents the first real attempt in Uganda's history to inject politics based on an understanding of nationalism, national unity (through reconciliation) (33), and the state's responsibility to civil society into government and administration. NRA shares a basic similarity with other liberation movements in Southern and Central Africa; like them, it is a popular force voicing the immediate interests of the entire mass of the population in the restoration of normal social intercourse, establishment and safeguarding of civil liberties, respect for human rights and to the extent possible, uncorrupt administration. But, unlike FRELIMO or ZANU (PF) or MPLA, NRA is not marked by any explicit commitment to the construction of some form of socialism.

A popular force, NRA's politics are more akin to those of 'People Power'. Its orientation to the state has not so far consciously taken account of the social and economic contradictions that had been developing in Ugandan society and economy during the '60s and were lulled into dormance during the two decades of murder, pillage and plunder following the eclipse of the ruling UPC and the opposition parties (34).

As NRA does not represent a socialist movement except perhaps in a very vague manner, its control of state power would have to be judged on the basis of the precise class configuration that emerges in Ugandan society and politics during the coming decade or so. Given the nature of representation of civilian elements in the administration, it would be a fair guess that the economic and fiscal policies of the new government will be directed to encouraging accumulation of surplus and reproduction of capital

by the rural rich in the hope that this would lead to industrialisation and to an increase in the standard of living for all sections of the population (35).

There is likely to be some tension in the government between more conservative elements intent upon 'producing economic results' (36) on the one hand, and on the other, the more radical elements in the government clamouring for better distribution in the present rather than in the distant future.

Whilst this tension can be contained to a certain degree, the potential contradiction between those sections of the producing petit bourgeoisie which benefit from government policies and those which believe that they are discriminated against is far more dangerous. For it was the latter kind of contradiction, engendered in the anti-government feeling widely prevalent in Buganda, which completely undermined the Obote (Mark I) administration, and to a significant degree, predisposed large sections of the country against Obote's return to power in 1980.

An important lesson is contained in the past experience of the Baganda petit bourgeoisie in general and kulaks in particular for the present government. Any future policy which comes to be seen as particularly beneficial to the Baganda and as being pursued at the expense of the agricultural producing class in the north, east and elsewhere is bound to evoke disloyalty to government and a feeling of *déjà vu* in reverse.

Even although it would be possible to rationalise such developments, there can be little doubt that economic policies should never be formulated in such a manner as to run the risk of being identified in the minds of the people as being particularly beneficial to a specific region and, by implication, not in the interests of some other region or regions. A state which is moulded by political forces in such a way as to reflect and represent the interests of a ruling class must, as far as possible, avoid creating the impression (37) that benefits and disadvantages are unevenly divided amongst its varied population.

It would be appropriate to hazard the prediction that the NRC administration under Musaveni's leadership has the potential capacity to create conditions of political stability in the short run (i.e., one or two years), whilst doubting that its populism can really develop any 'socialist' sinews. The question of whether the government will be able to undertake sufficiently imaginative economic policies which would have the effect of representing the interests of the producing Ugandan petit bourgeois class

as a whole, rather than those of regionally or socially segmented parts of it, is difficult to predict.

This, however, is certain: Uganda's past experience contains a whole host of lessons that could be usefully and profitably unlearned, whilst lessons already learnt elsewhere in East and Central Africa may not be entirely relevant to the concrete conditions of Uganda as expressed in the diversity of traditions and nuances of history presented by its peoples.

Notes

- (1) This article is in the form of a postscript to my various publications on Uganda in which an attempt is made to pull together a few salient observations on the characteristics of the state and the social, economic and international contradictions in which it is engulfed. I should like to refer readers to the following articles and books of mine on the subject: *The Political Development of Uganda: 1900 - 1986* (Aldershot: Gower 1986); 'National Integration and Ethnic Differentiation in Uganda: A Case of Arrested Fusion?' in: *Nationalism in the Contemporary World: Political and Sociological Perspectives* (London, Frances Pinter 1983), pp 119 - 148; *Central-Local Relations: The Case of Uganda* (Manchester: Victoria University of Manchester 1982); 'The Social Base of the Uganda People's Congress, 1958 - 70', *African Affairs* 74 (October 1975) 297, pp. 442 - 460.
- (2) The 'state' as the initiator of policy and as the centre of decision-making which affects all sections of the population is even more important in Third World countries than in developed industrialised countries. At the same time, it must be noted that there is a great variation not only in the level of development of different classes - ruling classes, 'subaltern' classes, and the 'proletarian' class - but also in the degree to which political and social organizations not directly connected with the state can exercise a vital influence on development and change. Thus, for example, in a country such as India, there is far greater scope for the emergence of powerful grassroots organizations which can challenge the state in specific areas of activity even though the state is extremely powerful. By contrast, for example, Uganda is paradoxically, characterised both by the existence of a state upon which all segments of society are dependent, and by the weakness of its institutions in the face of steady encroachments of its power by organised groups intent on subverting its authority and usurping its role as an agency for extracting and distributing the surplus produced by the economy.
- (3) This is so despite efforts made by leaders to 'militarise' power or to 'de-politicise' the mass of the population after assuming state power. Such efforts have by no means been confined to professedly anti-people regimes; even such pro-people's regimes as Zimbabwe's ZANU(PF) government, after accession to power, tend to play down mass participatory politics in favour of politics based on strong arm tactics and to seek to use the mass base of their power to coerce rather than to persuade different sections of the population democratically. Even in Uganda since March 1986, NRA's redoubtable success against anti-democratic forces and lumpen-militarism has been followed by a certain degree of reluctance on the part of the new government to stand aside rather than actively encourage mass political

- participation in decision-making and the mass of the people playing on active role in determining the demands that should be raised.
- (4) This class was the first to enjoy private ownership of property in Uganda, which brought it into conflict first with the Kabaka and the traditional structure of power, and subsequently with the colonial power. It is also interesting to note, that, whereas the ownership of private property assumed a more or less 'feudal' social character (associated with ownership of land) among the Baganda, it was much more firmly anchored in a petit bourgeois cash nexus in the dominant segments of the non-Baganda population.
 - (5) This development had the effect of dividing the 'traditional' Baganda chiefly elite into two groups, especially with the emergence of the Bataka movement. The colonial power was able to take advantage of the conflict between them to impose a regimen on Buganda which undermined the 'special relationship' between the Baganda and the colonial power, which, the former were led to believe, defined their status in Uganda.
 - (6) Martin Southwold, *Bureaucracy and Chiefship in Buganda* (Kampala: East African Institute of Social Research 1961).
 - (7) The Democratic Party (DP), although led by a Muganda, attracted practically no following in Buganda because the Protestants distrusted him because he was a Catholic whilst the Catholics refused to accept him because of his Mukopi (commoner) origin.
 - (8) i.e. the upper and middle echelon chiefs who were part and parcel of the 'kulak' class.
 - (9) I have discussed the major Marxist contributions to our understanding of Ugandan politics in my book on Uganda in some detail. In particular, I have dealt with both the slighter work of J. S. Saul (*The State and Revolution in Eastern Africa*, Heinemann, London 1979), and the far more important and seminal contributions of M. M. Mamdani (*Politics and Class Formation in Uganda, 1976- and Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda*, Heinemann 1983). Although Mamdani has thrown much light on state power and class conflicts in Uganda, he has an unfortunate tendency to re-ify social categories instead of illustrating his theoretical discussions with concrete facts. His latest contribution 'Peasants and Democracy in Africa' (*New Left Review*, 156, March/April 1986, pp. 37 - 50), based in part on fieldwork, is relatively free of re-ification, though in his discussion of 'the State as Plunder Capitalism' (ibid.), he has tended to exaggerate in a gross manner, the economic benefits accruing to the expropriators from the application of Amin's Land Reform Decree (1975), whilst saying very little about the economic consequences, for primary producers, of magendo (= corruption) practices and the resilience shown by the former in their efforts to mitigate the severity of their plight under Amin's tyranny.
 - (10) UPC was, by definition, a national party; but, in actual fact it was excluded from sinking roots among the mass of the population in Buganda. By tacit agreement, it became the major party outside Buganda.
 - (11) The cleavages within the Bantu and the Nilotic populations have been as important as - in fact, more crucial in the long term - the division between the Bantu peoples and the Nilotic peoples. This has been documented by a number of social anthropologists who have carried out fieldwork in northern Uganda (i.e. John Middleton, Aidan Southall and Frank Girling).
 - (12) Even the military had become divided though, in the absence of Baganda or 'Bantu' elements, the split was along the lines of officers

- who were disposed to the Kabaka and those (like Amin) who supported Obote. See, for example, Victoria Brittain, 'Uganda After Amin and Obote', *New Left Review*, 156, March/April 1986, pp. 51 - 61.
- (13) The tendency of some scholars to hold imperialism responsible for the general as well as the unique features of post-colonial states is unfortunate for the reason that, by this approach the specificities of different concrete situations become clouded over in woolly generalities. This does not mean that the role of imperialism should be minimised. It simply means that the role played by its local allies in neo-colonial states should not be under-estimated or ignored.
 - (14) There were, of course, spasms of realisation among certain leaders that the Ugandan state was heading for disaster. The abortive 'Common Man's Charter' was originally prompted by a desire, on the one hand, to hold the mass of the people together into a single national mainstream, and, on the other, to bring the various local elites together into a single undifferentiated and homogenous petit bourgeois ruling class enjoying state patronage. But, such efforts were never seriously pursued, because the temptation of immediate enjoyment of power was too great to resist and too preoccupying to permit the division of energy to securing long term political aims.
 - (15) Britain has noted that even during the first five years of independence, the Ugandan armed forces had become the fastest growing on the continent, 'expanding at a rate of fifty per cent annually. Ninety per cent of the new recruits were northerners, including an estimated six thousand southern Sudanese.' (*The Liberation of Kampala*, op. cit., p. 52).
 - (16) See, for example, Aidan Southall, 'General Amin and the Coup', *Journal of Modern African Studies* 13 (March 1975): 1, S. 85 - 105; 'Social Disorganization in Uganda: Before, During and After Amin', *ibid.*, 18 (December 1980): pp. 627 - 656.
 - (17) The term 'class' is used (in the sense of a 'class for itself') in a rather promiscuous manner even by such a distinguished and otherwise careful and discriminating writer such as Mamdani.
 - (18) Mamdani has drawn attention to the 'galaxy of compulsions' consisting of 'forced contributions, forced crops and forced sales' which is the characteristic feature of agricultural production in Uganda. He distinguishes (in the pattern of 'double exploitative relations' prevailing in the sphere of 'peasant productive activity' (between the gradual and long run process of 'capital accumulation from below' leading to peasant differentiation at the point of production, and 'accumulation from above' which takes place either through the state or through individual capitalists with political connections who are capable of mobilising 'the machinery of extra-economic connection' In his view, 'It is the tragedy of the African peasantry that this second path to capital accumulation represents the dominant tendency in the countryside today' (*'Peasants and Democracy in Africa'*, op. cit., p. 43). He reaches the conclusion that the result of this double exploitation has been to encourage the development of 'the "external" bourgeoisie' at the expense of a potential 'village bourgeoisie'. As a pivot for the analysis of the political economy of Uganda under the Obote (Mark I) government, this framework has the distinct advantage of showing in a conclusive manner that the same state 'which in an earlier period had been used to put an artificial break on the process of class formation was now used to accelerate it artificially.' (*ibid.*, p. 45; emphasis supplied). The Amin regime, which took the first major initiative to dispossess the 'immigrant bourgeoisie' (industrial and real estate), distributed the spoils to a 'whole gang of influentials and

military bureaucrats who ... became known at the mafutamingi.; (ibidem)

My point then is quite simple: The African 'bourgeoisie' that developed after independence, and especially since the 1972 expulsion, is a creature of state power, shaped by political expropriations and sustained by the extra-economic coercion of the peasantry (ibid., p. 46).

So far so good. But when he then proceeds to analyse the significance of the 1975 Land Reform Decree of the Amin government (and the administrative re-organization that had preceded it) and the trends that it unleashed (during the Amin regime, which persisted throughout the confused and anarchic interregnum between its overthrow and the victory of NRA earlier this year) of 'forced labour' and 'forced production' in the rural areas and a precipitous decline in the share of the world market (itself falling in the case of such commodities as coffee which are important for Uganda's economy) accruing to the peasant grower, he has completely overlooked the rather effective though scarcely articulated strategy of silent passive economic resistance that a significant segment of the peasantry launched against the Amin government (rightly from 1974 onwards) of growing less and less for commercial purposes and concentrating more on subsistence agriculture in a manner reminiscent of the process of 'involvement' described by Geertz in the Indonesian context of an earlier period.

- (19) From time to time, the state apparatus simply got rid of bureaucrats, intellectuals, judges, and ministers who were suspected of being honest or of being capable of withholding cooperation from the tyranny under which they were forced to serve. The Vice-Chancellor of Makerere University (Kalimuzo), the Chief Justice of Uganda who had been for a brief period Chief Minister of Uganda just before independence (Benedicto Kiwanuka), several senior surgeons and doctors at the mulago hospital, and former ministers of the government are but examples of the many that were meted out the 'sudden disappearance' treatment by Amin's squads.
- (20) These included the small but politically committed left wing (marxist-Leninist) element which was excluded from the Moshi Conference, largely on account of the machinations of opportunist leftists (led by Dan Nabudere) who imagined themselves to be the only truly anti-imperialist Marxists of Uganda. The marxist-Leninist group had kept alive, against heavy odds, a steady propaganda offensive against the Amin regime by producing periodic analyses of what was happening in Uganda during the '70s. See T. V. Sathyamurthy, 'Obituary: Jitendra Mohan', *The Economic and Political Weekly* 20 (13 April 1985): 15, pp. 633 - 634.
- (21) Musaveni's role in organising armed resistance to Amin's government dates back to January 1971, days after the coup. Along with Eriya Kategaya, he founded a resistance organization based on tactics similar to those which were proving successful at the time in Mozambique under Frelimo's leadership. The Front for National Salvation (FRONASA), founded along such lines, was reviled and sneered at by such 'leftists' as Nabudere, his follower Tandon, and Rugumayo; it followed a lonely path for nearly five years, until the eve of the Moshi Conference. When the Tanzania troops decided to push back Amin's troops from the Kagera salient into Uganda, they took with them two Ugandan forces - FRONASA which went west covering Ankole, Toro, western Buganda, and Arua in the West Nile district; and armed Ugandans under the name of Kikosi Maalum, pro-Obote in political orientation, and led by Oyite-Ojok (who became the

Commander-in-Chief of the army after Amin's overthrow) and Tito Okello (who, along with General Basilio Okello - no relation it must be added - was instrumental in persuading Obote to flee from Uganda in July 1985). The Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA) was supposed to have resulted from an amalgamation of FRONASA and Kikosi Maalum. In the event, however, a national army never materialised under the post-Amin regimes. NRA, in its present form, was born (February 1981) after FRONASA was edged out of the political centre of Uganda during the confused shifts of power taking place in Kampala during the period immediately preceding the 1980 election. A clear account of the main aspects of Ugandan politics during these years is contained in Victorian Brittain, 'the Liberation of Kampala', op. cit., especially pp. 53 - 57.

- (22) In 1979, a government headed by Lule was installed after the fall of Amin. It lasted only for two months. Binaisa was elected President in the place of Lule who was ousted. Like Lule (who was too 'feudal' for UNLF's liking, Binaisa (who was too corrupt and manipulative even for the more venal among his colleagues) proved to be a disastrous choice of head of State. When Binaisa was overthrown (rather, placed under indefinite house arrest in the Presidential Palace at Entebbe), a Military Commission (led by Paulo Muwanga, a Muganda supporter of Obote and a senior politician, and the armed forces) took power. This regime paved the way for Obote's 'second coming' which was to prove a long drawn out and painful visitation for the mass of the Ugandan people.
- (23) See Victoria Brittain, 'The Liberation of Kampala', op. cit., pp. 55 - 57.
- (24) 'The election in fact, was a complete sham. The UPC used the state media, the civil service, the Ugandan army, the police, and even Tanzanian soldiers to gain total control over the electoral proceedings. Constituency boundaries were goerrymandered ...', ibid., p. 55.
- (25) Ibid., pp. 57 - 58.
- (26) This class did rear its head during Obote's first government but rapidly lost its hold on the state apparatus after the government's onslaught against the Kabaka and the Baganda people in 1966.
- (27) Characterised by predictable economic production, and re-assertion of normal rights by which the producing members of society will be enabled to take part in the market economy without fear of encroachment by magendo forces.
- (28) Victoria Brittain does not make a sharp enough distinction between the composition of the National Resistance Council (NRC), the National Resistance Movement (NRM, and the National Resistance Army (NRA). NRC's core is of course composed of 'close-knit veterans of five years in the bush' and is therefore 'a more united group', but it also consists of more variegated elements drawn from circles which were not closely involved in the liberation war. The 'ideological disunity and organizational weakness' of NRM to which Brittain rightly refers, it can be legitimately assumed, may have found its way into NRC during the last few months. (op. cit., p. 60). See also T. V. Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development ...* op. cit., Chapter 11, passim.
- (29) The present cabinet includes among others, for example, Andrew Kayiira, Energy minister, who was a member of MC and had been a bitter opponent of Musaveni. He, however, changed sides just before the liberation forces took Kampala, taking with him a fairly sizeable fighting group which was engaged in defending one of Kampala's seven hills against NRA. Neither of the two senior ministers drawn from DP

had had anything to do with NRA before 1986, whilst one of them (Paulo Ssemogerere) had swallowed his principles and compromised himself in his opposition role in the 1980 parliament by agreeing to serve MC as a Minister in the interregnum that followed the July 1985 coup.

- (30) As Brittain has noted, the extraordinary youth of NRA signifies the fact that 'it was built on a deep movement of social revolt and organized to a degree unique in post-independence African history' (op. cit., p. 60). See also T. V. Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development ...*, Chapter 11, *passim*.
- (31) Viewing the same problem from a perspective of the role played by imperialism in fomenting class struggles in Third World countries, Brittain has written that 'The shape and ferocity of the coming class struggles in Uganda have been foreshadowed to some extent in the audacity of the recent attempts mounted by imperialism to stop him (Musaveni) getting thus far.' (op. cit., p. 61). There can be little doubt that potential agents of de-stabilisation of the present regime representing interests (class or otherwise) of the present regime representing interests (class or otherwise) inimical to the objectives of NRA's national liberation struggle, are lurking in the corridors of power in Kampala and Entebbe today.
- (32) It is worth repeating that Marxist writers on Uganda have tended to over-schematise the class structure of the society in a rather mechanical fashion, without recognising the fact that the economically powerful classes have thus far seldom engaged in 'class' action in order to realise 'class' interests. As a consequence, there has been a pronounced tendency in Marxist writing on Uganda towards a re-ification of classes. We are here not denying the importance of class formation, class power and class action nor of state power in the post-colonial era, but are inclined to base our observations on actual or concrete instances of class relations as manifested in Uganda rather than on mental constructions of them. By the same token, we are equally critical of those Marxist writers who seek to explain Uganda's under-development and the anomic violence of the period 1971 - 86 purely in terms of imperialism. They do so without taking into detailed consideration the relationship between the impact of imperialism and the role played by its 'class' allies within Uganda. These local class allies of imperialism consist of comprador, 'feudal', and other elements actually opposed to the emergence of a producing modern 'national' petit bourgeois class.
- (33) Musaveni stressed, on the eve of taking power, the overwhelming need for reconciliation. All political parties are represented in the NRC government. The government list, as Brittain has correctly stressed, 'was clearly based more on political and ethnic concessions and compromises than on a coherent political direction.' (op. cit., p. 60). See also T. V. Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development ...*, op. cit., Chapter 11, *passim*.
- (34) A number of straws in the wind would indicate that the government is following a policy calculated to assuage rather than confront those in Uganda who would prefer a temporising approach towards the internal and external forces ranged against policies implied in the various documents issued by NRM since 1981, rather than confronting them. This would explain Musaveni's request to both Britain to continue their military training programmes. It would also underline the determination of the regime to avoid 'outright confrontation with imperialism. Managua-style' (Brittain, op. cit., p. 60), and not to lose sight of the fact land-locked Uganda is 'dependent on transport access through a

key US ally where British advisers are a constant presence.' (ibidem.) At the same time, the new government (not unlike others in the region (e.g. Zimbabwe) which followed a similar path to power) is showing a certain degree of reluctance to encourage popular political forces based in the mass of the population demanding wider political participation and decision-making.

- (35) See T. V. Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development ...*, Chapter 11, *passim*.
- (36) Ibid.
- (37) Ibid.

T. V. Sathyamurthy