

UGANDA PEOPLE'S CONGRESS AND NATIONAL RESISTANCE MOVEMENT

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The National Resistance Movement (NRM) is a movement to resist UPC or what UPC stands for, i.e. national-democratic liberation. The earliest incidence of this resistance is given to us by none other than the founder of the NRM, Yoweri Museveni. He recounts:

We were staunchly anti-Obote. On 22 February 1966, the day he arrested five members of his cabinet, three of us, Martin Mwesigwa, Eriya Kategaya and myself went to see James Kahigiriza, who was the Chief Minister of Ankole, to inquire about the possibility of going into exile to launch an armed struggle. Kahigiriza discouraged us, saying that we should give Obote enough time to fall by his own mistakes. We saw him again a few weeks later and he gave us the example of Nkrumah, who had been overthrown in Ghana by a military coup two days after Obote's abrogation of the Uganda constitution. Kahigiriza advised us that Nkrumah's example showed that all dictators were bound to fall in due course. Inwardly we were not convinced. We knew that dictators had to be actively opposed and that they would not just fall off by themselves like ripe mangoes. Later I went to Gayaza High School with Mwesigwa to contact Grace Ibingira's sister in order to find out whether she knew of any plans afoot to resist Obote's dictatorship. She, however, did not know of any such plan. We came to the conclusion that the old guard had no conception of defending people's rights and we resolved to strike on our own. (Museveni, Y. 1997:19)

Museveni does not give us the reason why they were staunchly anti-Obote. However, given the background of the three, it is not difficult to figure out. Museveni himself tells us the background of the three:

I had been with Martin Mwesigwa since primary days in 1953. He was quite outstanding in school work and was head prefect at Ntare School. He came from a cattle keeping background like myself, but his father had been a sub-county chief in Ankole, which put him in a slightly different social group from ours. People who became chiefs tended more towards Christianity than ordinary ants. He was very gentle and mild-mannered, with a quiet sense of humour, but also very determined and courageous, which is how he had managed to join us. When we had political debates within our group, he put forward a lot of ideas but he was not as effervescent as I was.

I had not known Mwesigwa Black for as long as I had known Martin. We had met at Mbarara High School. Mwesigwa was nicknamed 'Black' because he was very dark-skinned, but his real first name was William. Like Martin, he was quiet and mild-mannered. He was also from a cattle-keeping background and his parents were born-again Christians.

By contrast, Valeriano Rwaheru was from a farming background, short and stocky, and he was Roman Catholic. He too was quiet but noticeably courageous in the skirmishes to come. He was, therefore, a very valuable person to have around in difficult times. All three of these men were to lose their lives in the 1970s, in the struggle against Amin.

Eriya Kategaya, whom I have known since our first year in primary school, is the only one of the four who is still alive today. His origins are in a mixed background of cattle-keepers and cultivators. He is quiet and reserved, but enormously courageous, as he was to prove in his clandestine work in the years ahead. (Museveni, Y. 1997: 17)

From this quote it is clear that all the people mentioned were Bahima (or Bahima-related as in the case of Kategaya) a characteristic which Museveni seeks to obscure by calling it the cattle-keeping background. Museveni has cause to obscure the true character of their identity. As Bahima, they belonged to the dominant identity or better still dominant caste in Ankole.

In simple words, they were part of the oppressors. For millennia the Bahima had dominated the Bairu. When British colonialism came, it only rationalised the dominance of the Bahima and then used them as the administrators of Ankole. However, from around 1949 the Bairu began to resist this domination. They formed an organisation called Kumanyana which they used to demand equality with the Bahima. On the eve of independence, Kumanyana members became the leading figures in the Ankole branch of Uganda People's Congress. Because of this, much as virtually all Bahima were Protestant, the overwhelming majority of them joined the Democratic Party. The Bahima saw UPC as a threat to their privileges. It is in that vein that Museveni and his group hated both UPC and its leader, Milton Obote. They had good cause to dislike Obote and his UPC for eventually Obote got rid of the privileged position of the Bahima. (Doornobos, M.R. 1970: 1096-1109)

As the event Museveni is recounting occurred when he was in his late teens, one would have been tempted to dismiss it as the antics of a naive teenager; however, he is recounting it here not only when an adult but with a lot of pride. Beyond that he has also condemned some basic tenants of the national-democratic revolution of 1966: "In 1966 Obote used the army to overthrow the constitution, and depose Mutesa who was immensely popular in Uganda but was actually deified" (Museveni, Y. 1985, 86: 78)

Let us pause for a moment and analyse this statement. While Mutesa was popular and deified in Buganda, it is not true that he was popular throughout Uganda nor was he deified outside Buganda. That said, the abolition of the monarchies cannot be viewed in terms of popularity or being deified. In any case as monarchies, they had to be deified. The issue here can only be grasped in terms of the dynamics propelling society at the time. Here again, much as Museveni claims to be guided by science, he does not at all grasp the scientific principles which could have explained to him the abolition of the monarchies.

To understand the underlying causes of the abolition of the monarchy, we need to have a theory of modes of production. A mode of production (meaning 'the way of producing') is a specific combination of productive forces and relations of production. By productive forces we mean labour power and the means of production (e.g. tools, equipment, buildings and technologies, materials and improved land). Relations of production on the other hand includes the property, power and control relations governing society's productive assets, often codified in law, cooperative work relations and forms of association, relations between people and the objects of their work, and the relations between social classes. The next tool of analysis we need is base and superstructure. The base of society consists of employer-employee work conditions, the technical division of labour, and property relations into which people enter to produce the necessities and amenities of life. The totality of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society, the real foundation on which arises a legal and political superstructure and to which correspond definite forms of consciousness. These relations *fundamentally* determine society's other relationships and ideas (ideology) also called the superstructure.

To apply this theory in explaining the abolition of the monarchies, we need to go to the initial period of the colonisation of Uganda. We must recognise that colonialism was the imposition of the capitalist mode of production in the area that we now know as Uganda. When capitalism is first introduced to a place like Uganda before colonisation, it finds itself without the wherewithal to run a capitalist system. In that situation it resorts to subsuming "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 intensive, 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 Han, D.R. 1992: 88) The capitalist mode of production does this through a process called articulation of modes of production. The mechanics of articulation involved the fashioning of the points where one mode of production joins with or is joined to another or what Poulantzas calls "nodal points". (Hahn, D.H. 1992: 33)

In Buganda the British forged a nodal point out of the Protestant forces which had fought the religious wars that ravaged the kingdom in the last quarter of the 19th century. In 1892 Captain Lugard, the representative of Imperial British East African Company lent support to the Protestant forces and together they defeated the Catholic forces. By assisting the Protestants win the battle he rendered them beholden to and dependent on him. Thereafter, to fashion them into a proper articulating force, he proceeded to install them in power. However, being in power was not enough; they still had to acquire legitimacy which meant appropriating to themselves the whole Ganda ideological gamut. To do this, Lugard got the independent and recalcitrant Kabaka Mwanga deposed and sent to exile and in his place, his infant son made Kabaka. This was an extremely suave and significant move. To the Baganda the Kabaka was not only the source of legitimacy but ideology flowed from him. As the Kabaka had to be of royal blood, the way to control the institution of Kabaka was to have an infant Kabaka to whom Apolo Kagwa, Lugard's protégée, would be the principal regent. That done, the articulation of the Ganda social formation had become an irreversible process.

However, the social formation created was pregnant with contradictions. The incoming capitalist mode of production sought to replace the pre-capitalist mode of production. Charles Bettelheim captured this contradiction very well when he said that the pre-capitalist modes of production are "undermined and perpetuated at the same time" in a process he called "conservation-dissolution". (Alavi, H. 1982: 175ff 6) However, as the dissolution or undermining process gets under way, the pre-capitalist modes of production do not take things lying down; they resist and thus giving rise to contradictions. The aspect of "conservation-dissolution" process which most concerns us here is in the realm of the superstructure. When capitalism was imposed, it not only came with its corresponding superstructure, but found the existing pre-capitalist modes of production with their corresponding superstructure. The major struggle between the two corresponding superstructures existed in Buganda.

One possible explanation for this could be the fact that the Buganda structure was the most refined and developed. A number of struggles between the two superstructures occurred. There were, for instance, the struggles which ended up with the deportation of Kabaka Mutesa in 1953. However, all these struggles remained relatively minor compared to the 1966 struggles. It was these struggles which ended up with the abolition of the monarchies in Uganda. Monarchies, as we know,

are an aspect of the superstructure of pre-capitalist societies. As we have already indicated, Museveni never liked these revolutionary occurrences. To really rub in his resentment for the national-democratic revolution of 1966, Museveni even went further and created kings where there had never been kings.

In 1967 Museveni joined the University of Dar es Salaam. About his choice of university, Museveni has this to say: "We deliberately chose not to go to Makerere. Because of our group's involvement in politics, we all put Dar es Salaam as first choice. In this we were influenced by Julius Nyerere's distinctly more positive and progressive leadership." (Museveni, Y. 1997: 19)

"I will most of the time talk of my personal experiences and use them to illuminate the general struggle in which we, at the college, were engaged in. Let me start by saying that before I came to Tanzania, I expected a lot, probably, of the Tanzanian Revolution. At a distance, one gets an exaggerated image of Tanzania's anti-imperialists' stance. You get the image of clear headedness regarding Socialism, anti-imperialism, Pan-Africanism etc. You got the impression that most of the government leaders, ministers, top civil servant etc., are devoted cadres with a level of political consciousness. You get the impression that this and that situation would never arise in Tanzania where so much is supposed to be happening." (First published in Che Che; The Monitor Sunday, November 4 2012)

There is no doubt the University of Dar es Salaam was teeming with left-wing academics and literature. Such a situation should have shaped Museveni into some revolutionary; however, all Museveni got from Dar es Salaam was a left-wing camouflage and war methodology. It is this left-wing camouflage that a number of left-wing elements often acquire and run around the world with, persuading people that Museveni was a great revolutionary.

The fiery Zanzibari revolutionary, the late Abdul Rahman Babu, for instance, described Museveni's ascent to power in the following glowing words: "the Ugandan Revolution is ... politically and morally the most significant event that has happened to Africa since Ghana's victory; and there is no doubt that in the next few years it will establish itself as having had a much more profound impact on Africa's history than even Ghana's. Ghana was the first phase, and Uganda the second in the long march to genuine freed Africa." (Ondoga ori Amaza: 1998:1)

Victoria Brittain, a former Associate Foreign Editor of *The Guardian*, writing in the prestigious left-wing journal, the *New Left Review* says: "The liberation of Uganda by what its protagonists called 'a protracted people's war' took exactly five years. Such a change of government under armed popular pressure rather than by a coup d'etat has never before been achieved in Africa. Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) was trained in the bush war to a level of discipline and organization which completely outclassed the corrupt government army still nominally reliant on a British Ministry of Defence training team twenty years after independence. Repercussions on other repressive neocolonial regimes in the region—notably Kenya—are inevitable in the medium if not the short term." (Brittain, V: March-April 1986)

Professor Carol Sicherman of Lehman College, City University of New York had this to say: "In 1967, while the fledgling college was searching for its identity, a gifted Uganda, Yoweri Museveni

(later of course, his country's President) chose Dar es Salaam for his university education over his own country's famed Makerere College. As he himself explained, he had been seduced by the exaggerated image of Tanzania's anti-imperialist stance that prevailed abroad, and he had expected the college to embody African self-assertion and socialist principles. On his arrival in July 1967, however, he found not only reactionary authorities in the college but worse yet students who were hostile to socialism and even African liberation..." (Sicherman, C. 1997: 108)

Let us take a look at some of the revolutionary writings that Museveni read while at the University of Dar es Salaam. We have evidence that while at the university, Museveni, for instance, read Lenin's essay, "The Collapse of the Second International." We mention this because it is in that essay that Lenin defines a situation which is ripe for revolution. This is what Lenin taught:

To the Marxist it is indisputable that a revolution is impossible without a revolutionary situation; furthermore, it is not every revolutionary situation that leads to revolution. What, generally speaking, are the symptoms of a revolutionary situation? We shall certainly not be mistaken if we indicate the following three major symptoms:

(1) when it is impossible for the ruling classes to maintain their rule without any change; when there is a crisis, in one form or another, among the "upper classes", a crisis in the policy of the ruling class, leading to a fissure through which the discontent and indignation of the oppressed classes bursts forth. For a revolution to take place, it is usually insufficient for "the lower classes not to want" to live in the old way; it is also necessary that "the upper classes should be unable" to live in the old way;

(2) when the suffering and want of the oppressed classes have grown more acute than usual;

(3) when as a consequence of the above causes, there is a considerable increase in the activity of the masses, who uncomplainingly allow themselves to be robbed in "peace time", but, in turbulent times, are drawn both by the circumstances of the crisis and by the upper classes themselves into independent political action.

Without these objective changes, which are independent of the will, not only of individual groups and parties but even of individual classes, a revolution, as a general rule, is impossible. The totality of all these objective changes is called a revolutionary situation.

Such a situation existed in 1905 in Russia, and in all revolutionary periods in the West; it also existed in Germany in the sixties of the last century, and in Russia in 1859-61 and 1879-80, although no revolution occurred in these instances. Why was that? It was because it is not every revolutionary situation that gives rise to a revolution; revolution arises only out of a situation in which the above-mentioned objective changes are accompanied by a subjective change, namely, the ability of the revolutionary *class* to take revolutionary mass action *strong* enough to break (or dislocate) the old government, which never, not even in a period of crisis, "falls", if it is not toppled over. (Lenin, V.I chapter 2; also see Woddis, J. 189)

Had Museveni grasped what Lenin is talking about, he would have realised that the situation obtaining in Uganda at the time he launched his so-called liberation war was not ripe for the Cuban type of revolution that they sought to bring about in Uganda. In such a situation, what needed to be done is preparatory work that the renowned revolutionary Engels once recommended: "The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of backing (preceding) the proletariat by some second edition of the Peasant War." (Marx & Engels, 1856) It is this type of revolutionary work that

the founding fathers of modern revolutions from time to time recommended as necessary to prepare ground for further struggles. (Engels, F. 1853; also quoted in Draper, 1978)

In the Communist Manifesto, for instance, Marx and Engels first noted that the bourgeois revolution in Germany would proceed under conditions of more developed capitalism and with a much better prepared proletariat than the British bourgeois revolution of the 17th century and the French revolution of the 18th century; and then went on to draw the conclusion that “a bourgeois revolution in Germany would be but a prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution”. (Marx, K & Engels, F. 1848 also 1969 Chapter four) Writing to Weydemeyer, Engels talked of: "The preliminaries of the proletarian revolution, the measures that prepare the battleground and clear the way for us, such as a single indivisible republic etc," (Engels, F, April 12 1853)

Later in 1856, Marx voiced the view that it was necessary to work out a combination of the proletarian revolution with a peasant democratic movement: “The whole thing in Germany will depend on the possibility of backing (preceding) the proletarian by some second edition of the Peasant War.’ (Marx to Engels 1856) In these analyses of the founding fathers of Marxism, Lenin did discern the germ of new revolutionary tactics appropriate to the new situation engendered by the debut of imperialism.

In the era of imperialism, Lenin analysed, it was no longer possible as Marx and Engels had said that capitalism would ruin the middle strata to the point where the proletariat would constitute the majority of the population and thereby create the conditions ripe for revolution. This process, Marx and Engels had said, would go on under the superintendence of the bourgeoisie, then a progressive class seeking to bring about the eradication of feudalism and other pre-capitalist modes of production and social formations. This historic mission, Lenin was to argue, could no longer be performed by the bourgeoisie. The bourgeoisie was now locked-up in fierce struggles with the proletariat and is increasingly finding it in its interest to lean on survivals of the pre-capitalist order. It therefore becomes the historic mission of the proletariat to clear-off the pre-capitalist encumbrances to the revolution. For the Russian revolution, this was done through the bourgeois-democratic revolution of 1905.

For a peripheral capitalist country like Uganda, this will have to be done through a national-democratic revolution. National-democratic liberation, as we have already indicated, is what UPC has been prosecuting since its inception.

For Museveni, this logic was of no value. It was diverting him away from waging war on UPC and national-democratic liberation. To get some sort of theoretic authority to back his political line, he revised Lenin's thesis:

To make revolution, you need two sets of conditions: subjective and objective. The objective conditions obtain in almost the whole of Africa. It is an objective fact that the Africans live in the most appalling conditions, that in certain places like Southern Africa, the exploiters assume a fascist stance. These factors are there and they are undeniable; hence the correctness of Chou En-lai's statement that 'Africa is ripe for a revolution' which alarmed many quislings. But the subjective conditions are usually lacking.

It is the work of the most conscious activists to arouse the masses, raise their political consciousness and give them a vision of a better future and the knowledge and will to oppose the existing exploitation by all possible means. It is incumbent on the activists to make the oppressed people realise the latent capacity in them to smash the centuries-old exploitation and become masters and beneficiaries of their labour. It is only through raising the consciousness of the masses that the subjective conditions for a revolution will be created. This needs patient work by the most conscientious cadres. The process of creating the subjective conditions is as hard as the organising of revolution itself. However, it can be accelerated by various devices. The most important thing is to win the confidence of the masses. It is necessary for all the local cadres-or 'trainers'. as they are sometimes called, indeed for all activists that seek to enlist the support of the masses, to lead a pure, exemplary and, most preferably, ascetic life. The person who uses the opportunities that present themselves to seduce peasants' wives or daughters, will never win the confidence of the masses. Through personal example, political propaganda-in the simplest language about the simple and, to begin With, parochial problems-and through demonstrating the power of the people vis-a-vis the enemy, the cadres are able to create the subjective conditions, a fully and politically conscious people, that are indispensable for the revolution.

In a colonial situation, where the master has created the illusion of invincibility by habitually using intimidatory colonial violence on the people, it is necessary to demonstrate to the masses that the enemy can be destroyed by revolutionary violence. It must be seen that the 'invincibility' of the enemy is just fraudulent; he is invincible because he has never been challenged by a revolutionary force using the correct methods of revolutionary violence.

Hence in Mozambique, it has been found necessary to show peasants fragments of a Portuguese soldier blown up by a mine or, better still, his head. Once the peasant sees guerrillas holding the head of the former master, the white man's head cold in death, the white skin, flowing hair, pointed nose and blue eyes notwithstanding, he knows, or at least begins to suspect, that the picture traditionally presented to him of the white man's invincibility is nothing but a scarecrow. Once the 'native' peasant in Mozambique and, I am sure, elsewhere has discovered that the oppressor can be destroyed, he moves with great speed engineered by the hatred for the enemy long in him. However, once the peasants' passions are aroused, they usually swing to the other extreme; that all white men are devils, and all white prisoners must be killed. Any association with Whites on the part of the African militants is a sign of treason. This position is not entirely wrong, but needs to be corrected in the interests of waging a scientific struggle." (Museveni, Y: 1975: 8-9)

If a study of Lenin's thesis on conditions ripe for revolution could not help Museveni find his revolutionary way, then his studies of the Cuban revolution should have. After all they claimed to have "modeled" their so-called revolution on the Cuban revolution. No less an authority than Fidel Castro has gone on record, arguing that the Cuban revolution took 100 years to incubate:

"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." (Fidel Castro, speech at the commemoration meeting held at La Demajagua, October 10, 1968.)" (Woddis, J. 1072:188)

The struggles Castro is talking about began one morning when Carles Manuel Cespedes del Castilo, 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. The war which ensued was called the Ten-Years War and lasted from 1868 to 1878.

The Ten-Years War was followed by the Little War from 1879 to 1880. By September 1880, the rebels had been completely defeated. As a sort of political solution, the Spanish government instituted some reforms such as the application of the Spanish Constitution in Cuba. The reforms which the Spanish government put in place proved ineffective and this led to another war. This war began on 24th February 1895 with uprisings all over the island. Although handicapped by lack of arms, this time the rebels fought much better than in the Ten-Years War. Whereas in the Ten-Years War they had been restricted to the eastern part of the island, this time around they managed to reach the west coast in just three months. This feat caused the Spanish authorities to change their command, bringing in General Valerios Weyler Nicolau. That did not change much and by May 1897, the Spanish leader was ready to admit defeat.

Meanwhile, the struggles in Cuba had captured the American attention and there began agitation for intervention with sensational stories of Spanish atrocities against the native Cuban population, intentionally sensationalized and exaggerated. This agitation continued unabated even when Spain removed General Nicolau and changed policies.

In January 1898, a riot by Cuban Spanish loyalists against the new autonomous government broke out in Havana, leading to the destruction of the printing presses of four local newspapers for publishing articles critical of Spanish Army atrocities. The US Consul-General cabled Washington with fears for the lives of Americans living in Havana. In response, the battleship *USS MAINE* was sent to Havana in the last week of January.

On 15th February 1898, *USS MAINE* was rocked by an explosion, killing 268 of the crew and sinking the ship in the harbour. The cause of the explosion has not been clearly established to this day. However, the blast was used to fan expansionist sentiments in the US with newspapers blaming Spanish officials for the destruction of the ship. In the end war broke out between Spain and the US.

After losing the Philippines and Puerto Rico, which had also been invaded by the US, and with no hope of holding on to Cuba, Spain surrendered and called for peace on 17th July 1898. On 12th August, the US and Spain signed a protocol of Peace, in which Spain agreed to relinquish all claim of sovereignty and title over Cuba. Following that, on 10th December 1898, the US and Spain signed the Treaty of Paris, recognizing Cuban independence.

Although the Cubans had participated in the liberation efforts, the US prevented Cuba from participating in the Paris peace talks and the signing of the treaty. Moreover, the treaty set no time limit for US occupation and the Isle of Pines was excluded from Cuban control. Although the treaty officially granted Cuba's independence, US General William R. Shafter refused to allow the Cuban leader, General Calixto García and his rebel forces to participate in the surrender ceremonies in Santiago de Cuba. Thereafter, although independent, Cuba had effectively become a neo-colony of the US.

By 1958 the US owned one third of all cane land, and had 956 million dollars invested in mining and oil (which it shared with great Britain); trade, manufacturing, public utilities which were entirely US owned. Its domination of the sugar industry and the

economy as a whole distorted the economic life of the island which had to import rice, tomatoes, onions, chickens, eggs--and to pay valuable dollars for these items which the island should have been perfectly capable of producing.

For the people this meant poverty and oppression. Out of a population of some 6.5 million, one million never wore shoes. Half a million rural workers never tasted milk or meat; their diet was mainly rice and black beans. Out of a working force of 2.4 million, no less than 700,000 were unemployed during sugar slack season--and 200,000 were out of work throughout the year. An investigation made in 1957 by the Catholic University Association revealed widespread poverty, hunger and disease among peasants and farm workers. (Woddis, J. 188-189)

This situation was not accepted by the Cuban people. For 60 years before the overthrow of Batista in 1959 there were persistent and continuous battles against the various US-supported dictators. These battles were led by a number of political organisations and parties. One of these was Jose Marti's political party, the Cuban Revolutionary Party, formed in 1892. Among its leaders was Carlos Bolino, a Marxist who in 1925 became one of the founders of the Cuban Communist party.

As early as 1904, a Workers party was formed. This is the party which was re-named the Socialist Workers Party in 1905. Then in 1925 the Communist party was launched under the leadership of Carlos Bolino and the legendary Julio Antonio who was later murdered in 1939 by the secret police of the dictator, Machado. It is these long and arduous struggles which prepared the ground for the revolution in Cuba. By the time Fidel Castro and his comrades attacked the Moncada, the situation was ripe for revolution. All that was missing was the bold move made by Castro and his comrades and which acted as the spark which started the fire.

When Museveni launched his so-called armed struggle for revolution, the situation which was obtaining in Buganda, the area which he made his war theatre, was the exact opposite of what obtained in Cuba in the 1950s when Fidel Castro and his comrades launched their struggle.

Buganda's political situation was informed by two factors. The first is that the Baganda were angry at the consequences of the national-democratic revolution of 1966. They wanted to reverse that situation to that which was obtaining prior to 1966. Secondly, the kingdom of Buganda, where Luwero (the theatre of the war) is found, was at the historical moment which Professor Hobsbawn, the famous student of social banditry, has described as being pregnant with social banditry. According to Hobsbawn:

... social banditry is unusually prevalent at two moments in historical evolution: that at which primitive and communally organized society gives way to class-and-state society, and that at which the traditional rural peasant society gives way to the modern economy. At such times, the desire to defend the old and stable society against subversion of its values, the urge to restore its old, threatened, disintegrating norms becomes unusually strong. (Hobsbawn, E. 1969: 13)

It is at such moments in history, Hobsbawn contends, that social banditry emerges. Such was the case in Luwero in the early 1980's when Museveni launched his so-called guerrilla war. In the short-run, the situation was very favorable to Museveni. While the government - and a UPC government at that - considered Museveni's operatives criminals, the overwhelming majority of the peasantry in Buganda viewed them as heroes. For, as Hobsbawn has pointed out, in the perception

of the peasantry: "*the social bandit is a hero, a champion, a man whose enemies are the same as the peasants', whose activities correct injustice, control oppression and exploitation, and perhaps even maintain alive the ideal of emancipation and independence.*" (Hobsbawn)

There is another reason why Museveni, had he been a revolutionary, should not have launched his so-called armed struggle. This period was immediately after elections. And Museveni even used the elections as an excuse for the war. This is clearly the kind of context about which Che Guevarra had warned: "Where a government has come into power through some form of popular vote, fraudulent or not, and maintains at least an appearance of constitutional legality, guerrilla outbreak cannot be promoted since the possibility of peaceful struggle have not yet been exhausted." (Woddis, J. 1972: 249-250)

In total disregard of this caution, Museveni launched his so-called war of liberation soon after the 1980 elections and even gave election malpractices as the reason for the war. Initially Museveni and his National Revolutionary Army were a serious nuisance to the government. However, when the government set up a Special Brigade led by Colonel Ogole, an officer specifically trained in counter-insurgency to fight the war, things dramatically changed.

By 1985 when the coup took place, the insurgency was over. On the eve of the coup, some 400 NRA rebels had surrendered to the Zairean authorities and they had been disarmed. The Zairean (now Congo) Foreign Minister had come to Uganda to report this to the government. Museveni himself had returned to exile in Sweden. However, the junta that took power had no capacity to contain Museveni who regrouped his shattered NRA and within six months had removed the junta and placed himself in power.

Museveni described his ascendancy to power as a fundamental change, meaning revolution. It should be noted that "fundamental change" is the term the Cubans used in the early part of their uprising to mean revolution. It is his brother, General Salim Saleh, who gave this hegemony an even a more colourful description. In *The Monitor* of Wednesday, 29th November 2006, he clearly stated:

"A small group of fighters, with 27 guns, without external assistance for much of the time and without a rear base in any neighbouring country, defeating a government that had a force of almost 60,000 soldiers in a record time of five years, is almost un-paralleled in the history of revolutionary warfare. The only similar case in the world is that of Fidel Castro in Cuba. After the initial setback of losing most of his fighters to the Batista Airforce, he gathered 12 survivors with whom he headed to the Sierra Maestra Mountains from where he, eventually, defeated the dictatorship."

The problem is that without a revolutionary situation in Uganda at the time, NRM ascendancy to power was no more than what Engels long ago described:

The worst things that can befall a leader of an extreme party is to be compelled to take over government in an epoch when the movement is not yet ripe for the domination of the class which he represents and for the realisation of the measures which that domination would imply. What he can do depends not upon his will but upon the sharpness of the clash of interests between the various classes, and upon the degree of development of material means of existence, the relations of production and means of communication upon which clash of interests of classes is based every time. What he ought to do, what his party demands of him, again depends not upon him, or upon the degree of development of class struggle and its conditions. He is bound to

his doctrines and demands hitherto propounded which do not emanate from interrelations of social classes at a given moment, or from the more or less accidental level of relations of production and means of communication, but from his more or less penetrating into the general result of social and political movement. Thus he necessarily finds himself in a dilemma. What he can do is in contrast to all his actions as hitherto practised, to all his principles and to the present interests of his party; what he ought to do cannot be achieved.

In a word, what he can [do] is in contrast to all his actions as hitherto practised, to all his principles and to the present interests of his party; what he ought to do cannot be achieved. In a word he is compelled to represent not his party or his class but the class for whom conditions are ripe for domination. In the interests of the movement itself, he is compelled to defend the interests of an alien class, and to feed his own class with phrases and promises, with the assertion that the interests of that alien class are their own interests. Whoever puts himself in this awkward position is irrevocably lost.

We have seen examples of this in recent times. We need only be reminded of the position taken in the last French provisional government by the representatives of the proletariat, though they represented only a very low level of proletarian development. Whoever can still look forward to official positions after having become familiar with the experiences of the February government — not to speak of our own noble German provisional governments and imperial regencies — is either foolish beyond measure, or at best pays only lip service to the extreme revolutionary party. (Engels, F. discussed in Chapter 6)

To relate this analysis Engels made to the situation in Uganda, we need to substitute social forces for social classes. This is because in the Uganda of today social classes are not yet the main actors in politics. The principal struggles taking place in Uganda today are not class struggles. They are struggles for national-democratic liberation. These struggles pit the forces proposing national-democratic liberation against those resisting it. Among the forces for national-democratic liberation is the democratic intelligentsia, the oppressed nationalities, etc. On the other hand, the forces ranged against national-democratic forces are the feudal forces, those representing the formerly dominant identities, and those representing imperialism.

The national-democratic forces made great gains in the struggles of the mid-60s. The war the NRM waged has simply served the reactionary forces. Upon coming to power, Museveni immediately moved against his most serious enemy, the Uganda Peoples' Congress. His aim was to completely obliterate UPC. To this effect, immediately upon coming to power, the NRM decreed, through Legal Notice Number 1/1986, a ban on political parties. This ban was rationalised through a series of assertions that amounted to irrational reasoning. The first one was that Uganda was not ready to operate political parties. Museveni has so argued:

“So the question of democracy is a vital matter indeed for Africa. There is a lot of debate on this issue at present, but I see one problem in it. It is that some of the thinkers confine this debate to multipartyism, which they think is equivalent to democracy. I myself disagree with this viewpoint. I have gone on record on this issue and I shall do so again. A society like ours here is still pre-industrial, which means that it is still primarily a tribal society, and that its stratification is, therefore, vertical. In an industrialized society, on the other hand, you have horizontal linkages and, therefore, horizontal stratification.

“If you take the United Kingdom, for instance, you will find that manufacturers in Scotland, in Wales, and in England all have similar interests. When they are discussing issues with government, they are debating how to protect their industries:

whether to join the Common Market, and what the advantages for British industry are in so doing. They are talking of cross-national industrial interests. The workers who work in the industries are always struggling with their employers over wages and this will apply to all workers, whether they are in Scotland, Wales, or England. Again you get a horizontal, cross-country linkage based on class interests, because an industrialized society is really a class society. That is why the political parties in industrialized societies are largely national. If you take the Labour Party in Britain, it is largely a party of workers. Again the workers in Scotland, in Wales, and in England will join the party on the basis of their class interests.

“You can see, therefore, that a multiparty system in an industrialized society is likely to be national, while the propensity of a similar arrangement in a preindustrial society is likely to be sectarian. In this debate on democracy, the lack of which is one of the major crises in Africa, we must bear this point in mind, otherwise we shall again vulgarize the debate and miss the boat like we did in the 1960s. The democratic movement in Africa will be hijacked again like the anticolonial movement was hijacked in the 1960s. (Museveni, Y.)

The point Museveni is making here is that Uganda has to wait until it gets industrialised like Britain before she can engage in multiparty politics. However, Uganda will never end up like Britain. Museveni's erroneous expectation that Uganda will somehow become like Britain stems from the course he was taught at school and is also still taught in Uganda schools.^[1] In the topic, Stages of Economic Growth, it is taught that there are several stages through which an economy goes. Those stages are listed as: traditional society; pre-conditions for take-off; drive to maturity; and, age of high mass consumption.

Following these teachings, Museveni and a number of NRM thinkers believe Uganda will someday reach the stage where Britain is today. While that kind of trajectory could apply to pre-capitalist Britain, it cannot apply to Uganda today. The reason is simple: Britain then was undeveloped, and Uganda today is classified an underdeveloped country. This difference arises from the onset of imperialism. With the spread of capitalism as imperialism to world level, "the pre-colonial self-centered development of peripheral societies was blocked, being transformed, in regionally differentiated scope and form depending on previous historical and natural conditions, into complimentary and subsidiary systems attached to the metropolitan system." (Ziemann, W & Lanzendorff, M. 1977: 155)

Moreover, social classes are not the only basis of politics. While Museveni thinks that struggles are only over questions of sharing wealth, we know that political struggles can also be over cultural and symbolic aspects of life. This kind of injustice stems from patterns of representation, interpretation and communication. This type of injustice assumes three forms. The first is cultural domination by which we mean being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture which is alien and hostile to one's own. The second aspect is disrespect or being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypical public representations and/or in everyday life interactions.

Before 1966 the Baganda had the habit of calling people of other identities badokolo or badugudugu. Badugudugu meant dark-skinned. There was also a disparaging sense in which they used the word Munyoro not to mean the identity but to mean socially inferior. They also disparaged the foods eaten by other identities. The third form of meting out cultural superiority is

misrecognition or non-recognition of other cultures. About this form of injustice, Charles Taylor has observed:

"Non-recognition or misrecognition ... can be a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, reduced mode of being. Beyond simple lack of respect, it can inflict grievous wound, saddling people with crippling self-hatred. Due recognition is not just a courtesy but a vital human need." (Taylor, C. 1992)

The remedy for these cultural and symbolic injustices and oppression is some sort of cultural and symbolic change. This can call for political organisations or for existing political parties to take up such causes. The US gives good examples of political parties taking up the issue of the oppression of black people as their agenda. The political parties could advocate for putting in place programs and policies which would cause a revaluation of the place of disrespected identities such as women. They could also call for actions that could revalue the cultural products of maligned identities. In the same manner political parties could bring about "wholesale transformation of societal patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication in ways which would change everybody's sense of self." (Fraser, N. 1995)

In Uganda, a critique sympathetic to the NRM has argued:

No previous Ugandan political organisation was less well-known, and only the Okellos, and perhaps Amin, had been socially less representative than the NRM was at the moment it took power. The NRM desperately needed a formula that would provide it with national acceptance: 'Movement' democracy provided part of the answer to this dilemma.

In large part this fact was the consequence of how the NRM came to power! Even seven months before it did, when Obote was still President, no one in the NRM could have imagined they would run the government so soon.

The history of the NRM demonstrates how slender its social base had been - the product of one man, Museveni, a young not yet influential leader though an ingenious organiser. Neither the Front for National Salvation (FRONASA), the military faction he had created in exile in Tanzania, which fought in the liberation war against Amin, nor the hastily formed party, the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM), he led in the 1980 elections had attracted 'a significant representative social base.'¹

The Popular Resistance Army (PRA), which Museveni organised to begin guerrilla warfare against the second UPC government, was minuscule and ethnically concentrated, consisting mostly of those of his trusted Banyankore friends from his schooldays who had also participated in FRONASA.² Since its theatre of operations was in Buganda, it mainly recruited Baganda. In its first year, the NRA was an army comprised of a large number of Baganda officers, but to this day the Banyankore who have been there since the beginning predominate among the top leadership (Kasfir, N. 2000:63).

There is a point which Professor Kasfir misses in the above passage. Social bases are not simply attracted - they are historically constituted. In the case of Uganda there were three social bases which by the time the NRA came into the scene had already been politically organised by UPC, DP and Kabaka Yekka, which later became the Conservative Party (CP). That being the case, there was no social basis for the NRA/NRM to organise. It is this congenital problem that beset the NRM from its beginning. To deal with this problem, upon getting to power, the NRM virtually banned political parties. This was done through Legal Notice Number 1/1986.

This act was intended to freeze political parties so that the NRM would have time to build itself. The trick couldn't work because while the NRM had no social base, the political parties had bases which kept them alive. Museveni also tried to delegitimize the political parties. He sought to revise Uganda's history so that the political instability the country has undergone could be blamed on the political parties. Simultaneously, he also sought to re-invent the wheel by bringing about his own brand of democracy which he called "movement democracy". According to him, this was to involve participatory democracy as well as be based on individual merit. In his view, in elections, people should be chosen on the basis of their individual merit rather than the political parties they support. As Professor Kasfir points out, the problem with participatory democracy is that

"..... while it has the great virtue of involving each person in self-government, becomes unwieldy in those states where the number of persons and the area in which they live is wide. The conventional solution is to make participation indirect, usually through representation where one person is chosen to represent many voters, particularly where the voters cannot easily assemble together to discuss the candidates. In Ugandan movement democracy, the problem of the large state is solved without parties is by creating at several tiers --at the cost of excluding most voters from most decisions. Thus there are significant differences if not contradictory." (Kasfir, N. 2000: 68)

As we shall show, the so-called movement democracy was no more than a grand scam.

By the end of the 1980s the NRM had constituted itself into what Giovanni Carbone has called "a hegemonic party system." (Carbonne, G. 2008: 105) Carbone argues that such systems belong to a "*variety of arrangements that are one-party centered and yet display a periphery of secondary and indeed 'second class' minor parties...*[The latter] may be an empty facade...[or else] may be relevant in some substantive respect ... The pattern can be described as follows: The hegemonic party neither allows for a formal nor de facto competition for power. Other parties are permitted to exist, but as second class, licensed parties; for they are not permitted to compete with the hegemonic party in antagonistic terms and on an equal basis..Not only does alternation not occur, in fact but it *cannot* occur, *since the possibility of a rotation in power is not even envisaged....* No real sanction commits the hegemonic party to responsiveness. *Whatever its policy, its domination cannot be challenged. ... A hegemonic party system is definitely not a multiparty system, but is, at best, a two-level system in which one party tolerates and discretionally allocates a fraction of its power to subordinate political groups.*" (Sartori, G. 1976: 230-231)

The very first open use of the so-called movement democracy to stave off the challenge from political parties was in the 1989 elections. From 1986 up to 1989 the NRM had operated under the cloak of what it called a broad based coalition. This type of coalition was not the usual involvement of political organisation; rather it was the incorporation of individual members poached from other political parties.

From the naive DP, the NRM scooped the President General of the party as well as other leading members. In their naivety, the DP leaders believed that since the NRM had no political base, they could go along with it and later defeat it at elections.

With the case of UPC, two factors militated against the involvement of people of stature. Not only was the NRM wary of UPCs standing, but such people were also not interested in being identified with the NRM. Under these circumstances, the only UPC leader they could entice was Anthony Butele, a former minister no doubt, but an inconsequential member of the party. While Butele might have been a great choice for window dressing, nobody expected him to bring sizeable support to NRM from UPC or even cause a split. Instead, Butele was a subject of ridicule among UPCs; he was, for instance, nicknamed the “Ten point Program” because it was said he didn't talk without mentioning that.

And so, with UPC keeping its distance and DP operating on an illusion, the NRM called for elections in 1989. The results of the 1989 elections were not very favourable to the NRM. Given that DP had a social base as well as its political apparatus on the ground, and NRM did not have these facilities, without UPC in the picture, DP easily commanded the results. The NRM had to save its face. It moved quickly to call for another election, making sure there were no risks of losing.

This insurance came from three sources. First, the NRM made sure there would be no elections for the President. Secondly, the NRM organised fresh elections through the Resistance Council (RC) system, from the village level, without the involvement of political parties. The sub-county resistance committees so-elected were then to assemble at county level and elect the Members of Parliament.

This exercise only produced 60% of the MPs. This number was then beefed up by a decree stipulating that the 38 “historicals”, who had fought with Museveni in the bush war and who had been appointed MPs, would retain their seats. The President could appoint 20 members, and the army was to be represented by 10 Members of Parliament. The political parties were also handicapped by the fact that elections were to take place three weeks after it had been announced. This made it almost impossible for the political parties to mobilize their members as well as support. As the voting method was lining up behind the candidate one supported, there was no need for an Electoral Commission, ballot papers or voting register. The argument for lining up was that it was cheaper than using ballot papers. However, the drawback was that it forced voters to reveal their choices. With all these safeguards, the NRM was still nervous. This led them to establish a special National Executive Committee (NEC) in the new parliament to determine policies as well as oversee government. The NRM made sure they had an automatic majority in the NEC. The powers given to NEC were also extended to the army policy making body. This meant that, in case the NRM did not perform well in the system they had so cleverly engineered to favour them, then the new parliament would still find it impossible to wrest political control from the inner circle of NRM.

The next time the scam of "movement democracy" was deployed as an instrument against political parties was during the elections for the Constituent Assembly in 1994 and later in the deliberations of the assembly. Long before stumbling into power, Museveni had set his sight at changing the Constitution. Somehow, he believed that the constitution was the problem and once you changed it, everything would be fine. This thought was contained in the famous Ten Point Program. It was later provided for in Legal Notice Number 1 of 1986, the decree that constituted the NRM government.

Initially Legal Notice Number 1 of 1986 provided that the NRC and the Army Council would constitute the Constituent Assembly to enact the Constitution. This provision came under serious criticism because these two bodies were not elected. In response the government got Legal Notice Number 1 to be amended so that the Constituent Assembly could be elected.

However, it was not until 1988 that the first steps towards changing the Constitution were made. The government then launched the Constitutional Review Commission.

The UPC expressed the view that this was not necessary. All that needed to be done was amend the 1967 Constitution. Against that advice, the Constitutional Commission went on with its so-called consultations as well as educating the people on the constitution from 1989 until December 1992 when the Commission reported to the government and provided a draft of the proposed Constitution. It was after this that the elections for the Constituent Assembly were done.

On the conduct of the elections, Dr Besigye, the then leader of FDC, tells us:

By the time the Constitutional Assembly elections in 1994, the NRM's all encompassing, and broad-based concept remained only in name. For instance, while the CA electoral law clearly stated that candidates would stand on 'individual merit', the NRM Secretariat set up special committees at district level whose task was to recommend 'NRM candidates' for support. Not only did the logistical and administrative machinery of NRM move against the candidates supporting or suspected to be favouring early return to multi-party politics, it even moved against liberal candidates advocating for the initial NRM broad-based concept..... (Kobusingye, O. 2010: 207)

It is against this background that Museveni was to claim victory: "We have won." Who are the we? Of course those who shared his viewpoint.

When it came to the actual discussion of the draft constitution, the gimmicks the NRM engaged in did not produce the kind of utopian constitution the NRM had dreamed of. The Constitution the NRM eventually came up with was described by two constitutional experts as follows:

It is too early to tell whether this 'bottom up' approach to the making of a constitution will fare better than the 'top down' method widely used throughout the ages: only time will tell. In the meantime, it is interesting to note that the people's constitution has an uncanny familiar resemblance to its predecessors! True, some constitutional fundamentals are universal and as such are to be found in all written and unwritten constitutions. However autochthonous the new people's constitution may be said to be, it could not ignore them even if the people were so inclined. However, a close examination of the available evidence suggests that far from being based on the people's views, the people's constitution is a product of the country's elites: it was designed, written and promulgated by them. It simply could not be otherwise.

The people were of course, consulted, they even sent their representatives or rather delegates to the Constituent Assembly, but by then the game was already up. Thus, for example, the only measure of substance which the Constituent Assembly was able to reject was the proposal for a council of state, which incidentally was not a people's idea but was, as it has been inelegantly stated, 'smuggled into the Draft Constitution' by some members of the Commission; the so-called 'eight wise men'. Moreover, the Commission's *modus operandi* already alluded to above vividly indicates that the claim that the new constitution was based on the people's view is not borne out by the evidence. The Commission, albeit inadvertently, admits that much in its interim progress report, and indeed goes on to provide ample evidence to support our views that the new

constitution was virtually handed down rather than the other way round as some would have us believe. (Furley, O & Katalikawe, J. 1997: 252-253)

We earlier described the DP as being naive. This is because they thought that since they had a social base (and NRM did not have one) as well a political apparatus covering the whole country, they could go along with NRM sure that when elections were held, the DP would easily win. In this illusion they were completely oblivious of what Obote used to refer to as Museveni's thirst for power.

Paul Ssemogerere, the President of DP eventually realised the folly of working in the NRM regime and resigned from his cabinet post. Following that, he was persuaded by Cecilia Ogwal, an equally naive acting leader of UPC, that he should run for the Presidency of Uganda as a candidate for a front of UPC and DP combined. Obote as leader of UPC initially opposed the idea; however, when Cecilia Ogwal and other UPC leaders insisted and he gave in, sensing that experience alone would eventually convince them.

That lesson did not take long to come. The elections held in May 1996 turned out to be what Obote had anticipated--a loaded dice in favour of the NRM. Upon realizing the futility of any election under the NRM, the Inter-Political Forces Cooperation (IPFC) met and decided to boycott the forthcoming parliamentary elections which were due to be held in June 1996.

However, in a very strange twist, the very afternoon after the morning meeting which decided to boycott the parliamentary elections, Cecilia Ogwal chaired a meeting of the Presidential Policy Commission (PPC) in Uganda House and not only questioned the wisdom of boycotting the polls, but went on to manipulate the meeting to endorse the party's participation in the parliamentary elections. The meeting ruled that whereas the party could boycott the elections, individuals could participate. What she did not realise is that if officials like her participated, then the party would have been represented in an official capacity.

Despite this, Cecilia Ogwal, the highest party official in the country, decided to participate in the elections. As this was in total contravention of the party position, two days before the election, Obote as her appointing authority, wrote her a letter suspending her. The letter was delivered by Dr James Rwanyarare, a former cabinet minister, who had been visiting with Obote in Lusaka and who then replaced Cecilia Ogwal as Chairman of the PPC.

The Ogwal group tried to resist this change in two ways. First, they made attempts to raise the matter in the PPC; and when Dr Rwanyarare, the new chairman of PPC refused to convene a meeting to discuss the issue, they convened a meeting of the National Task Force (NTF). The NTF condemned the actions of the President and went on to endorse the formation of what they called Interim Executive Council (IEC). Secondly, they made an attempt at physically taking control of Uganda House. When these attempts failed, they resorted to operating a faction of the party.

Museveni thought that if he labeled the NRM a system, it would make it not only different from political parties but would also make it superior to the parties. Unfortunately for him, reality could

not be altered by semantics. Mamadani was to observe: "Before that, one could say that the NRM was different from political parties, different in that it had no organisation, only headquartersWith the Constituent Assembly elections, we are witnessing the birth of NRM as a political party. With that change the movement vs. party question is no longer a question of principle." (Mamdani, M. 1995: 237; also quoted in Carbone, G. 2008: 94)

Notwithstanding this, the NRM was to conduct a referendum, as required by the 1995 Constitution, to decide whether to have the NRM system or the multi-party system.(Bratton, M. and Lambright, G. 2001: 429-452) This was really bizarre. The choice in this exercise amounted to whether to have a single political party, the NRM, or a multi-party system. In other words it was simply an attempt to get rid of political parties, using the referendum to legitimise a one-party state. Obviously this was an infringement of the Constitution the NRM itself had put in place.

In total disregard of both its own Constitution as well as the argument of UPC, the NRM, thinking that the situation was in its favour, did all it could to get a vote against multiparty politics. The NRM took full advantage of its hold of state power to define the rules of the game as well as influence the course of the campaign in its favour. Although the constitution had called for a referendum to be conducted in the last month of the fourth term of Parliament which began in 1996, there was need for the necessary enabling legislation. The legislation was passed on 1st July 1999 in a manner which caused it to be challenged in court on the grounds that it was passed without a quorum. The Supreme Court ruled against the government. Thereafter, another Bill was tabled which became the Referendum (Political Systems Act).However, when the time for the Referendum came, the political parties boycotted it, arguing that freedom of association is a fundamental human right which is not granted or denied by vote. And this was not the end of the story; as we shall show later, in the end the exercise turned out to be a farce.

At one time Museveni confessed to gambling with history:

"In fact in the letter of President Museveni referred to above, he further explained: "Then some people may ask the question: "If NRM could be ready to compete for political office with opposing political forces in future, why not do it now?" Do not support doing it now because it is not the best way of governance and, fortunately, for now the people still agree with us. It is only when the majority of the people change their mind that we have to adjust our position. It would be something imposed on us by circumstances. 'So the NRM/Movement System is convenient, and for the time being, a popular means to political power.'" (Dr Besigye found in Kobusingye, 2010: 212)

However, by the beginning of the new century, unease with Museveni's manipulation of the political process to serve his selfish interests had reached the very inner circles of the NRM. The first major visible sign of the unease was Dr Besigye's rumbling critique of the movement published in *The Monitor* newspaper of 7th November 1999. (Kobusingye, O. 2010: 203-212)

This was followed by a call in 2001 by Bidandi Ssali, a prominent member of the movement that the NRM should be turned into a political party and space opened for other political parties in preparation for the 2006 elections. In characteristic fashion, Museveni moved to sideline Bidandi Ssali. However, sidelining Bidandi Ssali had no effect; the debate continued.

Ironically, even the passage of the Political Parties and Organisation Act (PPOA) (in May 2002) which was supposed to clarify the restrictions on political parties and therefore permanently institute the so-called no party democracy simply set off a process which unraveled it. The PPOA was challenged in the Constitutional Court and a number of its clauses were nullified. The court went further to declare that the NRM is a political party like any other, and not a system as the NRM had argued.

These manipulations had become so apparent that even the donors who had all along kept quiet about the undemocratic nature of the regime could no longer look the other way. The emperor had finally realised he was naked. In the circumstances, Museveni took the only route left for him. In March 2003 at a meeting of the National Executive Committee of NRM held at Kyankwazi, Museveni recommended that the country should move towards multi-party politics.

The reader should recall that two years before, when Bidandi Ssali talked of doing the same thing, Museveni scolded him, advising that those who talk like Bidandi Ssali should be ignored because, he went on to argue, multipartyism was "sheer rotten sectarianism based on tribalism and religion." (*The New Vision*, 1st July 2001 quoted in Carbone, G.2008: 191)

Notwithstanding that, NEC endorsed Museveni's proposal. In September 2004 the government published a white paper on constitutional reform. Among the many other issues, the white paper proposed a referendum on the question of the return to multiparty politics. The referendum was eventually held on 28th July 2005. The opposition again boycotted the referendum, still arguing that freedom of association is a fundamental right which does not need to be voted on. The bizarre thing is that the NRM, after 20 years of resisting multiparty politics, campaigned for it. The results of the referendum was 92 % in favour of multiparty politics. Then in February 2006 the first multiparty elections were held in Uganda. Although the NRM used its hegemonic status to claim victory, UPC, on the other hand, had one very special success to celebrate. It had survived the NRMs attempts to kill it.

It is fitting for us to end this chapter with a look into the future. Two authorities have made predictions about the future of the NRM. G.M.Carbone agrees with Nelson Kasfir when he says: *"They have invested little energy in building a vibrant Movement. The NRM's national secretariat is a moribund organisation with little sense of direction...Why don't they create a political party and challenge the opposition?...Part of the answer is that they failed to use their time in power to create a strong organisation...the hollow shell that the NRM has become would be apparent to everyone. (Kasfir, N: 2000: 75-76 also quoted in Carbone, G.M. 107)*

While we do agree with the two authorities that the NRM might not outlive its founder, we don't share their view that this stems from their failure to use their time in power to create a vibrant movement. As we have already stated, the NRM suffers from some congenital deficiencies. It has no social base. Secondly, it has no objective beyond holding on to power.

Given these serious deficiencies, however much energy the leadership of the NRM could have invested in building a vibrant movement, the result would have been like building a house without a

foundation. The NRM, by using state power, may look vibrant; however, without state power it would be just the proverbial paper tiger it is. It looks menacing until you pierce it.

On the other hand the UPC has a social base (see chapter 2) Furthermore, the UPC is a response to the tasks which have come to the fore in the current phase of Uganda's history, namely, national-democratic liberation. As long as the task of national-democratic liberation is still on the agenda, the UPC will remain necessary. The very need to conduct national-democratic liberation will cause the UPC to be indispensable. Besides, what the NRA has done in the north and east of Uganda over the years has laid solid ground for UPC to flourish when the passing cloud which the NRM is clears.

i This course in A'Level Economics in Uganda comes direct from the writings of Walt Whitman Rostow (October 7, 1916 – February 13, 2003). A right-wing Professor in Economic History at Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the US. His book, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto*(1960) details his theory. The reader should read some criticism of this book.

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