

Contradictory outcomes from solutions for the agrarian crisis in the Great Lakes Region: the case of Kigezi, Uganda

Murindwa Rutanga*¹

Introduction

The agrarian crisis in the Great Lakes Region (GLR), which was first detected by the colonial states during early colonial rule, was linked to the politics, economic policies and activities of European colonial imperialism. During the establishment of European colonialism in Africa, Belgium took over the possession and exploitative rights of Congo, Germany colonized Rwanda, Burundi and Tanzania while Britain took possession of Kenya and Uganda. They immediately instituted different technologies to exploit these territories and their inhabitants. This *modus vivendi* was soon disrupted by Germany's new demand for a greater share of the colonies in Africa. This was manifested during World War I. The allied European powers inflicted a humiliating defeat on Germany and stripped it of all its colonies and exploitative rights. Belgium was gifted Rwanda and Burundi while Britain received Tanzania.²

It was through the colonisation process that Kigezi was carved out through military threats and diplomatic manoeuvres and added to Uganda. This process was concluded through the Anglo-Belgian-German Agreement in 1910.³ The implication of this was that British colonial policies would impinge on its economy, politics and social life. Likewise, any solution to resolve the agrarian question that gradually emerged in the region would have both an internal and an external character and orientation. With independence, the problem continued unabated and even worsened. Non-committal piecemeal solutions by state agencies – foreign, local, corporate and private including humanitarian organisations, have so far failed to resolve it over seven decades in some parts of the region. Hope for its resolution came with the rise of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) during the bush war in the Luwero Triangle against the Obote II regime in 1981. The Obote II regime

lasted from 1981 to 1985. Despite the massive and unwavering peasant support that the NRM received, it did not reciprocate by making efforts to address the agrarian crisis.

This crisis and other recurrent problems bring to light the NRM's fundamental flaw of lack of solid, pro-people socio-economic philosophy and praxes. It too has shifted from the revolutionary Marxist ideology and tenets of the early 1980s and mastered the art of rhetoric and populist politicking. This was against the backdrop of its nationalist foundation that aimed at building an integrated, independent, self-sustaining national economy.⁴ It, instead, capitulated to materialism and its vices and this is evidenced by its zealous consolidation into a comprador economic and political class. This has been clearly demonstrated through its zealous liberalisation of the national economy and the corollary sale of national assets and other infrastructure at throwaway prices. Most shocking has been the handing over of the monetary/banking sector to foreigners, plus the destruction of the public infrastructure.⁵ Recent studies on "Local Government in Rural West Bengal" have great relevance to this situation.⁶

The Kigezi region, which is the focus of this article, lies in the South-western part of Uganda. It borders Rwanda in the south, the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west and Ankole region in the east. It is made up of four districts – Kabale, Kanungu, Kisoro and Rukungiri. According to the 2002 Uganda National Census, it had a total population of 1,158,524 people, with a mean household size of 4.7% and a population density of 240 per square kilometre. Though the region has been seething with a serious agrarian crisis that was first detected in early colonialial years,⁷ the population is reported to be increasing very fast, with an average annual growth rate of 1.45%. The intensification of the agrarian crisis has been characterised by exhausted lands, acute decline in soil fertility, massive shift of agrarian property from the subalterns to the *nouveau riches* class, ceaseless struggles over agrarian property, with a corollary of massive poverty, impoverishment and 'immiserisation'. It is this agrarian crisis which has posed serious challenges to the state and other agencies.

It has persistently defied technical solutions by different agencies largely because of its socio-economic and political complexities *vis-à-vis* the character and content of those solutions. They are non-committal, partial and/or full of technicalities. Linked to these is the absence of any commitment to understand the problem holistically and dialectically. This article therefore attempts to fill this lacuna by examining some

* Dr. Murindwa Rutanga is a Professor of Political Science and Public Administration, Makerere University, Kampala, Uganda.

solutions to address it. Given spatial and resource constraints, its scope is confined to the efforts by the state, groups, organisations, finance capital and the subalterns to solve it in Kigezi; their achievements, shortcomings and resultants.

Some Statist Solutions for the Agrarian Crisis

There is a marked distinction between the state during coloniality and the state in post-coloniality in the methodology, conception and resolution of the agrarian questions. Without showering any praise or romanticising on either colonial imperialism or the neo-colonial state, the fact remains that the colonial approach exemplified greater efficiency. It was very technical, problem specific and practical. On the other hand, the post-colonial state has been demonstrating uncoordinated and erratic generalities that are devoid of any coherent pattern. Wherever the colonial state identified a problem, it would formulate solutions and direct technical staff to implement them. Though highly technocratic and high-handed, it would still, involve the local chiefs in a bid to localise solutions, enforce obedience and expedite their implementation. It was through such an approach that it was able to formulate and implement different projects.⁸ However, the general tendency in post-coloniality is for the state to gloss over agrarian problems instead of attending to them promptly, whether democratically, technically, systematically or despotically.

There appears to be an increasing lack of government interest and commitment to matters related to the understanding of the agrarian question and its possible solution. Its infrequent, half-hearted, erratic and reactive approach tends to suggest that agrarian solutions are formulated only in consideration of the sitting governments' political survival. Politicking and strategisation for future votes plus personal pecuniary interests may seem to constitute the *raison d'être* of these solutions. Recent examples in Uganda such as the *entandikwa* (micro-finance being extended to households by the state), *boona bagagawale* (micro-finance to enhance "Prosperity for All"), partial land reforms, modernisation of agriculture through NAADS and promotion of commoditisation of virtually everything, large-scale alienation of public land for private ownership and use for profit generation through 'hotelisation' to guarantee leisure and pleasure for the propertied class, seem not to have altered the situation much.⁹

Whereas the country has continued to rely heavily on agriculture for food and exports in post-coloniality,¹⁰ no visible efforts have been made

Contradictory outcomes ... the case of Kigezi, Uganda

to transform that agriculture and the agrarian relations in the country in favour of the agrarian population, who incidentally happen to be the majority. The 2002 Uganda National Census revealed that 94% of people in Kigezi lived in the agrarian setting, with 83% of all households being engaged in peasant modes of production. This is complicated by the fact that the national focus has remained largely on the colonial policy of export crop promotion. This is a negation of people's expectations, especially after the 1981-86 NRM guerrilla war. The NRM promised to implement its Ten Point Programme, which *inter alia* involved ridding the country of imperialism to build a free, independent, self-sustaining, national economy was abandoned in its embryonic stage.¹¹ It is of interest to note how a government that arose on the synergised tenets of democracy, Marxism and Maoism made a radical about-turn to a comprador one within five years in power:

... (to) raise yields by the adoption of appropriate technology through strengthened agricultural research and extension institutions; to promote increased diversification in export crops, by creating competitive systems of marketing institutions, enhanced export incentives, adequately remunerative producer prices, and more efficient public spending; to facilitate financial stabilisation by controlling credit expansion through improved institutional arrangements for financing crop procurement, and financial restructuring of marketing intermediaries; to promote employment creation; to promote self-sufficiency in food.¹²

Its rapid capitulation was further evident in the 1992-1995 government's production zoning of the country for export crop production.¹³ Though the government hailed this zoning as the solution to the issues of agrarian crisis, food security and massive poverty, its actual object was to perpetuate the externally-oriented agricultural commodity production for foreign exchange earnings. That largely explains why the state could not address the raging agrarian crisis in the country and reverse the colonial economic distortions that stemmed from the unequal integration of the region into the highly developed international capitalist system. Its earlier intentions and proclamations soon metamorphosed into mere rhetoric as it embraced neo-liberalism, especially the structural adjustment programmes (SAPs) that were propagated and enforced by the twin Bretton Woods institutions. The mass suffering and deprivation from the implementation of SAPs led people to jocularly refer to them as

structurally adjusting problems. These policies forced the NRM government to handicap the Ugandan state by depriving it of monetary and resource capacities through the sell of public assets at nominal prices.¹⁴

On its part, zoning the country for export crops had enormous potentials for exacerbating the agrarian crisis. The question is how. First, this form of production is not organically linked to the needs of the people but is price-driven by external demand. Given that its intention is export cropping for imperialist interests, the people involved in this structurally imbalanced arrangement become perpetual victims of price fluctuation in the international markets, the horizontal competition of exports from different producer countries, and the aggressive substitution with synthetics and/or shifts in tastes. Worse still, given that their produce is exported without processing, the threat of perishability and loss of quality compel farmers into immediate sale. Agricultural products are bulky and do not find ready markets internationally. They have to pass through the hands of brokers, insurers, shippers and stores.

All these continue to erode the peasants' incomes, purchasing power, welfare, production and expectations. Secondly, the state is enabled to access part of the peasants' resources through fiscal, monetary and other administrative measures. Examples include price-stabilisation funds, taxation and non-payment for farmers' produce through the issuance of promissory notes. The retained resources may not be used for the purported stabilisation of prices, development, provision of social services and welfare; they may instead be embezzled, used for patronage or for militarisation and purchase of armaments.¹⁵ Thirdly, production that is externally-oriented does not allow systematic local accumulation and investment. Fourthly, crucial resources like land and labour are permanently withdrawn from food production for local consumption to export production. This creates bases of permanent food insecurity, famines, malnutrition, disease, impoverishment, 'immiserisation' and untimely death.

Agricultural commodity production is by nature large-scale, and it is normally undertaken on fertile land. Given the colonial history that has persisted in post-coloniality and continues to define the socio-economic relationships between the capitalist world and the former colonies, commoditisation of agriculture has normally been export-oriented (mainly to the west). The privileging of foreign interests over domestic ones has been resulting in the marginalisation of the local people and their interests. Dominant among these has been the shifting of food

production for domestic consumption to marginal, hilly, stony, dry, non-irrigable and unproductive dry lands.¹⁶ This has tended to undermine the cropping patterns. The major consequence has been to undermine nutrition, food security and maintenance of soil fertility. Yet, the proceeds from exports are not normally reinvested in agriculture, the way businesses operate. They are normally transferred to other sectors like trade, transport, security, intelligence and politics.

The ever-growing, overzealous and insatiable need for foreign currency by the political class has tended to obscure the state from formulating and implementing profound and meaningful agrarian solutions. All these are manifested in the enforcement of the zoning scheme of the country in post-coloniality.

Being obsessed with the success of this zoning scheme, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries set up a task force (TF) to assess its performance. The TF unearthed numerous agrarian problems, many of which characterise the agrarian crisis in Kigezi. These included low input, low output farming, low quality products, high rural population and lack of exclusive commercial farming, low incentives to farmers, high cost inputs and unreliability of planning data. Also mentioned were land fragmentation as a cause of land shortages especially for livestock in montane areas, high illiteracy and low skills among farmers, crop and animal diseases, low extension staff, general reliance on human labour - mostly women and children in agriculture¹⁷ and the existence of different land tenure systems. The TF castigated the latter for hindering full ownership rights to land for free transactions, which it denounced as disincentive to the development of land productivity and value.¹⁸ Incidentally, the fact is that the TF's last finding was the reverse of the developments in Kigezi. The current form of capital penetration into the Ugandan economy precludes any land tenure system from blocking development and commercial transactions. Secondly, the TF concentrated on technical problems. This methodological flaw obscured from analysis, the social relations within the agrarian setting, and how these were constituting major impediments to agriculture.

The TF did not tackle the problem of unequal distribution and inaccessibility of resources. Land is increasingly being accumulated and concentrated in the hands of fewer people through different mechanisms. These include state grants, purchases, gifting, inheritance, trespass, grabbing, etc. Some persons had been gifted land by the state right from the mid 1940s, but that project came to fruition after

independence. Though it was the colonial state which had initiated it, it was the political class in post-coloniality that utilised land distribution as largesse to reward political supporters and relatives. This persisted during the 1960s and it was enhanced by the 1975 Land Reform Decree of President Idi Amin.¹⁹

The landowning class includes absentee landlords, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, the *mafutamingi* and the intelligentsia. *Mafutamingi* is a merchant bourgeoisie class that emerged from the 'economic war' that President Idi Amin Dada declared in 1972. Its object was to dispossess Asians of their business and property, chase them out of the country and hand over their confiscated business and property to the kin of Amin and his cronies, supporters and sycophants etc.²⁰ The Obote II government would, on its resumption of power ten years later (in 1981), reverse this policy, bring back the Asians, hand over to them their property and the control of the country's economy. The NRM exploited this capitulation by criticising and ridiculing the Obote II government but it too ended up continuing with the same policy when it captured power on January 26, 1986. It offered different concessions and incentives to woo them back. This exposed the NRM's emptiness in terms of socio-economic policies, nationalism and ideology.

The TF failed to bring out the failure of the land owning class to put the accumulated land to optimum use. Some of this land was being underutilised through the uncoordinated keeping of a few exotic cows - locally known as *efaamu* (farm). Others had planted eucalyptus trees and market-oriented, low food value crops like bananas and famine crops like *solanum* potatoes and cassava, or they were renting it out.

Despite its unearthing the numerous agrarian problems, the TF failed to advance further and propose a comprehensive agrarian reform. Neither did the government itself take a cue from these findings to formulate a comprehensive agrarian reform programme for the whole country and implement it. The political class could not formulate any far-reaching agrarian reform as it had earlier proclaimed during the 1981-86 NRM guerrilla war due to the change in class status, property ownership and outlook. During the guerrilla war, the combatants lived with the peasants in the Luwero Triangle. They analysed the agrarian question there and formulated tentative comprehensive solutions to address it.²¹ However, their capture of political power which was signified by the capture of state power on January 26, 1986, opened the gates to economic power. This followed the proverbial non-stupidity of dogs when death strikes a cow. They were quick to appreciate and

practice the dictum of one African president that politics was a narrow boat for crossing a wild wide sea of poverty. Following this logic, many members of the NRM leadership embarked on property acquisition and accumulation. This was manifested through a rush for land purchases mainly from the landlords in Buganda. This process of massive land purchases is still going on and it has sucked in other categories of people. It is taking threatening dimensions with the state - the supposed custodian of public property and good - coming out in full force to destroy public institutions including schools, government offices, infrastructure and public spaces like cemeteries so as to build hotels for tourists and earn foreign currency.²²

This new phenomenon of *hotelisation* of the country would appear to be a crusade for the destruction of public institutions, infrastructure and spaces. *Hotelisation* of the country at the cost of public interest is on the rise. This could be extended further to include the destruction of the country's education. Its initial assault included taking away university professors, intellectuals and researchers from Makerere University to fill the state cabinet and other lucrative jobs. These range from the Vice Presidency and Premiership to ministerial posts, directorships and the post of leader of the opposition in Parliament and parliamentarians. They are the gurus who today are zealously destroying the crucial institutions of governmentality in a bid to promote private property accumulation, profit, leisure and pleasure. What is of interest to note is that the NRM has been providing universal education at both primary and secondary levels (UPF and USE) locally known as "*bona basome*" (education for all), which the opposition has cynically twisted to "*bona bakone*" (sediment ignorance). The government has also initiated a policy of privatisation of services including education at all levels. The destructive potentials and effects of these new initiatives are enormous. The unceasing desire for money and material resources seems to have derailed the other three crucial institutions of governmentality - the family, religious institutions and prisons - from their role of imparting citizenry values to the young. The collapse or absence of institutions committed to moulding the young into responsible citizens has become interstitial for President Museveni to start on a nationwide crusade to instil the spirit of patriotism. He has started with educational institutions countrywide.²³ The question is how he can achieve this single-handedly, after dismantling institutions responsible for this task.²⁴ Can the NRM's intention be separated from the sedimentation of ignorance nationwide?

Metamorphosis from Rugged Guerrillas to Landowners

After becoming landowners, some of the former NRA guerrilla fighters are busy carrying out large-scale commercial farming and ranching activities. Sequentially, the pen wielders accessed the gun, which in turn led them to political power. Given that Uganda is a predominantly agrarian economy, land still remains prized very highly socio-culturally, economically and politically. Even those with no interest in ever engaging in agriculture still acquire land as a symbol of social status. Though this group and the colonially-created landlord class in Buganda rose from different socio-historical, political and economic circumstances, they have common interests in land. Transforming the acquired power into economic power was fulfilment of the proverbial drum-eating (accessing power) which implies using political power to acquire socio-economic power. This is notwithstanding the fact that the landlord class in Uganda has remained parasitic and anti-progress – waiting for rent from tenants and using their class position and connections to resist and sabotage any attempts to change or modify existing agrarian relations, while the newly-landed class has engaged the land in commodity production. Among this class is President Museveni, who owns expansive land for grazing his thousands of local breeds of cattle – on his famous “Kisozi Farm”. As such, both groups remain averse to any reform that could destabilise the existing *status quo* and deprive them of their estates. They have a very strong and eloquent representation in parliament, in other fora, offices and institutions. This is reflected in both the type and motive of the miniaturised land reforms that the NRM has attempted to implement during its tenure.

One of these was the deregulation of the 1975 Land Reform Decree in 1995.²⁵ This decree had effaced all earlier tenures in land by vesting all land rights in the state. In a bid to enhance its power and protect the newly acquired personal property in land, the NRM political class was compelled to deploy populist politics. This was because it could not formulate substantive policies in favour of the landless subalterns. If Idi Amin declared the Land Reform Decree in 1975, the NRM first used it and then repealed it in 1995 on the basis that it was obnoxious and repugnant. The 1995 Constitution vested the rights over land in the people, which act was more of a return to the pre-1975 decree status. History has however shown how any return to the past is bound to bear enormous costs. Today, the NRM is embroiled in fruitless and costly struggles to reverse the 1995 Law. This comes out succinctly in the struggles by the civil society to ward off the state from giving away

certain lands. Notable among these is public land with forests and public infrastructure, mainly through the National Investment Authority.²⁶ Buganda is insisting on receiving back the land that it was granted in the 1900 Agreement between England and Buganda. This is creating bad blood between the Buganda Kingdom and Uganda, which may in future explode again into military contestation.

Struggles over these resources have taken various forms including open ethnicised anti-NRM, anti-Banyankore²⁷ hatred propagation through radio talk-shows, dramas and open defiant rallies and demonstrations for *ebiyaffe*, sermons in religious institutions, court actions, public and international appeals. These are countermanded by state repression through tear-gassing, battery and bloodshed, arrests, imprisonment and court charges. Museveni's spirited defence to the Buganda Catholic bishops on “Why Land Needs Amendment”²⁸ and the recent arrests of two Cabinet Ministers of the Buganda Government plus a Democratic Party mobiliser²⁹, demonstrate the acrimonious, belligerent and recalcitrant resistance that the NRM is encountering in its land expropriation project. NRM has given back to Buganda some land, and other property including cultural-historical sites which the Central Government under the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) confiscated in 1966.³⁰ It has also granted Shs. 2 billion (about US \$ 1,000,000) to Buganda Kingdom. Buganda has however maintained its stance on *ebiyaffe*.³¹

Decentralisation of Management of Agrarian Crises

The result was that instead of changing the agrarian relations, the NRM government left that responsibility to individual districts. They were expected to provide technical solutions to agrarian problems. The onus was on technocrats within individual districts. This form of decentralisation tends to make the agrarian crisis appear as if it is a local affair, with no broader national, regional and international connection. Yet, the available correspondence from the districts to the central government shows the persistent advocacy for the central government's intervention.³²

The failure by the government to effect a comprehensive, holistic agrarian reform in the country has handicapped the peasants, the district administration and local councils (LCs). Leaving this problem to the ingenuity and interests of the individual district administrators creates problems. First, they lack a holistic conception of the problem at the national level and how it can be solved. Secondly, they do not have

power, authority and *locus standi* to legislate and enact laws for agrarian reforms. Finally, they lack resources, capacity and the state machinery to ensure the implementation of any meaningful reform. Thus, while the agrarian crisis requires socio-political solutions, the district administration is limited to simple, fragmented technical solutions at the micro level. This is demonstrated by the failure of the district LC's three-year efforts to resolve land fragmentation by land consolidation through voluntary land sales and exchange.³³

Limitations of State-Initiated Solutions

Ten years after the NRM's capture of state power, the Kabale District Agriculture Officer (DAO) raised four explanations why the state-initiated technical solution of land consolidation had floundered. Firstly, separate plots of land acted as security against localised natural hazards. Secondly, there was fear of unfair exchange due to lack of any standard measures of land size and soil productivity. Thirdly, there was peasants' distrust of rich peasants. They feared to lose their land to the rich through mergers. Finally, there were cultural considerations, which prohibited peasants from giving away inherited and/or gifted land.³⁴ The DAO did not include the inherent problem imbedded within the solution itself. The solution was technical while the problem was social. As such, technical solutions could never solve social problems. The same applied to administrative efforts to address the agrarian crisis. These included organising courses, seminars, workshops and practical demonstrations and competitions for the agrarian population and legislation.³⁵ The problem was that these courses were normally attended by men, instead of the women, who were the ones actually engaged in agricultural production. What was taught therefore would not be put into practice as many of the attendees were alienated from agricultural production. On its part, the achievements of competition would be short-lived. This had been witnessed in the soil conservation programmes during colonialism. The participants tended to lose enthusiasm as soon as the competition came to an end and the projects would consequently decline and gradually collapse. The explanation for this was that competition was target-oriented and without continuity.³⁶

But can it be taken for granted that the peasants were ignorant of the agrarian crisis confronting them and that they were waiting desperately for saviours from outside, or were there other far-reaching explanations? This was clarified by the DAO Kabale, who submitted that the peasants were very knowledgeable about soil conservation measures. He went on

to explain that the non-implementation of projected solutions was due to socio-economic reasons, and that the peasants were responding positively wherever supportive programmes were begun.³⁷ His submission puts into question the relevance and usefulness of the above-cited remedial measures that the district administration had been carrying out. It points to the need for other more concrete measures to address the agrarian crisis.

Meanwhile, the peasant agricultural production continues to face worsening crises. While the prices of export crops have continuously been declining, production of staple foods like millet and sorghum has continued to degenerate. Land has been over-cultivated without soil amendments and it has become under-productive. The old seed breeds that had been developed over millennia, with resistant capacities to weather and diseases, and were amenable to the soil, plus scientific inter-cropping methods, have been phased out systematically by privileging external hybridisation technologies like high yielding varieties of the green revolution, and using current biotechnology and genetic engineering. Plant and animal pathogens and pests have been multiplying and threatening peasant agriculture. Banana wilt, locally known as *toduura*, is on a rampage in the whole region, wiping out banana plantations. Peasants attribute its cause to be the new breeds of tissue culture from the Kawanda National Agricultural Research Centre. The peasants seem to have lost track of the traditional knowledge of selecting and preserving seeds, preventing and eradicating crop diseases and pests. They have become heavily dependent on the market for seeds and other agricultural inputs. All these require ready cash before every planting season. They lack the choice of right seeds since what they buy is dictated by what is on the market. Worse still, some plant pathogens like *Fusarium wilt* [bean roots rot] which have been attacking the crops in the GLR, are transmitted through the seeds. The rampancy of the crop pathogens and the pests reflect the complexity of the agrarian crisis in the region. Worse still, it is culturally abominable for peasants to purchase seed from the market. Households are expected to breed and preserve their seed.

The state-initiated reclamation process of swamps which the Belgians initiated in the Northern Rwanda region of Mulindi, was soon replicated in Kigezi by the British from the 1940s. This phenomenon led to the destruction of thickets and forests for agricultural production and resulted in the destruction of the habitat for birds, animals and reptiles which used to check the multiplication and spread of pests.³⁸ It was

aggravated by the modernity project which emphasised the importation of all forms of technology and knowledge at the preclusion of indigenous knowledge and technology. These approaches and praxes have not only proved erroneous but also hazardous as they have been causing the eruption of a multiplicity of problems. These are worsened by shortage and sometimes the absence of agricultural extension services.³⁹ All these have left the majority of the population in the agrarian setting in a pathetic quandary as the agrarian crisis continues to regenerate itself. The solutions proposed by the Agricultural Department to address the agrarian crisis are out of reach to the majority of the peasants, as they require ready cash.⁴⁰ All this reveals that the agrarian crisis is ultimately political and that it requires broad and comprehensive socio-political and legislative solutions.

This article has so far examined the various dimensions of this agrarian crisis in post-coloniality, the various externalised efforts to resolve it and their contradictory consequences. What is missing so far are the peasants' own initiatives to resolve it. To ignore this would be to assume that the peasants are inherently objects of their own history and therefore oblivious of the agrarian crises confronting them. That would be taking a pathetic, static stance of presenting them as unimaginative, rebellious victims, whose only objective is to frustrate the good intentions of the "benevolent" state — whatever that means — to resolve the crisis. In order to avoid the futility of a judgmental position, there is need to examine the peasants' collective efforts to resolve this malignant agrarian crisis, the new emergent challenges and how they are resolved. This section will be restricted to three categories: neglect of associational obligations, refusal to remunerate an association for its labour services and failure to pay back loans to lending institutions. It will therefore focus on the *ebibiina* movement (miniaturised self-help movements or cooperatives), micro-credit schemes, bank loan and wheat seed loans.

The Genesis, Influx and Hegemonisation of the *Ebibiina* Movement⁴¹

Ebibiina are voluntary associations at the local level by people with similar characteristics, interests, conditions and problems. The members first agree on the aims and objectives, functions, membership, resourcing, operations, management, responsibilities, obligations and benefits. While some discourses may define them as community-based rehabilitation (CBOs), we consider them as peasants' organisations

since they transcend communities spatially, operationally and socially. The *ebibiina* seem to have been singled out and have opted for different possible solutions because of their collective, social and democratic nature. Asaju explains that they are characterised by democratic rules and practices.⁴² The question then is what material conditions gave rise to the influx and hegemonisation of the *ebibiina*? Do they have major functionalities? Do they have a future or do they constitute the peasants' last resort? Should they be encouraged, promoted, replicated and expanded into larger cooperatives or should they be left alone to serve the needs of the desperate, isolated rustic peasants and gradually peter out?

Focusing on the agrarian questions in different parts of Africa, Moyo⁴³ (2002) unravels the historicity and functionality of peasant organisations in Africa. He locates the origins of the current form of peasant organisations in the massive agrarian social dislocations, increased impoverishment, insecurity over land and natural resources, property rights, and a multiplicity of violent agrarian struggles over resources and state power. He explores the negativities of the neo-liberal economic policy reforms and the reasons why they constituted a fertile ground for the formation of peasant organisations. Faced with the raging economic and political crises facing the peasants, together with the vicious globalising form of imperialism, through its conditionalities and denials imposed by the Bretton Woods international financial institutions and the World Trade Organisation, emerging as a formidable collective force, peasant organisations evolved as a possible alternative form of development in defence of agrarian livelihoods, promotion of social and economic development. The peasants' unending sufferings, coupled with the government's neglect of their concerns enabled them to take charge of their own affairs.

At the level of generality, their genesis has to be traced to the persistent massive poverty, social ills, *immiserisation*, diseases and death that became prevalent within the agrarian setting. Other explanations include the non-payment for the peasants' products, falling prices for the peasants' produce, the increasing economic crisis and imperialism and insensitivity of the state to the people's concerns. Their names reflect their concerns, aspirations, desires, objectives and goals. The philosophy, essentiality and praxes of *ebibiina* are aimed at solving specific problems rather than attempting to alleviate or reduce them. They demonstrate that the peasants have not lost hope and succumbed to the problems assailing them but that they have identified internal

initiatives and energies to resolve them and are harnessing them. Thus, the formation of the *ebibiina* constitutes a transformative process of the peasants into a strong collective force aimed at solving their problems. The *ebibiina* mainly focus on socio-economic, developmental, health, morbidity and mortality matters. This study did not come across any *ebibiina* which was concerned directly with politics. Of course, all of them were dealing with the consequences of failed politics. Analysis of the *ebibiina* therefore helps to expose the erroneously held notion that the agrarian crisis in the GLR is the exclusive concern of the state and external actors.

Historicisation of the Ebibiina Movement in Uganda

The history of the *ebibiina* movement in Uganda goes back to the decline of the economy and social services in the 1960s. This was intensified by the negative consequences of the 1972 economic war. The situation ran haywire when Uganda under the Obote II regime embarked on the implementation of the SAFs in 1981. The implementation of SAPs implied the government's abdication of the provision of critical social services to the people. What complicated the situation was the absence of local medicine people and practitioners. Yet, poverty was raging. The coming to power of the Obote II government had constituted the material base for the rise of the NRA. This guerrilla movement was critical of the IMF. While it expressed serious misgivings to the Obote II regime for hobnobbing with the IMF and made it one of the reasons for fighting it, it soon embraced the same IMF's policies and conditionalities and it became its most zealous convert. The NRM excelled in this and Uganda was soon hailed by the World Bank, IMF and the imperialist world as a successful story in Africa. Unfortunately, these imperialist praises could not be translated into reality. Its dealings, in line with imperialism, became ruinous to the domestic economy and society and resulted in mass of poverty, diseases, morbidity and death. With the resurgence of poverty, the bereaved families could not singularly afford the rising burial expenses and give the dead decent burials. They therefore had to help themselves if they were to survive. They were the ones who constituted the material bases for the proliferation of the *ebibiina*.

Operationalisation and Functionality of Ebibiina

Membership to the *ebibiina* for socio-healthcare is normally extended to all members of households whose heads have paid membership fees and

who carry out the other duties and obligations of the *ebibiina*. This type of *ebibiina* tends to be all-embracing. This is because they are formed to cater for the socio-healthcare of the members' households. Despite their initial objectives, they normally end up being multi-purpose. At the social level, they reinforce cohesion of lineages, clans, ethnic groupings or communities; provide identity, 'belongingness', security or economic interests.

Many of the *ebibiina* are formed with the economic purpose of pooling money together for distributive purposes amongst their members on a rotational basis. Unlike the *ebibiina* for socio-healthcare, membership to such *ebibiina* is individualised and the criteria for joining them is normally defined by specific factors. Some of them raise money through membership fees and other contributions, while members of other *ebibiina* may capitalise them through working for money, lending money at a profit, trading, providing social services to members or procuring inputs for them. Some raise money through borrowing from banks and other finance credit facilities to produce commodity crops. Others invest the money in commercial ventures like buying utensils for hiring out during social functions. Some *ebibiina*, mostly consisting of women engage in labouring for money with the object of uplifting the welfare of the members' households. Some of them purchase utensils, mattresses and other household requirements for the members. This raises the question of the locus of the men in the provisioning of their households' welfare within the peasant society. What saves them is their dominance in the socio-healthcare *ebibiina*.

In other instances, the *ebibiina* have come to play socio-politico-legal roles within their milieu. They protect bereaved widows and orphans from those who come with intentions of dispossessing them of their property. They normally come masquerading as relatives or debtors to the deceased. That way, such *ebibiina* enable their members to acquire strong collective voices, bargaining power and a *locus standi* for litigation purposes.

Another reason why they are opted for is that they have less stringent terms when compared to money-lending institutions such as banks. However, they have limited lending capacities owing to their objective limitation of thin financial resources. Though they demand land as collateral for these loans, they normally do not insist on land titles like banks. Even their mode of recovering the loans tends to have a human face. In other instances, some of them make material and monetary contributions to area development. They are sometimes used as

organisational fora for community welfare, hygiene, security, social or agricultural projects, community planning, dissemination of knowledge and policies and their implementation. Some *ebibiina* make specific contributions to community needs, nutrition needs and social functions.

These are however miniscule contributions. The agrarian crisis has been on the rise and it seems to be exacerbated partly by corrupt practices and partly because of the failure to extend credit facilities to the peasants. The study learnt from some of the respondents that soliciting for loans from a certain commercial bank in their area involved bribing a bank manager first. It was a racket that precluded the poor and middle peasants.⁴⁴

Loans or revolving funds in *ebibiina* enable the beneficiaries to accomplish projects that they would otherwise not have managed to embark on. The activities of one *Bataka Kweyamba* (literally meaning "Self-help Organisation") illustrate this very clearly. The members pool money together on a monthly basis and buy building materials in form of iron sheets for individual members on a rotational basis. The recipients then use the iron sheets to build decent houses. This is a clear demonstration of how such *ebibiina* assist individuals who would otherwise have never benefited from bank loans. Having seen the contributions of the *ebibiina*, the question is how they address their internal problems since they are not legal entities with any *locus standi* but are formed merely on mutual trust and understanding.

The government, courts of law and local councils recognise the contributions of the *ebibiina* and guarantee their existence, operation and protection. After all, the untold truth is that these *ebibiina* are performing roles meant to be performed by the state. This will be explained by synopsis seven court cases between individual *ebibiina* and some of their members, all of which ended up being solved in the Kigezi District Chief Magistrate's Court.

Judicial Regulation of Ebibiina

These court suits are discussed as follows:- The first involves two individuals and one *ebibiina* over neglect of individual responsibilities to the organisation while the second is between a woman's organisation versus a woman who contracted them to dig her piece of land for money but later refused to pay them their money. The rest of the cases revolve around non-payment of loans in the form of money and wheat seed.

Muziki Group Versus its two Members

The first court action was between a burial *ekibiina* known as Muziki Group and two of its members over the sanctions that it had imposed on them when they refused to carry out their duties and obligations. In forming this Muziki Group in 1989, the members set up objectives, goals, functions, obligations and entitlements. They all agreed that whoever failed to fulfil the obligations would be fined, and that whoever refused to pay the fine would be expelled without any refund of their contribution to the Group.⁴⁵ That arrangement held and the *ekibiina* operated normally until when two of its members refused to participate with other members in ferrying a sick member to the dispensary. The Group fined the two members but the pair refused to pay the fine. The Group therefore took the matter to the LC I Court. This court fined the two but they refused to pay it. The Group, based on this, decided to expel them. The case went up to LC II and the Muziki Group won it. When the case reached the LC III, the Court ordered their imprisonment for three days, and asked them pay the Shs. 5,000/= fine before being released. To get a sense of monetary value, a dollar by then was exchanging for Shs. 900. That meant US \$ 4.5 only. The exchange rate doubled to Shs. 1,800 two years later, after Uganda had invaded the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Having passed through those ordeals and paying the fine, the two members continued to be ostracised by the other members. They could not bear this social exclusionism. They wanted to rejoin their groups and get their membership reinstated (which would enable them to access its services, security and entitlements). They therefore appealed to the Chief Magistrate's court challenging the sentences and the expulsion from the *ebibiina*.

In passing judgment on December 14, 1993, the Court upheld their fine and the subsequent ostracisation. It however condemned their imprisonment as it had no legal backing whatsoever. It therefore restored their membership rights on the ground that they had paid the fine which the *ebibiina* had accepted. This is a clear example of the *ebibiina* that focused on provisioning of socio-healthcare.

A Labouring Ebibiina Versus A Fraudulent Contactor

The second court case involved members of a women's *ebibiina* dealing with socio-economic issues versus a fraudulent woman contractor. The women members of this *ebibiina* took legal action against Leonia

Bahinyoza for refusing to pay them Shs. 4,000/= which had been agreed upon in October as payment for their digging for her a piece of land.⁴⁶ After accomplishing the task, she changed the terms and decided unilaterally to reduce the sum to Shs. 3,000/= on the claim that they had done unsatisfactory work. They rejected this breach of contract and challenged her in LC courts. They won the case with costs in LC I Court and the defendant received a bill of Shs. 8,500/=. She appealed to LC II, lost the appeal and was ordered to pay them Shs. 3,500/=. She still refused to pay it and they appealed to LC III Court. They won the appeal and were awarded costs. She maintained her adamancy and appealed to the Kigezi Chief Magistrate's Court.

In passing judgment on December 23, 1992, the Court dismissed the appellant's claim of poor work by noting that she had at first participated in cutting the bush ahead of the women to make it easier for them to dig the land. It further noted that the respondents had agreed to the LC II court's decision but she refused to pay them. It failed to see the reason why the LC III Court had proceeded to hear the case afresh instead of advising the LC II on how to execute their judgment. It therefore quashed the LC III court decision for being superfluous and upheld the LC II Court decision with costs. The appellant paid a total bill of Shs. 38,000/=: which was eleven times higher than the original bill given by LC II Court. This bill also excluded the costs that she incurred during the legal process, time lost, the other inconveniences, impairment of her reputation, esteem and social standing. Thus, what could have appeared cheap at the beginning of that trial, ended up being too costly for her. It however was a triumph for the women united under the *ebibiina*.

A Savings Credit Society Versus A Defaulting Member

The third case involved Lyamujungu Savings Credit Society against Ensegumire, one of its members. He borrowed Shs. 2,000,000/= from the Society in December 1994, at an interest rate of 4 percent and pledged his land as collateral against the loan. At the time, he had personal savings of Shs. 1,000,500/= in the society. The problem arose when he failed to pay back the loan for over two years. The society therefore filed suit against him in court in March 1997.⁴⁷ He refused the court summons and did not attend the court hearing. However, the case was heard *ex parte* (in his absence) and judgment was entered in favour of the Plaintiff Society with costs on April 16, 1997. The Court ordered him to pay a total of Shs. 1,032,684/=. He failed to pay it and the Court therefore issued a warrant ordering his arrest and imprisonment.

Commercial Bank Versus A Loan-Defaulting Couple

The fourth Court action was over a bank loan of Shs. 5,000,000/= extended to a couple at an interest rate of 22 per cent per annum. This loan was solicited for and obtained by Mrs. Besiime from Kabale Centenary Rural Development Bank in July 1996. She got it with her husband as a guarantor. This debt was to be paid by 25 September 1995. The couple however failed to pay all of it and the bank took action against Besiime in February 1996, claiming Shs. 1,964,200/= as the remaining amount.⁴⁸ The Court passed judgment in favour of the plaintiff bank with costs. The Judgment Debtor received a total bill of Shs. 2,356,200/= in March 1996. He failed to pay it and the Court issued a warrant to the Court brokers on 4 June 1996 ordering the attachment and auctioning of his property in Ntungamo town and to recover Shs. 2,356,200/= as decretal sum, interest thereon and costs for the Court brokers' fees for carrying out the execution.

Wheat Seed Loans

It needs to be pointed out at the outset that wheat growing in the GLR traces from coloniality. Wheat growing was introduced in Kigezi by colonial chiefs in 1914.⁴⁹ Since then, there have been continuous efforts by the administration, organisations, western-educated and influenced individuals to expand wheat growing as a food and commodity crop. Despite these efforts, its growth has remained lukewarm. It is grown by very few peasant farmers in a few areas. One explanation for such disinterest is the failure to hegemonise wheat as a food crop in the region. It is a cash crop without a market. It is at times purchased by multinationals for brewing beer or baking bread, both of which are commodities for the urbanites. Even then, the urbanites tend to prefer bread baked with imported wheat flour. This crop, like other European crops such as *solanum* potatoes, has failed to undermine the hegemonic pre-colonial staple foods. The reason for this is that the local people still highly value their cultural foods.

Wheat production has been fluctuating in response to the absence or low demand for wheat in the market. This is coupled with a lack of improved seeds, chemicals, etc. Being a foreign crop in the region, the wheat seed lacks protective genes against local diseases and the climate. That is why its production is still characterised by high chemicalisation in the form of fungicides, pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers. It also requires high irrigation and mechanisation. These are far-removed from

the peasant mode of production and monetary capacity. The peasant form of agriculture is heavily dependent on nature in terms of rainfall and the crop's hereditary defence system. This was confirmed by the importation of these facilities through foreign funding of the wheat and barley project in the mid 1970s but it collapsed by 1984 when the foreign funding ceased. The district administration then began to appeal to the central government for improved seed and funding of this project.⁵⁰

Within two years, the Kabale DAO lamented that Uganda Breweries had stopped buying sorghum from Kigezi for brewing *Serena* beer. He explained that the administration was making spirited efforts to expand wheat growing and that it wanted to introduce barley in Kigezi as a commodity crop. The problem that he explained was that the decade-old wheat and barley production project at Echuya with funding from the Saudi Arabia Government, had wound when that funding ended. This demonstrated the dangers of dependency on foreign sourcing.

In response to this crisis, the district agricultural department had taken it over, and it wanted to multiply wheat and barley seeds for farmers. It was further reported that the Uganda Grain Millers Company had come in to encourage the peasants in Kabale district to grow more wheat. It was also reported that the peasants were being assisted with procurement of seed and other agricultural inputs and that the Nile Breweries was going to appoint an officer-in-charge of the wheat and barley project.⁵¹ This was a clear demonstration that the prime administrative concern was commodity production. On the other hand, these efforts were being frustrated by international capital, which was switching from sorghum, a local raw material, to production of foreign crops like wheat and barley. The implication of this was that the heavy import of agro-chemicals and seeds for production would be facilitating capital flight and increase peasants' dependence on outside countries.

Since then, the agricultural department, the district administration, organisations and the central government have been pushing for the expansion of wheat production. This was repeated ten years later by the District Administrator (DA) after the subsiding of the Rwanda incursions into Kigezi.⁵² It was on this fertile ground that the Kigezi Co-operative Union Ltd. emerged and took control of wheat production. It sold and loaned out wheat seeds and other inputs to those interested in commodity production and it bought their crop. It charged an interest rate of 100 percent per annum for its wheat loan. It is this exorbitant interest rate and the laxity of the borrowers that later turned this wheat growing into another disastrous agrarian problem, ruining and de-

agrarianising the peasants. This article examines only three cases of wheat seed loan defaulting to show the perilous consequences of: 1) taking loans without first studying them to understand their investment, its dangers, and methods of avoidance; 2) shifting from traditional cropping to commodity production of imported crops under a seed-loan scheme.

A Cooperative Union Versus Wheat Seed Loan Defaulters

This section examines, albeit briefly, cases arising from seed loans, involving a cooperative union and three women. These trace from March 1993, when the Kigezi Co-operative Union Ltd. loaned wheat to them. It lent 300 Kgs. of wheat seed to Mrs. Bakeihahwenki;⁵³ and 200 Kgs. to Mrs. Musinguzi⁵⁴ and Mrs. Tindimutuma⁵⁵ apiece, at an interest rate of 100 percent per annum. The three failed to pay back the wheat seed loans. The Cooperative Society therefore took legal action against them. In these suits, it demanded a refund of 600 Kgs. of wheat or the equivalent Shs. 150,000/= from Mrs. Bakeihahwenki, and 400 Kgs. of wheat seed or the equivalent of Shs. 100,000/= from each of the other two defendants.

In the subsequent court hearings, the defendants accepted the charges and agreed to pay back the loans and the costs. The Court entered judgment in favour of the Plaintiff Society on December 12, 1994 and awarded it damages and costs. The first defendant received a total bill of Shs. 355,500/= while each of the other defendants received a bill of Shs. 277,900/=. They however failed to pay these bills. The Court, on January 18, 1995, issued warrants for their arrest before February 23, 1995. They however did not have the money to pay and their arrest and imprisonment were imminent. A Reverend Father intervened on behalf of Mrs. Musinguzi on February 21, 1995 and guaranteed to pay the bill within two weeks. The Court therefore ordered stay of the warrant of her arrest. On her part, Mrs. Tindimutuma was arrested and brought to court on February 21, 1995. The same Reverend Father stood surety for her, promising to pay the total bill plus the execution costs of Shs. 20,000/=. Yet, no payment was made in the latter case for over four months. The Court therefore issued a warrant to him on June 27, 1995 asking him to appear before court on July 14, 1995 and show cause why he should not be imprisoned in execution of the decree. It was through this strenuous court process that the loans were finally recovered.

General Discussion

The foregoing section has shown that the *ebibiina* in the agrarian Kigezi have increasingly proven to be the peasants' last bastion against multifarious agrarian problems. They also foster unity, co-operation, trust, discipline, a sense of belonging and hope in the community. Members have been able to accomplish functions, duties and projects that the state and the banks and other money-lending institutions had abandoned. This however does not mean that all the peasants are in the *ebibiina* or that *ebibiinas* handle all the peasants' problems or that banks have lost usefulness in the agrarian setting. The efforts and activities of the *ebibiina* are geared towards resolving identified problems. This explains the resurgence, fluxility and temporariness of the *ebibiina*. Only the *ebibiina* focusing on socio-healthcare and bereavement tend to have some semblance of permanence.

It would be self-limiting to restrict this article solely to analyses of their capabilities, *performance* and achievements. Whether they achieve their self-set objectives or not does not deny them the credit of being conscious of the agrarian problems and their attempts to address them. Their levels of performance, achievement, longevity and success depend largely on the ingenuity, industriousness, commitment and integrity of both the leadership and membership. The *ebibiina* enable members to engage in production and other gainful activities, to procure inputs, venture into trade, etc. They also help in keeping the savings of the membership. This is very crucial as the peasants normally find it difficult to save money amidst the competing demands:- domestic, social, statist, fiscal, educational, religious and/or physiological. By keeping money in the *ebibiina*, the members gradually develop a saving culture. They also acquire skills of forming and running *ebibiina* and organisations on democratic lines. Thus, the *ebibiina* constitute schools for learning and practising tolerance, democracy, leadership, management and governance. They also act as a surrogate to the state in the domains of social provisioning, disciplining, control and education. Put differently, they perform the 'foucauldian' functions of governmentality.

At the political level, the *ebibiina* tend to cushion the membership from external threats. They normally inculcate and reinforce morality, justice, ethics, integrity, accountability and self-reliance in the membership. At the social level, the activities and individual achievements in the *ebibiina* tend to reinforce and consolidate marriage and family bonds. Reality has shown that poverty has multifarious

negative social and economic consequences that tend to loosen and undermine marriage fabrics and family bonds. Mamdani unravelled processes through which the poor peasant households in Anwoma village, northern Uganda, were disintegrating very fast because of persistent vicious poverty and immiserisation. These had transformed homes of the poor into terrains of constant fights, alcoholism, separations and revolts by the male children.⁵⁶ Incidentally, a similar situation has been developing in other areas of the GLR. The crucial functions of governmentality by the family and religious and educational institutions have been seriously eroded. This is demonstrated by innumerable court cases and the increasing overcrowding of prisons in the whole region.⁵⁷

Whereas peasants have gone a long way in formulating organic solutions for their multifarious problems and in implementing them, albeit with some limitations, there are some peasants who have been falling into the traps of vicious international finance capital. Loan ensnares have been proving to be millstones around the borrowers' necks.

On the face of it, wheat seed loans tend to appear attractive to the borrowers and mutually beneficial to involved parties. Taken simplistically, it implies paying back to the lender two wheat grains for every wheat grain borrowed. On the face of it, this looks very attractive as one wheat ear will produce over twenty seed grains. But such abstract reasoning tends to ignore certain eventualities and the destructive possibilities of bad weather, natural hazards, animals, birds, human beings, morbidity and mortality problems, etc. On the other hand, it should not be concluded that all those who entered into this loan scheme made losses. If that had been the case, people would have abandoned the scheme and this would have resulted in its collapsing.

As the study learnt from interviews with both the Counsel for the Co-operative Union and the people in the area, peasants who invested the borrowed wheat seeds properly were benefiting from the deal. The question then arises as to what actually happened to the wheat debt defaulters. After all, the weather was fine and there were no crop failures that season. Even the defendants did not present any extenuatory defence.

The study learnt that the defaulters did not plant the borrowed wheat seed as earlier proposed but had instead sold it in the open market at a profit with the hope to buy wheat cheaply at harvest time and use the purchased wheat seed to pay back the loan. This brings to mind the proverbial teeth that munched the seed for planting and then scorned

the ploughed land where the seed was meant to have been sown. The borrowers seemed to have underestimated this form of loan and did not think of the consequences of debt defaulting. It appears that they did not know that defaulting from paying the loan would lead them to prison where they would be subjected to unpaid hard labour and other harsh conditions until they had cleared all the bills. Faced with the debt problem, such peasants would be forced to sell their property in order to repay the bills. These cases demonstrate how these loan facilities and the subsequent debt recovery mechanism set in motion a process of impoverishment and depeasantisation of many such peasants. Similar consequences could be happening with other loaning agencies in the region, with similar consequences. Topical among these are NGOs, jocularly known as "nothing going on", individual proprietors and the government.⁵⁸

The developments in this wheat loan scheme reveal the peasants' misapprehension of debts being inherently a problem. The maximum wheat loan in these cases was 300 Kgs. This would appear too much seed for peasant cultivation in the Kigezi sub-region where the land question is so acute. Even if they planted it through the uneconomic broadcasting method, still, borrowing two or three sacks of wheat seed reflected other ulterior pecuniary interests. After all, the cheapest and most convenient way of procuring seeds would have been to raise money, say, through borrowing from the *ebibiina* or individuals, and then to buy the wheat seed. They however failed to realise that in that seemingly simple loan lay their ruin. Thus, a wheat seed loan valued at Shs. 75,000/= had, by the end of the case, increased 4.7 times. These costs were additional to the defendants' personal expenses in the case, imprisonment, psychological violence and inconveniences. What these events reveal is that the peasants lacked prior experience of such credit systems and did not know the consequences of defaulting. Their unresponsiveness to the impending court action, plus their failure to negotiate with the creditor union for debt-rescheduling or for phased-debt repayment and the failure of some of them to attend court hearings, raise doubts about their misapprehension of the vicious and ruinous character of finance capital and the law.

The Co-operative Union - bank loan complex brings out new forms of intensive capital accumulation. Banks earn interest on the loans. They then extend part of this money to the Co-operative Union. The latter then uses the loan to procure agricultural inputs to loan out to the peasants at an interest or sell to them at a profit. It also dominates the wheat trade

in the area. Then, the capitalists, business people, the bureaucratic bourgeoisie, the rich peasants and migrant workers outside the country benefit from buying the peasants' property cheaply through the subsequent involuntary property sales in the debt-recovery exercise. All these reveal the destructive mechanisms through which the lending institutions, with the help of the courts, are accelerating the commoditisation process of land. This constitutes a de-agrarianisation crisis of the agrarian population in the GLR.

The fact that 50 percent of all the debtors to the Kigezi Cooperative Union that appeared in court were women poses a serious question. Given the fact that the Kigezi society is highly patriarchal and polygamous, the question arises as to what are the circumstances where men sell land to rescue their wives, as what finally happened in some of these cases. The explanation is that no person wants to stand in the court's path. When the court passes judgment against a person, then, the social constructs of gender and minorities become irrelevant. Societal justice demands collective responsibility to salvage a member of the community from all forms of danger. This emerges as a struggle between the praxis of societal notions of justice and the imported form of justice. The former is humane and corrective while the latter is uncongenial, retributive and destructive. As such, a husband will have to sell whatever property that is available in order to rescue his wife. Secondly, the peasants have learnt from bitter experience that courts will always protect capital. They do so by dispatching court brokers to auction the available property and recover the money. Thirdly, the wheat loans were contracted in the interest of the households. As such, it became a collective household responsibility to redeem the loan defaulters. Other factors include love, family esteem and responsibility. They are not prepared at all for household management. A head of a household, locally known as *Nyineka*, is judged by society based on the way he or she manages the affairs of the household. Another explanation is that men normally face enormous problems in managing the affairs of the household during the absence of their spouses. This could have been the main cause that made some of the husbands intervene. A positive lesson from these cases is that women in Kigezi take on heavy obligations and commitments for their families. That is also reflected in the use of their marriage names in agreements and litigation matters instead of their maiden ones. Another possible explanation for this could be the patriarchy of society in the GLR, where both the society and the law does not recognise women in terms of land/property ownership.

These cases demonstrate new forms and processes of impoverishment and depeasantisation by insurgent capital under globalisation in the agrarian setting. They show that loans in themselves cannot resolve the agrarian crisis, let alone ameliorate it. They also reveal the peasants' ignorance of the dangers inherent in the tempting loans, let alone knowing how to invest them profitably and ensuring prompt debt repayment. They further reveal that the peasants enter these transactions without careful analysis of the concealed intricacies and dangers of debts and the total debt burden, the complications in debts, etc. Court actions against debt defaulting have proved disastrous to peasant borrowers as they lead to heavy costs and imprisonment. Many of the affected peasants end up losing their property through public auction by the Court brokers to recover the bills. These confirm the predictions of Marx and Engels (1970) regarding the death knell of peasants through *inter alia* usurious debts, land sales, court cases, fragmentation, etc.⁵⁹

As earlier noted, these cases bring to light the dangers of acquiring loans without a clear understanding of their imbedded dangers and pitfalls and the proper ways to manage them. They show that the lack of knowledge in investing has high possibilities for ruining the peasants. Thus, they illustrate that the problem is broader than loans or credit facilities *per se*. These issues underline the urgency for intervention by the state, politicians, civic organisations, extension officers and organic intellectuals to educate the peasants about all the possible scenarios and dangers of loans.

These court actions expose the paralogy that the causation of the agrarian crises resides in a lack of funds through credit facilities. The NRM, international organisations and the Bretton Wood institutions have been emphasising this line of thinking and have gone ahead to dish out money through poverty eradication action programmes (PEAP), *Entandikwa*, *Boona bagagawale*, NAADS and the Plan for Modernisation of agriculture. Others are being dished out by international NGOs like World Vision, the Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA), and Savings and Credit Cooperative Societies (SACCOs). These and a host of others have been facilitating capital penetration into the agrarian setting through provision of micro finance credit facilities.

However, the agrarian crisis in Kigezi has proved to be resilient and resistant to the different efforts and solutions aimed at addressing it. The shallowness and half measures of these solutions and its defiance against their technocratic and non-consultative character have been coarsening into *inter alia* massive impoverishment, de-agrarianisation,

immiserisation, diseases and early deaths. This has been complicated by the rampancy and endemicity of new diseases like malaria, HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis; economic problems like the persistent declining of prices of exports and foreign earnings from export crops, hand in hand with the ever-increasing prices of imported goods, including instruments of production. Added to these are the negative effects of inflation and SAPs, the rising insensitivity and irresponsibility of the political class which is manifested in massive corruption and non-responsiveness to the concerns of the governed. The paradox is that the countries in the GLR which are ranked among the poorest in the whole world are also ranked amongst the leading corrupt countries in the world.⁶⁰

Conclusion

This article examined some aspects of the current status of the agrarian crisis, the different efforts by different parties to address it and their shortcomings. It demonstrated how the statist conception of this agrarian crisis has been framed exclusively in technical terms, warranting technical and monetary solutions. Though these prescriptions provided some temporary relief, they could not resolve it. Their failure lay in the fact that these were populist projects which could never address the agrarian question in the country. As a result, the prescriptions and solutions were not comprehensive or broad enough to resolve it. The explanation for this lies in the fact that the primal concerns of the post-colonial leadership were on aggrandisement of power and its translation into economic gains for themselves. Even the District Councils have continuously been locked in factional conflicts, which have left civil servants with the onus and power to solve the socio-economic problems confronting the peasants. All these are being complicated by a renewed capital assault of the agrarian setting through globalisation, biotechnology and genetic engineering, the World Trade Organisation, patenting, TRIPS, and the current food crisis arising from the diversion of food to produce second generation fuels, ethanol and bio-fuels for profits.

References

1. Dr. Murindwa Rutanga is Alternate Representative for Eastern Africa on the CODESRIA Executive Committee, a Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Basic Research (CBR) and its Founder Member, Chairperson of CBR's Research Policy Committee, Member of CBR Governing Council and Chairperson of Network of Ugandan Researchers and Research Users

- (NURRU). He is former Head of the Department of Political Science and Public Administration, Makerere University. He studied for his BA and MA at Makerere University, did a one-year pre-PhD Research Training Programme at the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata (CSSSC), before pursuing a PhD program at Jadavpur University, International Relations Department, Kolkata. He is a permanent member of the Jadavpur University Alumni Association.
- 2 Murindwa Rutanga (1999) "The Agrarian Crisis and Peasant Struggles in Kigezi 1910-1995". Kolkata: Jadavpur University. PhD Thesis. (Unpub).
 - 3 Murindwa Rutanga (2009) *Politics, Religion and Power in the Great Lakes Region*. Dakar: CODESRIA (Forthcoming)
 - (1991) "Nyabingi Movement: People's Anti-Colonial Struggles in Kigezi", CBR Publication, Working Paper No. 18.
 - (1996) "A Historical Analysis of the Labour Question in Kigezi District", in *Uganda: Studies in Labour*. Edited by Mahmood Mamdani, Published by CODESRIA & CBR, Dakar. pp 53 – 135.
 - 4 National Resistance Movement (1986) *NRM: Ten Point Programme*. Kampala: NRM Publications.
 - 5 James Akampumuza (2007) "The Management of Privatisation in Uganda Since 1982". University of Land: PhD Thesis (Unpub).
 - 6 See articles by Partha Chatterjee, Pranab Bardhan et al, Dwaipayan Bhattacharya, Rajarshi Dasgupta and Manabi Majumdar on "Local Government in Rural West Bengal"; *Economic and Political Weekly*, February 28, 2009.
 - 7 Uganda Bureau of Statistics (2007) *2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census*. Kampala.
 - (2007) *Nature, Distribution and Evolution of Poverty and Inequality in Uganda 1992-2002*. Kampala.
 - 8 Examples include the agrarian question in East Africa. The Colonial Office (1955) *East Africa Royal Commission 1953 – 1955 Report*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office. Also see Murindwa Rutanga (1999) Op. cit. and Mahmood Mamdani (1996) *Citizen and Subject*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
 - 9 Lynda Gichanda Spenser, "Hey KCC9, Don't Fuck with my Zombies": Displacing the Dead from Lugogo Bye-Pass Cemetery in Kampala, Uganda. Paper Presented to CODESRIA 12th General Assembly at Yaoundé, Cameroon, December 7-11, 2008.
 - 10 "Government Objectives for the Agricultural Sector" quoted in A World Bank country Study (1993) *Uganda Agriculture*. Washington DC: The World Bank.

- 11 National Resistance Movement, op. cit.
- 12 Ministry of Planning and Economic Development, "Way Forward," August 1991.
- 13 Uganda Government, *Production Zones And Targets 1992-1995*. Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda, July 1992. Chap. One: "Agricultural Zones in Uganda - Uganda Potential Zones for Agricultural Development." Kigezi was zone No. 9 to produce maize, finger millet, sorghum, bananas, field peas, sweet potatoes, kigezi potatoes, beans and ground nuts. The three districts were to produce tobacco, tea, *Arabica* coffee. Rukungiri was also to produce *Robusta* coffee and cotton, Kabale was to produce pyrethrum and vegetables while Kisoro was to produce horticultural crops.
- 14 James Akampumuza (2007), op. cit.
- 15 Nyangabyaki Bazaara P. (1997) "Agrarian Politics, Crisis And Reformism in Uganda, 1962-1996." Ph.D. Thesis: Queens University. Also see Nabudere, D. (1980) *Imperialism and Revolution in Uganda*. Dar es Salaam: Tanzania Publishing House.
- 16 This article is informed by the researcher's experience in agrarian India and Lesotho, where irrigation agriculture was being carried out even in hilly and high mountainous ranges. A clear lesson from this experience was that all lands even in seemingly complicated terrains can be harnessed if the state is interested in promoting agriculture and guaranteeing food security.
- 17 This reflected exploitation based on gender and age differences.
- 18 Task Force Secretariat, "Working Paper One."
- 19 Republic of Uganda (1977) *The Land Reform Decree, 1975*. Also see Murindwa Rutanga, (1999).
- 20 Mahmood Mamdani (1984) *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda*. Nairobi: Heinemann.
- 21 See National Resistance Movement op. cit.
- 22 Lynda Gichanda Spenser, op. cit.
- 23 *New Vision*, *Daily Monitor* and *Red Paper* Newspapers from 20th March and April, 2009. President Museveni launched this crusade at Mary Hill High School, Mbarara and Kabale National Teacher Training College. *New Vision* of April 16, 2009 reported that President Museveni had initiated the formation of patriotic clubs in secondary schools and these would be formed in 5,000 schools. It was reported that he was the association Patron, they would be coordinated by a Secretariat under his office and that they would receive funding from the state. *The Daily Monitor* and *New Vision* of April 21, 2009 reported

- that the NRM government had asked for Shs. 3.5 billion for the teaching of patriotism in schools across the country in the 2009/10 Financial Year. Shillings one billion was supposed to run a Patriotism Secretariat at the Security Ministry while the rest would finance patriotism lectures. Government had also allocated Shs. 6.86 billion for the 80 Deputy Resident District Commissioners who would guide the Patriotic clubs. While these are being opposed as being conduits for embezzling public funds, the main aim comes out through the *locus* of the secretariat and the funding of these clubs. Being under the President's office, Security Ministry and Resident District Commissioners clearly shows that they are being created as active arms of the ruling NRM government. This is creation of an enlightened Youth Movement for NRM's political project.
- 24 See CODESRIA publications on education under globalisation. Also see Mandani (2007) *Scholars in the Market Place*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers.
 - 25 The 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda. Also see the 1975 Land Reform Decree.
 - 26 The National Investment Authority was one of those institutions that the state set up to facilitate the quick and smooth implementation of neo-liberal policies like liberalisation of the economy and privatisation of public enterprises. Resistance to this state-ordained expropriation has been high-pitched over Mabira Forest, Namanve Forest and Butamila Forest; Shimoni Primary Teachers College and Shimoni Demonstration School (a UPE School) and Uganda Television and Broadcasting.
 - 27 Banyankore are an ethnic grouping from Ankore Region. Much of the NRM leadership including the President and most of the Military Generals hail from that ethnic grouping. The Baganda have come up strongly, arguing that the Banyankore are changing the law to steal their land.
 - 28 New Vision of Sunday 27th April 2008.
 - 29 See the New Vision, the Daily Monitor and the Red Paper Newspapers on the arrest of two Buganda Cabinet Ministers and one DP Mobiliser on 18th July 2008 and were released on 25th July 2008.
 - 30 This was when the Central Government attacked and destroyed Lubiri – the Palace of the Kabaka of Buganda. The Kabaka fled to Buganda. The leader of UPC abolished the kingdoms, confiscated their property and it declared republicanism over Uganda.
 - 31 The Sunday Vision of April 19th, 2009, the New Vision and Daily Monitor of April 20th and 21st 2009.

- 32 See correspondences from the DAO to Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries of 10 April 1997. Also see communication of Kabale LC V Chairman on bean root rots, dated November 28, 1997.
- 33 1996/97 Document by the District Agricultural Officer, Kabale.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 1996 Kabale District Agricultural Officer Report. The Department had held 278 one-day courses and 135 demonstrations. A total of 13,900 peasants had participated.
- 36 1996/97 Document by the Agricultural Officer, Kabale. On legislation, the District Council was making bye-laws in regard to the identified problems and solutions. The most crucial one was the bye-law for soil conservation, which was made in 1990. The Council revised it in 1996 and increased the fines for the violators.
- 37 These supportive programs included zero grazing by Heifer Project under SWRARP and International Heifer Project; Research by ICRAF on identification of agro-forestry trees, use of contact farm in seed potato production and adaptive research in SWRARP programmes.
- 38 Murindwa Rutanga (1996) Op. Cit.
- 39 1996 Kabale District Profile, Op. Cit. The ratio of extension staff to the peasants in Kabale District was 1:2292. The situation was far worse in the districts of Rukungiri and Kisoro.
- 40 These range from buying new seeds every planting season, laborious cultivation, purchasing of pumps and different chemicals for spraying, fumigation to fertilisation.
- 41 *Ebibiina* (Pl.) *Ekiibiina* (sing.) means self-help co-operative society, or association.
- 42 Adebakin Simen Asaju (2002) "The Internal Dynamics of Peasant-Based Co-operatives and Democratisation in Nigeria" in Romdhane, Mahmoud Ben and Sam Moyo Eds. (2002) *Peasant Organisation and the Democratisation Process in Africa*. Dakar: CODESRIA.
- 43 Sam Moyo (2002) *ibid*.
- 44 Information from the respondents.
- 45 The Civil Appeal No. MKA 40/93: J. Senzonga and E. Twinomugisha Versus Jack Kabakyenga. Kigezi District Chief Magistrate's Court, Kabale.
- 46 Civil Appeal 56/92: Mrs. Leonia Bahinyoza Versus Tirikwendera & Others. Kigezi District Chief Magistrate's Court, Kabale.
- 47 Civil Suit No. MKA. 14/97: Plaintiffs: T. Besigye and C. Twine for Lyamujungu Savings Credit Society Versus J. Ensegumire, filed on

- March 7, 1997. Kigezi District Chief Magistrate's Court, Kabale.
- 48 Civil Suit No. MKA 14/96: Centenary Rural Development Bank Ltd. (Plaintiff) Versus G. Besiime (Defendant), Kigezi District Chief Magistrate's Court, Kabale.
 - 49 Kigezi District Annual Report, 1914-15 and Western Province Annual Report 1914-15. Also see Kigezi District Annual Reports of 1916-17; 1920.
 - 50 Report of the Department of Agriculture, Kabale, dated 15 February 1984.
 - 51 The Kabale District Agricultural Officer, "Some Notes And Crop Production Figures, Kabale District 1985-86 Season."
 - 52 Kabale District Administrator, 1993.
 - 53 Civil Suit No. MKA 23/94. Kigezi District Chief Magistrate's Court, Kabale.
 - 54 Civil Suit No. MKA 24/94. Kigezi District Chief Magistrate's Court, Kabale.
 - 55 Civil Suit No. MKA 32/94. Kigezi District Chief Magistrate's Court, Kabale.
 - 56 Mamdani, M. (1992) in Bernestein, Henry et al (eds.) (1992) *Rural Livelihood: Crises and Responses*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
 - 57 Michel Foucault (1991) on Governmentality in Burchell Graham et al (Eds) (1991) *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
 - 58 The NGOs include UNFA, The World Vision, SWUADA, EDF and PAP.
 - 59 Engels, F. (1970) "The Agrarian Question in France and Germany." *Selected Works of Marx and Engels*, Vol. 3. Moscow: Progress Publishers. Also see Lenin V. I. (1956) on the development of capitalism in Russia.
 - 60 See the recent reports of Transparency International Global Corruption Reports; and Reports by Commissions of Inquiry into Different Government Departments, and the Ssebutinde Commission Reports. Okello Martin (2007) "Fighting Corruption in Public Institutions: An Assessment of the Performance of Uganda's Inspector General of Government, 1995 - 2005". Makerere University: MAPAM Dissertation (Unpub.)
 Ranny Ismail (2007) "The Role of African Parliamentary Network Against Corruption (APNAC) in Uganda 1994 - 2004". Makerere University: MAIRDS Dissertation, (Unpub.)
 Also refer to the New Vision, the Daily Monitor and the Red Paper Newspapers.

**Jadavpur Journal
of
International Relations**

Editorial Board

DR. ANINDYA JYOTI MAJUMDAR
PROF. SUCHETA GHOSH PROF. SUMITA SEN
DR. RUP KUMAR BURMAN DR. SHIBASHIS CHATTERJEE
DR. KAUSHIK SEN DR. PARTHA PRATIM BASU
(HEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT)

JADAVPUR JOURNAL OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS commenced publication from 1995. The present volume is the ninth issue.

Copyright © Jadavpur University.

Subscription per issue : Rs.100.00 Foreign \$ 8 (including postage)

Advertising rates and specifications may be obtained by writing to the Head of the Department of International Relations.

Jadavpur Journal of International Relations invites original research, review articles and book reviews in the broad field of International Relations including Area Studies. Two hard copies and a floppy diskette of manuscripts along with an abstract of 100 words should be submitted to the Head of Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University, Kolkata-700032. All articles should be typed double-spaced, between 5000-7000 words, one side of the paper and with wide margins. Authors are requested to keep one copy of the typescript with them to guard against loss in transit. The Editorial Board reserves the right to decide whether material submitted will be published in this journal, references, notes, tables, diagrams, etc. should be supplied on separate paper.

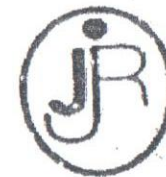
The views expressed in the articles are those of individual authors and do not necessarily represent those of either the Department of International Relations or of Jadavpur University.

Published by The Registrar, Jadavpur University, Kolkata-700 032.

Sole Distributors : Pragna Prakashani, 8, Narasingha Lane, Kolkata - 700 009

Printed by Pragna Prakashani, 8 Narasingha Lane, Kolkata-700 009

**JADAVPUR JOURNAL
OF
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
VOLUMES 13
2009**



**DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
JADAVPUR UNIVERSITY
KOLKATA - 700 032
INDIA**

**Jadavpur Journal
of
International Relations**

VOLUME 13

2009

CONTENTS

Editor's Desk

7

Articles

Afghanistan: Return of the Past?

Jyotirmoy Banerjee

11

Military Dictatorship and People's
Movement in Pakistan

Riaz Ahmed Shaikh

24

Militancy, Peace and
Conflict Resolution in India

Sumit Mukherji

46

The Global Economic Crisis:
Capitalism in a fix or a flux

Sangeeta Mahapatra

65

Moral Universalism, "International
Relations" and Beyond

Imankalyan Lahiri

78

Human Development Approach and India

Anupama Ghosal

96

India and Portugal:

Poulami Aich

114

A Cultural Encounter (1498-2008)

Globalization: the African Perspective

Ansu Datta

131

Environment and the Economics of
Nationalism: Revisiting the Oil Issue and
the Restless Run of Locusts in the
Niger Delta

Sheriff Folarin and
Henry Okodua

141

Contradictory outcomes from solutions for
the agrarian crisis in the Great Lakes
Region: the case of Kigezi, Uganda

Murindwa Rutanga

168

Comments

The Left and the Nuclear Deal

Krishnendu Mukhopadhyay 203

India-China Relations: Cooperation or Conflict?	Chandrima Ghosh	208
Here in the Past: A Theoretical Analysis of Transnational Corporations	Pallavi Pal	216
Women in Third World Politics	Madhuparna Sarkar	225
Unequal terms of peace: How the issue of Israeli settlements stands in the way of the peace process	Sanjeev Pillay	233
Book Reviews		
	Sucheta Ghosh	243
	Parama Sen	246
	Anindya Jyoti Majumdar	250
	Kaushik Sen	253

Editor's Desk

The thirteenth annual volume (2008-2009) of the journal of the Department of International Relations, Jadavpur University, in your hands now, continues to reflect the enlarged scope and multidimensional and diverse characters of the discipline of International Relations in the contemporary era. The articles are of varied nature; while some have been inspired by the events around us — be it the discords and tensions at the regional and international levels or global economic crisis — others explores the ending themes of peace and conflict, morality, development and bilateral relations. We also have in this volume three articles focussed on Africa. While one assesses the impact of globalisation in Africa, scholars from Nigeria and Uganda investigate specific issues in their respective regions but of great interest to any inquisitive reader.

The comments section — mostly authored by our existing students or by those who have recently taken up teaching jobs — also follows the main section in nature and spirit. Along with bilateral relations, issues of tropical interest have been explored and investigated. The usual Book Review section comes next.

Like its previous issues, the present volume too aims at catering to a multiplicity of views and research angles. Needless to say, the authors are solely responsible for the sources cited and views expressed in the articles which do not reflect any institutional opinion.