

**WEST BENGAL POLITICAL SCIENCE REVIEW**

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**INDEPENDENCE AND ITS NEGATIONS IN  
THE GREAT LAKES REGION 1960 - 2010**

*MURINDWA RUTANGA*

**Introduction**

This year, over seventeen countries have held celebrations and international Pan-African conferences in commemoration of fifty years of independence. Other than Congo and Nigeria, the rest are former French colonies. These celebrations have been occasions for deeper reflections on independence, its achievements and problems. Memorable among these were: the continental Conference in Côte d'Ivoire in August, the international Symposium in Ghana in September and the five successive conferences in Senegal in December. These conferences have enabled me to reflect on the independence received by the Great Lakes Region of Africa (GLR) and its negations. While the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has celebrated fifty years of independence, Tanzania will be doing it next year. Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda will celebrate their independence in two years time while Kenya will do it a year after the trio. And Southern Sudan is holding a full week of referendum election to decide whether to secede or remain in the larger Sudan. At the same time, deadly diseases including malaria, yellow fever, HIV-AIDS and ebola; famines, poverty, lack of entitlements and wherewithal are on rampage. Imperialism has maintained a firm grip on the GLR. GLR is afflicted by incessant conflicts - ethnicised like the Abahutu-Abatutsi ones in Rwanda and Burundi which climaxed in the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, the *Luo-Gikuyu* post-election violence in Kenya; or *arabised-islamised* ones like in Southern Sudan, and Sudan Peoples Liberation Army versus the Khartoum government. Others include the Al Qaeda in Kenya and Tanzania in 1998 or Al Shabaab in Uganda and Kenya in 2009-2010. GLR is under the firm grip and dictatorship of Western imperialism. The political classes in these countries are playing their compradorial roles to imperialism more or less like the colonial chiefs, implementing its dictates, fighting its proxy wars, obeying unquestionably the policies of imperialism including the Inter-

national Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, International Criminal Court, (ICC), World Trade Organisation (WTO), etc.

This paper therefore examines historically, materially and dialectically the politics in the GLR from coloniality to the present. It begins by analysing historically the crisis in the Congo right from 1880 when King Léopold II took possession of it as personal property. It exposes the horrific massacres, catastrophes and inhuman exploitation of this individualised colonial imperialism that wiped out over ten million indigenes to earn Léopold US\$ 1.1 billion by his death in 1908. It explores how these criminalities against humanity were perpetuated in new forms even after independence to the extent that by the fall of Mobutu's dictatorship in 1997, he had amassed wealth worth US\$ 4 billion. It examines promises and frustrations of independence right from Congo under Patrice Lumumba through incessant coups d'états, gruesome massacres and genocides to the generations of new social movements in the region. These range from anti-dictatorship movements like the National Resistance Movement (NRM), the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), the Alliance of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADFL), to reactionary ones like the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). It analyses the factors which underlay the rise of predatory and kleptocratic states, the reasons for the heavy indebtedness of the GLR, why the GLR is among the poorest in the world, full of illiterates, poverty and diseases while it is the richest in natural resources. It examines the forms of governmentality which emerged at independence, the problems which rose, their causes, effects and how they became interstitial for the different forms of western imperialism. It explores the new struggles that emerged, their causes, the expressions which they took, their politics and consequences.

### Historicisation of the GLR

Available literature and researches trace the origin of human beings in the GLR. The GLR like many other parts of Africa has been characterised by great civilisations, with highly developed socio-political and religious organisations, economic development and constructions. Evidence of these includes the fossils and human remains being excavated in the GLR. Living evidence includes the mountain gorillas

and other apes which inhabit the region. It has been found that these gorillas share 98 percent of the DNA with human beings. This however is beyond the scope of this paper. Scholars like Diop (1974), Bernal (1984), Jackson (1970), Khamit-Kush (1983) and Ki-Zerbo (1981) have explored this subject matter to great length.

When Western imperialism initially invaded GLR in form of slave trade and later in form of colonisation, it encountered many great kingdoms. Among these were the kingdoms of Kongo, Rwanda, Buganda, Bunyoro, Nkore, Mpororo, Buhweiju, Burundi, Karagwe, etc. (MurindwaRutanga, 1991, 2011; Mamdani, 1976; Mukherjee, 1984; Rodney, 1972; Karugire, 1980; Ki-Zerbo, 1981 and Mafeje, 1991). While slave trade had plundering, destructive and disruptive effects, it did not claim and settle in any space to deliberately and systematically change the people's modes of existence. This paper however does not examine that mode of exploitation due to shortage of time and space. It only focuses at its successors, colonial imperialism and neo-colonialism. Colonial imperialism was a phase of imperialism where the capitalist West invaded other continents, conquered them and acquired territories with the sole aim of extending the home capitalist mode of production. This implied that it had to penetrate virtually all domains of the colonised peoples. To achieve this implied changing whatever was in existence in order to make the indigenes serve the interests of the colonisers. This process was highly disruptive and destructive.

The European colonialists – Belgians, Germans and British manipulated some of these kingdoms into collaboration with them to fight, defeat and colonise the other peoples in order to make them serve their home capitalist interests. The driving motive was to acquire permanent sources of raw materials for their industries, markets for their manufactured goods, places for reinvestment and areas for resettling the ever-increasing unemployed population (MurindwaRutanga 1999; Césaire, 1955, 1972; Lenin, 1982; Fanon, 1963; Rodney 1972; Magdoff, 1978)

Colonisation of the GLR was part of the larger European colonisation project of Africa which traced its roots in the American War of Independence of 1776. In that war, North America which had industrialised and become strong defeated Britain. Within the same period and region, slaves fought and defeated their French slave masters, defeated

them and they established the Haiti state. America then adopted policies to protect its infant industries. These barred imports from Europe and exports to Europe. It wanted the raw materials for its industries and then sell their industrial products in the domestic markets. This American War of Independence had negative economic and political consequences for Western Europe. This was because although Western Europe was the most industrialised in the whole world, it lacked natural resources and markets for the manufactured goods. Its industries, factories and firms had to continue producing and making profits, employing local labour and guaranteeing tax revenues to their home governments. The American protectionist measures hit Europe very seriously as American markets and raw materials became inaccessible. The warehouses in Europe got filled with manufactured goods while the industries faced increasing shortages of raw materials. While these factors raised the costs of production in Europe, there were no markets for the produced goods. The industrialists were therefore forced to lay off the workers and close the factories. This created an unemployment crisis as they could not meet the exorbitant costs of production on continuous basis without any profitable outlets for their products. This created an economic crisis in Europe (Beaud, 1984; Lenin, 1972).

These had a negative multiplier effect on the European economies. Clients demanded their savings from the banks. Yet, the banks could not pay as they had either invested the money in the industries or lent it to the industrialists. The banks began to demand for their finance capital from the industrial capitalists to no avail. While some of these banks threatened to take over the industries, others became insolvent and they collapsed. This meant that the industries could not get loans for investing. Worse still, borrowing from banks could not make any economic logic since products would not get any market. The unemployed proletariats threatened to form bloody revolutions. Many of them had been equipped with revolutionary knowledge and cognitive praxis. Their consciousness had been raised on their transformative potentials and possibilities not only as a class in itself but also as a class for itself. They had learnt these from the classes conducted by Karl Marx and Engels on the Manifesto of the Communist Party. In their judgment, the conditions and timing of the proletariat revolution were ripe. They

planned to take over political power and the means of production and begin production.

This socio-economic crisis affected the states' revenues. States could no longer run their activities, provide services and acquire new improved weapons for their armies. The bourgeoisie and politicians began to urge the home governments to provide urgent solutions for this social problem. They feared the impending danger of the proletariats' bloody revolution which was going to wipe out the bourgeoisie class and all its socio-economic and political achievements. The workers' revolutionary attempts in Lyon and their successful achievements in Paris in 1871 did constitute sufficient evidence. Rhodes in 1895 summed these in his reflections about the meeting he had had with the unemployed population in East End of London just the previous evening;

I ... attended a meeting of the unemployed. I listened to the wild speeches, which were just a cry for "bread", "bead", "bread" ... I became more than ever convinced of the importance of imperialism ... My cherished idea is a solution for the social problem, i.e., in order to save the 40,000,000 inhabitants of the United Kingdom from a bloody civil war, we colonial statesmen must acquire new lands to settle the surplus population, to provide new markets for the goods produced by them in the factories and mines. The Empire as I have always said is the bread and butter question. If you want to avoid civil war, you must become imperialists (Lenin, 1972).

All these help to explain how the European colonisation of Africa did not have anything to do with Africa's interests the way some European intellectuals, ideologues and apologists of colonial imperialism have been advancing in paralogies and casuistically of the Whiteman's Burden. These go under labels like: to civilise, Christianise, educate the barbarians and primitives, tribal wars, human sacrifice and cannibalism; abolish Arab slave trade, introduce commerce, prepare the Africans to rule themselves, etc. All these are demolished by the balance sheet of colonisation which is full of millions of massacred Africans in the name

of those professed intentions. On the forefront were ten million indigenes of Belgian Congo, who were wiped out under Léopold's rule from 1880 to 1908 (Hochschild, 1998).

The initial encounter of Africa with Europe after the rise of capitalism in Europe was through slave trade. This was a crude mercantile capitalism where accumulation of capital was through sale of human beings captured from Africa into slavery in America. Slave trade in Eastern Africa had thrived from the twelfth century. While it profited some of the indigenes who invested in it, it threatened to depopulate the region by creating insecurity of persons and property, destroying people's modes of existence, development, civilisation and socio-cultural, societal, historical, scientific and technological advancements. Capturing and carrying away robust productive labour – the most critical resource for production - created *inter alia* conditions for permanent food insecurity, famines, diseases and population decline. All these transformed the region into a permanent terrain of untold horrendous human deaths from all these plus wars and war-related causes. They weakened the region economically, socially, politically and militarily. They made it simple for the invading Europeans to attack and defeat these peoples without encountering sustained defence and resistance (Rodney, 1972; Malquias, 2007; Mukherjee, 1984; Davidson, 1992; Suret-Canale, 1988).

### **Modes of Colonisation of the GLR**

Colonisation was Africa's second major encounter with capitalist Europe. Europe invaded it, conquered, disorganised and then reorganised it to make the indigenes serve the conquerors' capitalist interests. The conquerors imposed colonial states onto the conquered territories and it ruled them in form of military conquest. It put in place systems and conduits to drain away resources through loot and plunder, forced production and forced sales, unequal trade relations, land alienation for European settlement, economic investments and replacement of Africans in trade and commerce with an imported class. This process destroyed African modes of production, trade, property ownership, free enterprise and trade. The uncompromising militaristic character of European colonial rule was evidenced through the commissioned military officers who were deployed by their home countries to colonise and administer these colonies.

The colonial mode of capitalism which disorganised and displaced the obnoxious and inhuman slave trade mode of capitalism in the GLR was still mercantilist in form and essence. As such, it was not for internal production and accumulation but for draining away resources. As such, it either established European settler colonies for massive production of raw materials for the home industries or it established peasant economies for production of raw materials by small peasant holdings. The colonialists displaced the Africans from politics/administration and economy/business. They replaced the first category with an imported political/administrative group from Europe and they replaced the second category with the business class from Asia and Europe. They recruited the local agents or chiefs to carry out administrative functions at the lowest levels. The object was to make the whole process appear as if the indigenes were ruling themselves. They made the agents act as a wall between the colonisers and the colonised subalterns. In case of grievances, the indigenes would attack the agents who would be on site. This was well accomplished as in Kigezi, Uganda where over 1,400 peasants attacked an administration centre at Nyakishenyi one Sunday morning 1917 shouting that they had come to pay taxes. They massacred 64 colonial agents and wounded 15 women and children, destroyed all the physical infrastructure, tax receipts and registers (MurindwaRutanga, 1991).

In addition, employing these local agents would reduce administration costs through low pay. They would translate and localise the colonial policies, laws, economic demands and political impositions. It conformed to the proverbial *omwiru* rope (slave) which ties other *abairu* (slaves) – which implies that only a slave can control/rule fellow slaves. The colonialists termed it Native Authority or Native Administration. This mechanic overtime transformed the indigenes into depositories of labour, raw materials, livestock, food, aquatic and game products for export and for the functionaries of the colonial state. It marked the institutionalisation of foreign oppression, exploitation and domination. In the process, colonial imperialism instituted obnoxious, cruel anti-people laws for its rule. While its territorialisation process did bring into formation larger administrative and political units within the same borders, it at the same time fragmented peoples, families, communities and ethnic groupings. Subdividing the colonies into small administrative units cre-

ated occasions for the rise of the harshest wrath of petty colonial chiefs. MurindwaRutanga (2011), Hochschild, (1998) and Mamdani (1996) do expose the tyrannies of those colonial chiefs.

There has been a tendency to think that it was only Kenya, which experienced land expropriation in the GLR. However, colonisation of the whole of Africa is expressed in the proverbial *muzungu* (White man) who came carrying a book in his hands. He asked the indigenes to close their eyes to pray. On opening them, they found the *muzungu's* book in their hands while the *muzungu* was holding the land. This was the fulfilment of the prophecies of Seers like Nyakairima-Ka-Muzoora that men with skins of children would invade the area, defeat the people and establish their rule. Nyakairima-Ka-Muzoora said that these people travelled in grainstores which run on thread that covered the world. They warned that these people ate land (MurindwaRutanga, 2011; Aseka, 2005; Ngorogoza, 1969).

People knew the powers of clairvoyance of these seers but their resistance could not protect them and their lands. To demonstrate this, about five percent of Kenya's total land of 225,000 square miles was appropriated for European settlement by the time of independence. This land alienation was processal until when the Africans waged the Mau Mau movement. As early as 1903, the British colonialists had expropriated 5,000 acres of land for 89 European settlers. Ten years later, the alienated land had increased to 2,118,942 acres. By 1930, it had risen to 10,375 square miles. By the beginning of World War II, there were 9,345 European settlers in Kenya (Aseka, 2005; Brett, 1973; Leys, 1974).

Developing a settler colony in neighbouring Tanzania was handicapped by the contradictions and dynamics of colonial imperialism. It was first colonised by Germany and then lost to Britain. Though Germany had wanted to develop it into a settler economy, Germany was still economically, technologically and industrially weak. This was because it had just unified. All its hopes were completely shattered when it was defeated during its initial military quest for its share of the colonies in the 1914-1919 World War I. Tanzania was then granted to Britain while Rwanda and Burundi were handed over to Belgium. This fulfilled Lord Delamare's hopes of developing Tanzania into a settler colony to con-

nect Kenya with the settler colonies in Southern Africa. These, plus the earlier Maji Maji movement of 1905-07 did affect the speed of land alienation in Tanzania for European settlement. That was why by 1939, there were 4,054 British settlers in Tanganyika owning 788,000 acres of land, 3,205 German settlers owning 476,000 acres of land and Asians utilised 280,000 acres (Aseka, 2005:144).

Though Uganda was integrated into the British capitalist system as a peasant economy, this did not stop the British from alienating land there for plantation agriculture. What needs to be noted here is that while capitalism will harness the existing modes of production that it finds in place, it may introduce new modes of production to supplement the original ones. By independence in 1962, there were 11,700 Europeans and 76,200 Asians in Uganda. Some of these owned plantations, estates and farms while others undertook other activities. Similar land alienations occurred in other parts of the GLR. The issue is how this land was alienated and whether the Africans accepted it outright. If they resisted, what forms of resistance did they take?

The European invasion and colonisation of Africa was characterised by resistance and massive killings of Africans by Europeans. The Europeans meted out all forms of cruelties and penalties onto Africans under the cover of restoring law and order and enforcing discipline. While these excesses did initially constitute the *modus vivendi* of Léopold's plunder of Congo, it soon became the dominant mode of colonisation in all the other colonies (Hochschild, 1998, 2000; MurindwaRutanga, 2011, 1994, 1991; Iliffe, 1969; Karogo, 1987; Mainawa-Kinyatti, 1986; Throup, 1988).

Anti-colonial resistance began right from the first encounter between the initial emissaries of colonialism - explorers, missionaries, etc. These resistances and killings continued during the demarcation of international boundaries and land alienation. The colonisers fought and killed the indigenes over resources, taxation, forced labour, forced production, criminalities, etc. The colonialists had come with determination to smash any challengers to their power, their mode of rule, imposition and hegemonisation of their technologies of power. Their task was to guarantee uninterrupted supply of resources for export. Evidence among these anti-colonial resistances were: the anti Belgian-German-British

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resistance resistance in the Ndorwa-Mulera-Rukiga region (MurindwaRutanga, 2011); the Nandi resistance (Ellis, 1976); the Maji Maji Movement in Tanzania from 1905-1907 (Ilfie, 1979); the Nyabingi Movement which raged on in Western Uganda, northern Rwanda, Eastern Congo and north-western Tanganyika (MurindwaRutanga, 2011, 1994, 1991), and the Mau Mau Movement in Kenya from 1952 to 1962 (Karogo, 1987; Throup, 1988; Carothers, 1954). In these resistances, thousands of indigenes were massacred by the colonialists, others were arrested while many more had to flee in fear of retribution.<sup>1</sup> With the Mau Mau, the survivors were herded into strategic hamlets.

On their heels followed the Abahutu insurrection in Rwanda in 1959, which resulted in massacres of thousands of Abatutsi. Though it appeared at face value as if Blacks were butchering Blacks, the Belgian colonial authorities and philanthropists had played an instrumentalist role in the invention and ethnicisation of Abahutu-Abatutsi antagonisms through the formation of the Bahutu Emancipation Movement (Parmehutu) in 1957. They also played a central role in instigating and directing the insurrection. There were persistent reports of helicopters which flew to where the fleeing Abatutsi had been to assemble on a hill and they chopped off their heads during those insurrections. Anybody can tell which institution could own and did own helicopters at that historical moment and did have licence to fly them in colonial Rwanda. All these bore out the *Fanonian* exposure of colonial imperialism as being criminal violence and injustice of a colonising people over the colonised peoples, and which was characterised by *inter alia*: force, death, corporal punishments, inequalities and injustices, etc. (Fanon, 1963).

### King Léopold's Ownership of Congo

King Léopold II acquired Belgian Congo as personal property in 1880 and he owned it until his death in 1908. After acquiring this vast territory full of resources, there were different options available for him to exploit it. He could use machines, animal labour, slave labour, wage labour, enslave the indigenes onto their own lands or lease/hire it out. He decided to enslave the colonised indigenes on their lands. Belgium was not highly capitalised. Even if it had had machines, mechanisation of production in such colonies would become extremely costly, which

would defeat the purpose of colonisation. But institutionalisation and harnessing of this technology of exploitation entailed authoritarian rule and brutalities that would result in horrendous massacres, penalties and plunder. They recruited local chiefs to plunder the colony. All those in colonial service used brutal force to ensure that this colonial project gained King Léopold II wanton wealth of more than US\$1.1 billion. They would join the indigenes together by tying roles around their necks to ensure that they would not escape. These horrific and obnoxious technologies of oppression, exploitation and brutalities which they instituted to serve the accumulation needs of Léopold II ended up wiping out over ten million Congolese within 28 years of his owning it as personal property to earn him such hefty personal fortune (Hochschild, 1998). The perplexing question is how such a number of people could be wiped out within 28 years without weapons of mass destruction – biological, chemical or nuclear. Much of the answer lies in the horrific and cruel racist modes of exploitation which were instituted.

The Belgian authorities overworked the Africans in all activities that they designed. Their deployment of Africans was racially determined. Africans were forced to work in inhuman, horrible conditions non-stop and for very long hours without food. I am persuaded to submit that the Belgian colonialists were sadists who were deriving leisure and pleasure from overworking Africans non-stop to death. Examples included the construction of roads and railways and hunting wild rubber and mining. To demonstrate this, a lot of people died in the construction of the Matadi-Léopoldville Railroad in the 1880s. This did not cease with Léopold's death. Instead, the indigenes continued to die in similar conditions. An example was between 1921 and 1931 when the Matadi-Léopoldville Railroad was being vaunted and rebuilt with a wider gauge. More indigenes died than those who had died in its initial construction in 1880s. In Eastern Congo, a total of 1,359 porters were worked to death or they died of disease during the World War I. In another incident, 5,000 workers died in Katanga Copper Mines and Smelters between 1911 and 1918. The barbaric merciless killings were an imprint of the Belgian colonial imperialism which earned them the proverbial revenge of *Kaitwe Ababirigi!*; (Wish you were killed by Belgians); *Kaitwe AbaDachi!* (Deutsch - Wish you were killed by Germans); *Kahorwe Ababirigi!*; (Wish you faced retribution by Belgians!). The Belgian

lashes are hitherto dreaded all over the GLR as '*Eminaana ya Rwanda* (lashes of Belgians in Rwanda). To demonstrate this, the mine management in the gold Mines of Moto administered 26,579 lashes on the Congolese miners in 1920 (Hochschild, 1998). The main curse is being killed or revenged by Belgians '*Kaitwe Ababirigi*' or '*Kahoorwe Ababirigi*'.

The worst suffering and death were meted by armed sentries of Belgian trading Companies onto the indigenes through the institutionalisation of rubber terror in the Belgian Congo. They would send all the population into the wild thick forests for days and nights to hunt for wild rubber. These forests were full of death from wild animals, reptiles, diseases, rivers, etc. It is this rubber terror which largely explains why millions of Congolese perished under Léopold's rule and the subsequent Belgian rule. Any form of resistance against Belgian exploitation would be brought down with brutal terror. The Belgians applied scorched earth policy, took women and children hostage, killed Africans in thousands for retribution, leisure and pleasure which were racially motivated. They would then sever the hands of all the victims and take them to their superiors as evidence of their hard work, efficiency, dedication and commitment to the service of Belgian colonialism. Thousands and thousands of Congolese were either gruesomely murdered by the Belgian authorities, or they died of exhaustion, overwork, food insecurity, famines, diseases, ferocious animals, reptiles, harsh environment, risky mines and other disasters, wars and other related causes. All these combined to negatively affect the lives, health and birth rates of Congolese. One long time Belgian businessman and administrator in Congo, Alexandre Delcommune candidly said that Léopold's rule would have wiped out all the vines of rubber and all the natives if it had lasted another ten years (Hochschild, 1998:206). All these forms of cruelties and exploitation were maintained up to 1960 to guarantee maximum profits to Belgian capitalism up to the end of formal colonialism in 1960. All these were disapproved Marx' earlier presentation of capitalism as being progressive if it invaded backward areas and colonised them. Colonial imperialism soon disapproved him by demonstrating that it did not have any interest in venturing in liberating the productive forces. What followed instead was that it harnessed the existing modes of production to serve its interests. Nowhere did it ever venture in im-

provement or modification any modifications of the modes of production that it found in place. Its object was always to maximise profits at minimum costs. As such, Belgium's taking over of Congo at the death of King Léopold did not stop the forms of exploitation, oppression and death which were abundant. It only made efforts to conceal the excesses and brutalities from the public gaze. Notable among these was its shifting from reliance on wild rubber to cultivation of rubber. This was a process of institutionalising labour and taxes. The two modes would supplement one another. It then imposed very heavy taxes which compelled the indigenes to seek employment on plantations, mines and also to collect wild rubber. The Belgian colonial government did multiply technologies of exploitation and their intensity of exploitation were intensified during the World War II. Among other things, it increased the legal maximum for forced labour in the Belgian Congo to 120 days (four months) per man per year. The metropolitan state badly needed rubber for manufacturing of tyres for military trucks and planes and minerals like copper for the manufacturing of planes, and uranium for selling to America, etc. This is demonstrated by the fact that more than 80 percent of the uranium which the US used to bomb Hiroshima and Nagasaki had been mined from Shinkolobwe Mine in Congo (Hochschild, 1998).

Unfortunately, these brutalities did constitute the colonial modes of exploitation and oppression all over GLR and beyond. GLR suffered various forms of oppression, repression and exploitation, rape, disorganisation of societies and cultures, violation and/or denial of their rights, etc. The difference lay in the degree of the abuses and the colonial state's capacity to conceal them (MurindwaRutanga, 1991; Iliffe, 1979).

One of the main colonial achievements was the construction of the colonial social discourse which became a very potent ideological tool. This discourse was for legitimising and rationalising their colonial project and all its barbarities which were being committed onto the Africans indigenes. While it helped to define and represent the subalterns the way the colonialists wanted to do, it also functioned as a very strong ideological tool for the European colonisation and subduing of Africa. It facilitated the colonialists to *inferiorise*, shape and control the minds of the subalterns (Kant, 1802; Binger, 1890; Mottouille, 1946; Couper, 1878; Roscoe, 1922; Kharnit-Kush, 1983).

### The Rugged Path to Independence

While the World War II was an occasion where men were massively conscripted into the colonial armies to go and to the frontline, their families were forced to produce food to feed the colonial armies and provide other labour services as war efforts. It also became a formidable and effective school for spreading knowledge about independence. Why? Unexpectedly, it daringly exposed the inter-imperialist antagonisms, the Europeans' weaknesses and the Africans' capacities to throw out colonial imperialism. While on the frontline, the Africans questioned why they had got involved in fighting a European war. They shared ideas with fellow combatants from other colonies about colonialism, their resistances and possible ways of defeating it. They also realised their personal courage at the frontline supplying firepower to repulse the enemies and help their European commanders in the trenches to win the war.

Upon their return from the war, they were filled with the spirit of nationalism which was intertwined with independence. To them, independence signified regaining all that they had lost to colonialism – sovereignty, independence, freedom, self-rule, land, economic resources, commerce, cultures, order of things, etc. They wanted to abolish all colonial impositions, the colonial state, all its technologies of power and exploitation. They wanted freedom of thought and action and realise all their hopes and expectations. These marked the birth of Nationalism (Chatterjee, 1993).

This marked the beginning of the most organised, systematic and relentless nationalist demands for independence all over Africa. Strikes and mass protests became common occurrences and they were ruthlessly and bloodily suppressed by the colonial armies and police. The Kings African Rifles and the colonial police had to suppress the 1945 and 1949 strikes in Uganda (MurindwaRutanga, 2011; Mamdani, 1996); the general strike in Zanzibar in 1948 (Clayton, 1976); and the subsequent Mau Mau in Kenya from 1952 to 1962 (Karogo, 1987; Throup, 1988; Carothers, 1954). In the same way, the Force Publique had to suppress mass demonstrations in Léopoldville, Congo in 1959. These colonial forces perpetrated untold inhuman atrocities while suppressing these movements.

The popular meaning of the independence movements was in the common interpretation of the Mau Mau Movement as *Mzungu Aludi Ulaya, MuAfrika Apate Uhuru* (Europeans had to return to Europe so that Africans would get independence). Independence was therefore a result of arduous struggles, assassinations, etc. On their part, the colonial authorities made sure that they left in place a trusted group which would guarantee western imperialist interests. In pursuit of this, the Belgian colonialists created and instrumentalised the Abahutu-Abatutsi contradictions into an irreconcilable antagonism that soon exploded into an ethnicised insurrection in Rwanda in 1959. Tired of strikes in Belgian Congo and scared of worse ones, Belgium hurriedly conceded independence to the unprepared, ill-equipped Congolese subalterns in 1960. This was the first independence in the GLR. It was after it had instigated the Abahutu insurrection the Abahutu-Abatutsi conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi, and masterminded the assassination of Prince Rwagasore of Burundi,<sup>2</sup> that Belgium conceded independence to the two colonies in 1962. On its part, Britain succumbed to the pressures of the peoples of Tanganyika in TANU and conceded independence to them in 1961. It was by then busy realigning political forces in Uganda and Kenya in its favour. It thereafter conceded independence to Uganda in 1962 and to Kenya in 1963. If all of them got independence within a range of three years, what type of independence did they actually get and what did it mean to them? Why didn't it propel them to where they wanted to go? What explains why all these countries became steeped in insurmountable problems instead of flourishing like America, China and Norway after gaining their independence?

The colonised people wanted to regain their land, control their economies, politics and determine their own destiny. They had innumerable irreconcilable grievances against colonial imperialism, which ranged from forced labour, forced production and forced sales to compulsory annual taxation, dictatorship and misrule, corruption, racial discrimination, restriction of movement, denials of rights and other insurmountable injustices. To the local elites, independence meant peace, stability, freedom, property ownership, abundance, development, progress, prosperity for all and rule by the elected indigenes.

All these countries embarked on the route to independence that was poised with tragedies. This started with the horrendous innumerable

massacres and destruction of property in Rwanda during the 1959 ethnicised Abahutu insurrection. Thousands of refugees streamed out of Rwanda to the neighbouring Burundi, Congo, Uganda and Tanzania. Unfortunately, this opened the floodgates of conflictual politics amongst the subalterns in the GLR. The second tragedy befell Congo in 1960 through the overthrow of Lumumba's government, his arrest, detention and horrible murder by the machinations of CIA, Belgium and Mobutu. Then followed the perpetual ethnicised conflict in Burundi, the ethnic-religious rivalries in Uganda which provided a fertile ground for constitutional crises and incessant coups d'états. These were followed by ethnicised political conflicts in Kenya.

The political class which replaced the colonialists in controlling the instruments of power in the GLR was neither apt for the task, nor ready for it. It did not have an alternative to the European colonial discourse and its successor, the USA's modernisation discourse, with its motive of capturing the minds of the decolonising peoples. Its key proponents included Apter (1965), Rostow (1960), Janowitz (1964), Huntington (1968), Hyden (1980, 1983) and Bates (1981). These weaknesses do explain why these countries failed to push forward for their economic independence after receiving state power. The new political class failed to heed the advice of the underdevelopment discourse on the dangers of imperialism and the urgency of 'delinking' from it and all its mechanics in order to form socialism. The main proponents of the underdevelopment discourse included Amin (1975), Césaire (1955), Rodney (1972), Frank (1967) and Wallerstein (1974). One of the reasons why no country in Africa tried to implement this theory was because it lacked any attractive economic promises for the benefit of the politicians. Some defeatists disparaged it as proverbial barks of a lonely dog at the moon.

The political classes that assumed power over time fashioned their governmentality within the modular of colonial dictatorship. They inherited the whole colonial system unchanged and they intensified the cruelties, oppression and mechanics of dictatorship of the colonial state. They fashioned it into a horrendous bloody and corrupt dictatorship. These gradually became bases for the ever increasing problems in the GLR. They shattered the hopes and expectations of the millions of the expectant indigenes who had returned from the trenches against imperialism. The victims responded to these betrayals in different ways. While

some waged social movements, or withdrew support to the state and all its activities, others began to seek solace in religions, alcoholism, music, despair, homicides, suicides, mental breakdowns, sexuality and other forms of criminalities. These diverse conflicting developments and misrule transformed the GLR into a terrain of conflicts and strife. Some Western scholars began to refer to GLR with derogatory clichés like the great conflicts region, a hot spring of conflicts, a garden of Aden, etc.

People began to lose trust and hope when they saw their own people betraying them. Politicians like Obote warned the subalterns to stay away from politics as it was a dirty game. On his return to power from exile in 1980, he once again warned those plotting to overthrow his government how *Entebbe* (presidential seat) was too hot. Some Ugandans then retorted as to whether he was cushioning himself with an iceberg.

Given the absence of strong economic platforms in these regions for mobilising the people, politics, conflicts and violence took ethnic, religious, regional or interstate patterns. No matter what pattern that they took, they all ended up having disastrous consequences on the peoples and their countries. The other problem stemmed from the US depoliticisation of Africa. When it replaced European colonial imperialism in Africa, it embarked on a crusade of emptying the continent of all progressive forces inclined to socialism, nationalism and other revolutionary tendencies. While establishing its hegemony, it hired the political classes of these countries, propped them up and funded them to fight off communism. That marked the inauguration of the cold war. Mobutu was the first cadre in this anti-communist crusade and he fought it to the end. It needs to be noted that the cold war was fought in Africa to protect American interests and its victims were the African masses, their democracy, rights, independence and justice.

### **Tribulations of Independence**

Independence faced innumerable enemies and tribulations from within and without. To the subaltern's dismay, it began crumbling like a pack of cards right from the beginning. Belgian Congo under the fiery Lumumba became the first victim. He, together with Nkrumah and Sekou Toure were planning a United States of Africa (USA). This USA would have one political leadership, one capital, one army, one

economy, one central bank and one currency. Lumumba wanted Africa to have a meaningful independence which would benefit all the people. This was articulated in his independence speech, in which he castigated colonial imperialism and proclaimed emancipatory politics for Africa. This scared the West and it prompted the CIA and the Belgian forces to plot his assassination just at the beginning of his premiership. They soon arrested him, detained him without trial, subjected him to insurmountable, horrendous and excruciating tortures until when his captors shot him dead in Elizabethville in January 1961. They then dismembered his body and dissolved it in acid in order to erase his traces from the earth (Hochschild, 1998). Encouraged by this heinous deed that did not raise public outcry in the GLR, Belgium went on to plot Prince Rwagasore's assassination in Bujumbura just before Burundi's independence. That way, Western imperialism was able to empty Africa of radicalism and this enabled the West to impose on the different African countries a manipulatable incompetent if not politically blind political class.

Mobutu's obedience to the imperialist bidding of overthrowing Lumumba's government and subsequently assassinating Lumumba endeared him greatly to US imperialism and it opened his political gateway for Congo's presidency within five years. His political stars began shining the world over in 1963 when President Kennedy hosted him at the White House as a special friend of USA. Kennedy rewarded him with a gift of a jet for his personal use and safety. He was given US Airforce Pilots to fly him. While this force guaranteed his safety, it was a device for the CIA to monitor his activities, ensure that he did whatever the USA wanted him to do without falling prey to the Soviet Union. In other words, it became a sure way of ensnaring him into the service of US imperialism and he remained in its service for all the thirty two years of his rule until 1997 when he was defeated by ADFL.

With the CIA and Belgian involvement, Mobutu was able to stage another coup d'état in November 1965. Thus, Congo did experience two military coups d'états within its first five years of independence. He then tenuously retained power as president and ruined the Congo up to 17<sup>th</sup> May 1997 when ADFL defeated his forces and forced him to flee the country. His rule did constitute a record time of thirty-two successive years of nation-destruction, plunder and loot, state terror, massa-

crises, human suffering, detention without trial, physical liquidation of enemies and refugeeism. What needs to be acknowledged here is that the deliberately plotted political tragedies in Rwanda, Congo and Burundi by Belgium and the USA soon became very important lead paths for the political classes in Africa.

Military elites quickly learnt of the potentials and the benefits from staging military coup d'états. After all, one strand of the modernisation discourse spearheaded by Huntington and Janowitz had glorified the military in ensuring stability and order as prerequisites for modernity (Huntington, 1968, 1957; Janowitz, 1964). These largely explain why not only the GLR but the whole continent soon experienced coup d'états against democratically elected governments. They transformed Africa into a terrain of mass killings, detentions without trial, widespread displacements and refugeeism to crises levels (Mushemeza, 2007).

The armies in Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania did attempt it first through the mutinies of 1964. The mutinying soldiers were in Colito Barracks in Dar es Salaam, Lanet Barracks in Nakuru, Kenya, and Jinja Barracks in Uganda. The Tanganyika Africa National Union (TANU) leadership used the British marines to crush the mutiny. It then disbanded the leadership and arrested the top officers. It put in place new strict measures for military recruitment and politicisation which were anchored within the nationalist project. Kenya also used the Marines to crush the mutiny and it sent out the officers for further training. On its part, the political class in Uganda granted all the demands of the mutinying soldiers (Aseka, 2005).

This compromising response was mainly dictated by two internal factors. First, the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) political class was facing strong opposition from the Buganda elites. As such, the political class could not antagonise the army as it desperately needed the army's support. The second reason was anchored in Uganda's colonial history. The UPC political class came from the same region and ethnic groupings with the military forces. As such, the political class could not turn a deaf ear to the demands of their relatives. This compromising approach did however become interstitial for the military in Uganda to continue resorting to use of force whenever it desired anything. The political class further surrendered most of its political spaces and au-

tonomy when it used the army to crush Buganda Kingdom in 1966. This could have been handled by Parliament or Police but not the army. Armies are supposed to secure the international borders by fighting/repelling external invasions.

In the process, the army was quick to learn of the urgency to replace the civilians in politics in order to serve its economic, professional and political interests. It is this which explains why the two governments of Obote would be overthrown by army officers hailing from his home area. On their part, Kenya and Tanzania's uncompromising approach to those mutinies in 1964 saved them from military interferences in politics. The political classes in those two countries also espoused manipulative politics, which was either couched in ideology of ethnicity as in Kenya or demagogic nationalism and ideology of African socialism as in Tanzania. African Socialism and the strong independence ruling Chama Cha Mapinduzi (CCM) galvanised strong internal cohesion that was founded on nationalism. It was the political class and the membership which had changed TANU to CCM to suit the demands of socialism. Chama Cha Mapinduzi means revolutionary party. As Socialism is supposed to be a revolution, it has to have a befitting revolutionary party. Whoever tried to challenge the state would either have to risk being arrested and incarcerated for life or flee Tanzania. Not many Tanzanians dared to challenge the independence state after witnessing the consequences of the 1964 mutiny.

This was also practiced in other parts of GLR. Political killings became common occurrences in GLR. However, other than Tanzania, all the other countries in the GLR underwent ethnicised politics. Regardless of whatever method through which the political class comes to power – whether through elections under multiparty, two-party, single-party or no-party, military coups d'états, guerrilla insurgencies or popular uprisings - the military has remained a major player in all the other countries. It is this which largely explains the genesis of ethnicised exclusionary politics and the corresponding unending civil unrests/disobedience, disaffections, criminalities, mayhems, massacres, ethnic cleansings and genocide. Basu, (1991) and Clive (1984) provide incisive exposés of this modernisation theory and the rise of dictatorships in developing countries.

### Internal Challenges to Independence

What needs to be stated at this point is that there is no country in the GLR which has enjoyed relative peace, stability and steady development since their creation. Let us begin with the post-Lumumba Congo. On his second capturing state power, Mobutu with the help of USA and Belgium began to establish conditions for his undisturbed rule. He dismissed government, suspended the constitution, cancelled elections which were being prepared and he declared himself President of Congo for five years. He took steps the following year to play politics of populism by trying to Africanise names. This included ordering replacement of colonial names of places and peoples with African names. These included changing the country's name from Congo to Zaïre. Among other things was to conduct elections in 1970 under the new constitution and he was elected for a seven-year presidential term. This election process and its results enabled him to legitimise his rule and consolidate his political power. He proceeded to declare his government the Second Republic on November 24 1970. However, these formal constitutional changes remained cosmetic technologies of power which could not address the problems confronting the subalterns. Neither did they efface the grievances among the population.

He founded the Popular Movement of the Revolution Party as an instrument for his rule and control of the population. To ensure this, he made it the only political institution in Zaïre in 1974. He deployed populism to depoliticise the population, misdirect and threaten them from politics and political debates. He deployed ploys of satisfaction of bodily pleasures and epicureanism through music, entertainment, alcoholism and sexuality. These gave rise to a new culture of consumerism, leisure and pleasure that despised and hated every form of work and/or labour process. The state deployed empty slogans to dupe the population as western imperialism and the local political class drained away resources. It is the plunder of Congo's resources by imperialism through slave trade, colonialism, multilateral imperialism and this class that do explain the paradox of Congo – being the richest in natural resources but yet among the poorest in the world. Mobutu retained power through bloody dictatorship in the service of both his personal interest and those of multilateral imperialism. He remained the authentic product of cold war politics and he became a grand epitome of the stooges for western

imperialism. He zealously served this purpose to the satisfaction of Western imperialists. The West led by the USA accessed the most valuable minerals, forest products and raw materials from Congo at throwaway prices. His kleptocracy and Western plunder of resources perpetuated the impoverishment and pauperisation of the Congolese (Bayart, 1999, 1993).

His rule, which was characterized by incompetence, ruthlessness, cunningness and fraudulence faced a lot of militarised and bloody resistance. In July 1966, he was faced with a rebellion by former gendarmes of Katanga Province, who had joined the Congolese army. He fought it ruthlessly and defeated it. He made political moves the following year to change the constitution and make it suit his politico-economic and military interests. His main objective was to have control of the whole country by bringing provincial administration under the central government. In July 1967, he faced another revolt by some remaining white mercenaries and former gendarmes. He defeated them and the surviving rebels had to flee helter skelter to Rwanda and Angola (Hochschild, 1998).

Ten years later, he faced a very serious invasion of Shaba Province by Katangese from Angola in March 1977. The rebels captured towns and they posed a serious military threat to his regime. He had to solicit military assistance from Morocco to help him fight off this invasion. Though this invasion was defeated within weeks, the Katangese in the copper mining centre waged another resistance in May 1978. He had to solicit military assistance of the French Legionnaires, the Belgian Paratroopers and logistical support from the US to fight off and defeat the rebellion. Although it was finally defeated, this rebellion and the brutalities of counterinsurgents undermined the mining economy of Congo as it forced foreign management and technical workers in the mines to flee the country (Hochschild, 1998). It was after defeating these serious armed resistances that he put in place a non-compromising cruel system that struck fear in the population. He deployed a pseudo ideology that preached his invincibility and as a leader with nine lives like a cat. That way, he was able to establish his hegemony and rule without any more threats of armed resistance until the rise of ADFL on September 17, 1996 (Wamba-dia-Wamba, 1996).

As already shown, Rwanda got independence through an ethnicised, horrific bloody political trajectory. The Abahutu ethnic cleansing of 1959 cleared the political and economic paths for Abahutu exclusionary politics and economics which soon constituted the *modus operandi* of Rwanda's independence politics. In 1962, the Abahutu ethnic group overthrew the Abatutsi Monarchy. They declared a republic headed by Kayibanda. They instituted a state of terror against Abatutsi. Consequently, most of those who survived death had to flee the country. The Abahutu majority marginalised the remaining Abatutsi living in the country from accessing public resources – social services, educational, political, administrative, professional and any employment opportunities. It also blocked the exiles from returning to the country to regain their citizenship, rights and property. This exclusionary politics against Abatutsi did not however galvanise an intra-Abahutu ethnic unity. Instead, what followed over time was the emergence of new intra-Abahutu antagonisms based on regionalism. The region where the president hailed from would become the object of attack. This has been one of the main characteristics of independence politics. The origin of the incumbent president is a crucial determinant in the accessibility of public resources, contracts, employment, scholarships, etc. The first independence government which hailed from Southern Rwanda was overthrown in a bloody coup d'état by the military elite from Northern Rwanda in 1973. Among the victims was President Kayibanda who was assassinated. These developments irreconcilably fractured any unifying nationalist efforts for the country. Rwanda's politics soon skidded into the ethnicised and regionalised muck without any emancipatory vision for the vast majority of the population. This would stay until the Rwanda Patriotic Front's invasion from Uganda on October 1, 1990.

The path of independence for Uganda was no exception. Uganda is one of the few countries that boasts of having been ruled by nine presidents within the first 24 years of independence. Six of them were deposed by the military. The nine presidents exclude the presidency of the triumvirs. The triumvirate of Uganda High Court judges - Musoke, Aggrey and Nyamuconco - was set up by the Military Commission in 1980 after the overthrow of Binaisa's government, with the intention of hoodwinking the population that the leadership of the country was in the hands of the civilians. Uganda is one of the rare countries in mod-

ern history that was ruled by two illiterate military Generals, Idi Amin and Tito Okello as executive presidents. The question is why these anomalies were possible.

Uganda's independence politics was initially anchored on an unprincipled alliance which was tribally and religiously based. That was why it ended up fracturing the nationalist project within four years of the country's independence. Uganda's independence was achieved through electioneering politics that was largely characterised by rigging, manoeuvrability and horse trading. Political competition nationally was between the Democratic Party (DP), UPC, and the Kabaka Yekka (KY). DP was a party for the Catholics while UPC was predominantly for Protestants. KY was an ethnically based Baganda Party. 'Kabaka Yekka' literally means No one else but the King of Buganda. KY would play a crucial role in blocking the Catholics in Uganda from accessing political power. This was rooted in colonial history. The British authorities had privileged Protestantism and its converts. It ensured that only Protestants could become kings. Catholics and Muslims were ruled out. The British hated the Catholics and this was inculcated to the converts of the Anglican Church. As such, Britain found it too difficult to hand over political power to people of another religion and with roots in another colonial power. Faced with the politico-religious threat of the Catholics to get the reigns of power of Uganda, UPC had to forge an alliance with KY at whatever cost. That was how they were able to defeat DP in the 1962 elections.

The political class that came to power through this alliance hailed from Northern Uganda. This was the same region which the colonialists had singled out to provide labour for the colonial army. The colonialists had even constructed a theory about these people as marshal tribes, who could make good soldiers due to their height and temperament. This false ideology reigned throughout the colonial period and its destructive seeds came to fruition after independence. The question is how. The new political class exploited the coincidental unity of the ethnic and regional origin of the military personnel and political class to keep a firm grip onto power. Having control of politics and the military leads to access to the resources. This was achieved at the cost of excluding peoples of other ethnic groupings from accessing political, military and economic resources.

The main problem came from the conflict between Buganda and Uganda over the Lost Counties of Buyaga and Bugangaizzi. Britain had taken away these two counties from the Bunyoro Kingdom and gifted them to Buganda Kingdom in appreciation of for its collaborative roles with the British colonialists. Yet, the 1962 constitution provided for a plebiscite to be carried out in the two counties on October 9, 1964 for the occupants of the two counties to decide whether to return to Bunyoro or remain in Buganda. Given that the Baganda absentee landlords had been crudely exploiting these peasants without any redress as they were not protected by any law against this feudal mode of exploitation, they hated the Baganda absentee landlords. It was that which explained why they had had to overwhelmingly vote for UPC in 1962 with the hope that it would free them from Baganda's crude oppression and exploitation. UPC had a debt and interest to liberate this reliable vote bank. In addition, the central government would gain access to the resources in the two counties in form of taxation which in turn would weaken it economically.

Faced with this reality where Buganda was bound to lose those two very rich counties, the Kabaka tried fruitless legal, political and extra-legal means to block the plebiscite. These included appealing to the High Court which was rejected; shooting nine Banyoro peasants in the contested area on one market day and resettling thousands of Baganda peasant families in the contested area with a demand that they too had to be allowed to vote. The High Court rejected Kabaka's demands and the referendum was held. A total of 75 percent voted for their return to Bunyoro.

It was this plebiscite which ruptured the KY-UPC alliance. The Kabaka disbanded KY and instructed its members to join UPC and fight it from within. This was done and KY members soon won all the UPC offices in Buganda. They then used their *locus* to plot a parliamentary coup against Obote's government. This came to pass in 1966 when they accused Obote of corruption and of supporting the rebel activities in the Congo. Obote had to move very fast and he arrested five of his cabinet members as they were in a final cabinet meeting where they were appointing a committee to investigate and impeach him.

The conflict between Buganda and Uganda reached a climax when

Buganda ordered Obote to remove the Uganda government from Buganda's soil within 36 hours. Obote used the Uganda Army under the command of Idi Amin to invade Buganda Kingdom and crush it. The Kabaka was forced to flee helter skelter to Britain. This provided Obote with occasion to abolish the 1962 constitution which the British colonialists had imposed onto Uganda and he introduced a new one which is popularly known as the *Pigeon Hole* constitution. Among other things, he abolished all the kingdoms in Uganda and declared Uganda a Republic. He replaced the constitutional president who had been Kabaka Mutesa with an executive one and he immediately assumed those powers. He abolished the other parties and made Uganda a one-party state under UPC. That was how he was able to achieve his grand plan of controlling the political, military and economic powers of the country. However, these structural changes could not resolve the socio-economic and political problems which were confronting the country. This marked the genesis of military intervention in Uganda's politics after independence. Since then, the military has remained central in Uganda's politics.

The raging economic impoverishment, immiseration, discontent and grievances within the country forced some individuals to attempt assassinating Obote in 1969. They failed and this forced him to change politics. He declared Uganda a socialist state under the aegis of 'Move to the Left'. This was enshrined in 'the Common Man's Charter'; jocularly known as '*Common Man Shut up!*' Then, socialism was jocularly termed *Abasozoze!* (segregators). Incidentally, his new political moves became pillars for a sealed up dictatorship. They however threatened the interests of Britain, USA and Israel. Obote terminated the Israelites' activities in northern Uganda and Southern Sudan, and he halted support to the Anyanya I Guerrilla Movement in Southern Sudan. This movement had been founded with the object of destabilising the Sudan government. The British and Israelites therefore responded by exploiting the conflicts between Obote and Idi Amin. They plotted a military coup d'état against his government and this was effected by Idi Amin on January 25, 1971. This ushered the military into the political leadership of Uganda and this has remained hitherto. This dictatorship lasted for eight years until when it was kicked out in 1979 by a combined force of the Tanzania People's Defence Forces, Kikosi Malum

and Front for National Salvation (FRONASA).

The military forces continued to control Uganda's politics during the presidencies of Lule, Binaisa, the Military Commission which then stage-managed the elections to ensure the return of Obote to presidency. It carried out fraudulences in the elections and this compelled FRONASA to return to the bush to fight the Obote II government. In terms of the regional composition of the military forces, FRONASA was made up of fighters mainly from the South of the country while Kikosi Malum was full of fighters from Northern Uganda. FRONASA was opposed to the existing Northern dominance of the politics and the military of the country. The two armed forces had come from Tanzania with opposed views about Uganda's politics. While Kikosi Malum wanted the perpetuation of Northern hegemony, FRONASA pushed for its dismantlement. That was why the two groups had embarked on massive recruitment of troops from their respective regions as soon as they entered the country. While Museveni had full control of FRONASA, Obote lacked control of the Uganda National Liberation Army. It was controlled by Generals Oyite Ojok, Tito Okello and Bazilio Okello and it was this which gradually created grounds for the 1985 coup d'état against his government. That coup d'état was headed by General Tito Okello.

As soon as Obote resumed presidency in 1981, new guerrilla movements emerged in the outskirts of Kampala City to fight his government. They included the National Resistance Movement, (NRM), the Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM) and FEDEMU. While the last two were pushing for Buganda's ethnic interests, the NRM had a larger liberation agenda for the GLR. It waged a five-year guerrilla war and captured political power on 26<sup>th</sup> January 1986. Thus insecurity reigned in Uganda under the five successive governments of Lule, Binaisa, Muwanga, Obote II and General Okello. The defeat of the junta headed by General Lutwa by the NRM raised new hopes in the Ugandans. This resonated with Museveni's declaration that this was not a change of guard but a fundamental change.

No one should think that what is happening today is a mere change of guard: it is a fundamental change in the politics of our country. In Africa, we have seen so

many changes that change, as such, is nothing short of mere turmoil. We have had one group getting rid of another one, only for it to turn out to be worse than the group it displaced. Please do not count us in that group of people: the NRM is a clear-headed Movement with clear objectives and good membership.<sup>3</sup>

The question would be whose guards? Whose fundamental change? Would NRM emancipate Uganda from the fangs of Western imperialism?

Despite its declaration of the fundamental change, it seems to have encountered more challenges that it had anticipated. After capturing of state power and forming government, it shed off guerrilla characteristics and became routinised. It began to face many socio-political, economic, democratic and military challenges. It became an object of attack by movements like the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Force Obote Back, the Holy Spirit Movement, and the Lords Resistance Army (LRA). It faced regional threats like interstate military attacks from the Sudan, the DRC, Kenya and Rwanda. International threats came from Western imperialism, especially the USA, Britain and France, IMF, the World Bank, European Union, Multinational Corporations, World Trade Organisation, the Al Qaeda and the Al Shabaab. While imperialism remains the worst enemy for the GLR, the Al-Qaeda, the Allied Democratic Forces and the Al-Shabaab have intensified security concerns in the GLR. While Al Qaeda failed to bomb the US Embassy in Uganda in 1998 at the time it bombed those in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam due to the strong intelligence network, Al Shabaab was able to attack Kampala with bombs on July 11, 2010 and kill 79 people. It then attacked a Kampala bound bus in Nairobi and killed three people and wounded thirty seven others on December 20, 2010 (Daily Vision, December 21 & 22, 2010; Red Pepper, December 21, 2010; Daily Monitor, December 21 & 22, 2010).

Their attacks on Uganda and threats to the GLR are questioning the pro-imperialist stance of these countries. The main contention is their fighting a proxy war for the US in Somalia. What is not said but which is factual is that Uganda's presence in Somalia aims to cut off supplies to Karamoja. Uganda's intervention by sending troops to support the interim government in Somalia greatly reduced the conflicts

and cattle rustling in Karamoja.

Burundi, which is the second on the hit list of Al Shabaab for sending troops to Somalia has also been another theatre for coups d'états. Since the assassination of a revolutionary Prince Rwagasore<sup>4</sup> on October 13, 1961, Burundi has not experienced any peace and stability. Rwagasore had formed a multi-ethnic unity party, UPRONA. This won the Legislative elections and its mass, radical, nationalistic politics threatened Belgian imperialism. They therefore plotted his assassination, which resulted in instability.

Burundi attained independence from Belgium on July 1, 1962 with the Abatutsi in control of political power. The majority Abahutu were excluded from the economic-political life of the country and this was never addressed by the political class. The army carried out mass killings of Abahutu in 1972 to purge them from Police. Independence therefore gave rise to widespread bloody political conflicts that were ethnically defined. It did not take long before Michombero took over power and he too was soon overthrown by Col. Bagaza. Since the Abatutsi were dominating the army and political positions, then, they were the ones who could plot coup d'états against fellow Abatutsi. That transformed it into intra-ethnic conflicts. All the coup d'états that Burundi experienced were by Abatutsi officers against Abatutsi presidents. Coups became the modular for regime change in Burundi. The Abahutu responded by forming an all Abahutu party and all their membership had to be made up of Abahutu. Their object was to eject Abatutsi from power. This failed to work for a very long time until the ethnically-based movement grew very strong and militant. Inspired by the then ongoing genocide in Rwanda, the Abahutu in Burundi started an uprising in 1994 and killed many Abatutsi in Burundi. This forced the political class to concede some powers through the formation of government of national unity.

By the end of the Mau Mau Movement in Kenya, the British colonialists had created a reliable political structure to replace them and protect British interests. They excluded the Mau Mau nationalist strugglists and other radicals from coming nearer to power. They planned a peaceful transition of power to non-violent elites under Kenyatta. The selected class did not threaten the existing modes of production and property

relations. It instead wanted to be included in the economic class. It was not interested in demolishing the existing social order, economic set-up or 'delinking'. Once in power, this political class began to betray the interests of the people. Being a settler colony where masses of people had lost a lot of fertile land had been gifted to the European settlers, the urgent question was on returning the confiscated lands. The political class abdicated this nationalist project and it embarked on amassing wealth in form of White farms and estates, trade and commerce. It used its political locus to compete with the Asian economic class in trade, commerce, transportation and large scale plantations. This new shift to property acquisition had negative consequences of excluding the vast majority of the population. This political class found refuge in ethnicity. It began to promote ethnicity at the cost of nationalism. The failures of this political class in Kenya became glaringly manifest in the insurmountable corrupting riches and opulence in Kenya vis-à-vis the imposing poverty and squalor in slums like Kibera in Nairobi which is inhabited by 3.2 million people. It transformed Nairobi into a scene of criminalities like robberies, stealing, frauds, prostitution and insurgencies. That explains why Nairobi is more known as 'Nairobbery'.

This betrayal took expression of excessive anger, enmity and rivalry between peoples of different ethnic groupings. The Gikuyu ethnic group where Kenyatta hailed from became the first object of attack. Linking political power to economic power had made the Gikuyu very strong economically and politically which made it hated countrywide. After Kenyatta's death, the presidency shifted to Moi, from the Kalenjin ethnic grouping. This shift did not address the growing anger and enmity. It only shifted property accumulation to a different ethnic group. The Kenya Airforce attempted a military coup d'état in 1982. When it was foiled, Moi used the already fashioned ethnicity mechanic and harnessed it as an effective mobilising political tool and defence mechanism for his leadership and its failures. Soon, the state unleashed state terror onto the population by arming the Kalenjin subalterns with lethal weapons including bows and arrows and they became a threat to the whole country. This class also played politics of manoeuvrability, which was spiced with state ordained violence until when it was finally voted out of office. Given that the alliances and coalitions against his government were highly ethnicised, they did not have any serious political principles

and ideological commitment.

The politics that followed Moi's regime continued to manifest deepening ethnicised politics. It was within this logic of ethnic politics that Kibaki's assumption to presidency brought back power to the Gikuyu nationality. Other parties within the power-sharing government of national unity tried to push their interests on ethnic tickets to no avail. This reached a head during the elections December of 2007. The country continued to be paralysed politically by ethnicised political campaigns under two sharply divided camps – *Luoism* versus *Gikuyuism*. The other groups, which originally pushed religious politics ended up being sucked in this ethnicised politics. As this type of politics gained momentum and threatened to ruin the nationalist project, voting by the opposition became synonymous with evicting *Gikuyus* from Kenya's politics. The election that followed in December 2007 was therefore bound to end in rampant, ethnicised violence. After that election, Kenya got engulfed in a horrific ethnicised battle between the *Jaluo*s and *Gikuyus*. Kenya was rapidly moving to the brink of a highly malignant ethnicised civil war. It manifested all destructive characteristics of the Abahutu-Abatutsi conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi. It affected the whole of the GLR, especially the land-locked ones. It was claimed by the press recently that Museveni is scared of Luo political plot in Kenya, which is led by Prime Minister Odinga (Daily Monitor, 21 December 2010). This cannot be taken as an empty threat given that President Barack Obama is from the same *Jaluo* ethnic grouping.

The political class in Tanzania chose a nationalist political path which saved the country from conflictual politics and coup d'états. The main explanation lay in the type of independence politics, the strong political party, the character and politics of the political class that received independence. Unlike the other countries in the GLR, Tanzania got independence under a united political party, TANU under the presidency of Mwalimu Nyerere. It united all the colonised peoples - workers, peasants, pastoralists, fisher peoples, traders, etc. This enabled the political class to decisively deal with the political problems. In addition, Nyerere proved a visionary and politically committed leader who wanted a united continent under developmental states. He started by uniting Tanganyika with Zanzibar to form Tanzania before the formation of the East African community in 1967. His gradualist approach for the United States

of Africa was contrary to that of Nkrumah, Lumumba and Sekou Toure. These wanted a rapid approach. Though his approach was opted for, it cost the continent the opportunity to form a united states of Africa. The African leaders instead formed their own club - the Organisation of African Unity which would guarantee their undisturbed longevity in power.

The political class tried to disengage Tanzania from imperialism by adopting African Socialism under *Ujamaa Vijijini*. It did this by trying to return the post-colonial Tanzania to pre-colonial modes of existence. Reconstructing theoretically such a pre-colonial, pre-capitalist past and forcing people to relive it was an impossibility which could only be at the level of conceptualisation, reminiscence and/or mystification. African socialism did not have room for class antagonisms and class struggles. Being obsessed with revolutionary zeal and the need for political sanity, the political class had to change the party name from TANU to *Chama Cha Mapinduzi* (Revolutionary Party). It made Kiswahili the national and official language and it set up leadership codes for all the public servants. It resisted imperialism's intrusions until when it was hardest hit by the persistent economic crisis. These crises compelled it to shift from its anti-imperialist stance and it embraced the World Bank and IMF. It began to implement IMF's austerity measures through structural adjustment programmes (SAPs).

### Independence Negating People's Concerns

Overall, the GLR faced innumerable, unassailable problems after independence. Instead of being starting points for effecting fundamental changes and social transformations in the GLR, independence turned out to be a continuity of horrendous sufferings. The GLR countries nose-dived. The question is why since the long sought-after, hard-fought for independence had finally been handed over to the indigenes.

A stretch of sixty to eighty years of colonial rule which was following centuries of slave trade in the GLR did create a lot of changes in all fields. To reverse this therefore required deliberate conscious planning and organisation in different domains - socio-economic, political, ideological, educational, medicinal, philosophical, thought processes, religious, cultural, musical, aesthetical, artistic, legal etc. While slave trade had been characterised by rabid, indifferent plunder that involved mas-

sacres, colonisation was a systematic, sealed up dictatorship that did constitute the womb in which the generation of independence political class did emerge from, was schooled and gloomed. In the process, it meant that the political class inherited all the cruelties and technologies of dictatorship from colonialism to the letter.

Problems stemmed from within and without. The decolonising peoples lacked a clear conscious, far-sighted political class to organise them, disengage their countries from imperialism, reorganise them and lead them from where colonial imperialism had dumped them to new avenues for social transformation. The new political classes were darlings of the colonial order. Yet, many of them were not sure of what to do. They had not gone far with formal education. These two did set a limit to their interpretation of politics and economics locally and internationally. They lacked the capacity to define societal interests and enemies, the required developments and their routes, the dangers of coloniality-constructed structures - religions, languages and other forms of imperialisms, and construct new pro-people ones. Instead, their cognitive praxes became confined within the colonial strictures. This class failed to heed the *cesairean* and *fanonian* warnings against colonial imperialism as being violence, which had to be removed by violence (Césaire, 1955; Fanon, 1963). Neither did they consider the underdevelopment theorists' exposure of imperialism and its *modus vivendi*, and the need for the decolonising countries to *delink* from imperialism (Frank, 1967).

Economies of former colonies remained in foreign hands - Asians, Western Multinationals, banks, Transporters, shippers, insurance, etc. The same applies to knowledge production and dissemination. Most of the land originally expropriated by the colonial state changed hands to the new political class at independence. Urbanisation was a product of rural-urban migration. Yet, urban centres lacked any form of production. Absence of employment drained productive labour from agriculture to non-production and it created consumption-oriented, parasitic population.

States became increasingly anti-democratic. The political classes blamed all forms of the opposition and they declared the ruling parties to be the only parties. The question is why it was so easy for them to do so. The

answer lies in the fact that political parties all over the continent lacked deep histories. They did not exist before the rise of independence politics. Even after emerging, they remained temporary, without any anchorage among the peasantry. It was this which made it very easy for the political class to eliminate the others. The politicians had not made any attempts to take their parties to the people. Needless to say, there was no serious party work which has been done anywhere in agrarian Africa. They had not developed organically from within the societies. In addition, these countries lacked a strong bourgeoisie class or a large middle class, which would be responsible for defining and defending democracy, its principles and people's rights. In the absence of a strong ruling class to hold the political class accountable, the political class turned round and began to push the population to do as it wished for its own economic and political benefits, sustainability and longevity.

Independence became self-negating. Those holding political positions found them too sweet. Those who earnestly wanted to give them up were confronted by the insecurity of their relatives whom they had recruited they had recruited in public offices and organisation. Any attempt to hand over power by these protégés would be interpreted as betrayal. They therefore found reason to retain their positions and they began to beget ethnicised politics. They became insensitive to the people's concerns and began to be intolerant to criticisms. This was the rise of authoritarianism which with time developed into dictatorship. One of the major processes was to muzzle democracy through constitutional changes. While democracy does not produce resources, it enables better distribution of the available economic and political resources. The political class embarked on capital accumulation using party, political and administrative positions. They joined trade using their position to rival the imported commercial/economic class that was racially different. They used state positions, state muscle, resources, interest free loans from banks and individuals, and bribery/corrupt practices to acquire capital. Their lucrative ventures were in wholesales, import-export businesses, and shops. They recruited their relatives and supporters and hangers-on and sycophants to parastatals and other public bodies. They began to cream off money from export through marketing boards and they put these monies to their personal use in the name of the country and the party. All these led to the development of extremes

of the poorest and the richest classes in society. These made African countries to become heavily indebted to the World Bank, and to IMF. These largely explain why the new political class maintained the anti-people colonial state instead of destroying it. It instead expanded the state functions, strengthened and expanded its arms or coercion with personnel, increased budgets and other logistics. All these were made possible by the political class creating a system for siphoning out resources from the farmers' produce through Marketing Boards, expansion of exports and widening forms of taxation. They imported sophisticated technologies of torture for the intelligence and other coercive machineries. They kept firm control on the judicial system, the laws and civil service. They Africanised these institutions, promoted and remunerated generously those who were running them.

The independence leadership had simplistically identified the problems of the continent in social service terms - poverty, ignorance and disease. This enabled it to embrace the prescriptions of the modernisation discourse and the World Bank which emphasised increasing production of raw materials for export, primary education modernity and health services. This stemmed from the false assumption that the GLR had comparative advantages in the production of raw materials. Oblivious of the character and dangers of imperialism, they embarked on maintaining the system which imperialism had left in place. These included establishing of health services and educational institutions, roads, etc. Even Mobutu, who would later massacre unknown numbers of students at Lubumbashi University for challenging his dictatorship, did invest in education. It however never occurred to this class that they were promoting colonial education, Western values and constructions. Neither did they ever think that the products of these educational institutions would later on challenge their dictatorships and prolonged misrule. They never examined the content and objectives of this educational system. It was inherently pro-western capitalism, anti-people and anti African cultures. The political class in Tanzania had to reject IMF's policy of devaluing Tanzania's currency as utopian since it was not linked to Tanzania's conditions and to the basic needs of Tanzanians like primary education for the children, medicines and clean water (Nyerere's New Year Address to the Nation of 1980). They ended up promoting exploitation, foreign oppression and subjugation. Western

education emphasised individualism and deracinated its products from their societies. Another important domain was the economy. They left the economy within the western capitalist framework under the control of Western capitalism, with western banks, shipping and insurance. They left the import-export economy under the management of the economic class imported from Asia (Amin, 1975, 1974; Mamdani, 1976; Césaire, 1955; Frank, 1967; Rodney, 1972; Wallerstein, 1974).

At the economic front, the GLR embarked on the capitalist route to development without first studying all the possible options, benefits and costs. They all embraced the term 'development' uncritically, without asking what it actually meant, its origins, political and ideological import and dangers, etc. through this unquestionable acquiescence, development as a concept, ideology and practice hegemonised itself, increased in usage and referentiality without any corresponding results. No local people were involved in its choice. Even the new political class did not have any freedom of choice. This route was imposed on the GLR by the World Bank, FAO, and Western capitalist countries. This exclusion of the population in such critical choices resulted in disastrous failure of this choice. The fertile, well-watered expansive lands were continuously utilised for export production. Labour and other resources were mobilised and harnessed for export production instead of producing food for domestic consumption and sale. Western powers began to use international bodies, the UN and local teachers to promote export production. The dangers of these new forms of imperialism that retained these countries within the colonially-constructed western capitalist import-export strictures were already manifesting by 1970s.

#### **Nationalism Versus Imperialism: A Case of Tanzania**

Despite its anti-imperialist rhetoric under *Ujamaa Vijijini*, Western imperialism penetrated Tanzania and it viciously exploited the unprotected peasants. These were revealed by the Evaluation Report of the Kigoma Rural Development Project. It exposed how the World Bank had forced Tanzania to select tea and tobacco as Tanzania's national 'growth poles' on the ground that it had given Tanzania \$ 56 million over the years for their production and processing. Yet, both crops and sisal were at the bottom of the list of Tanzania's major food and export crops. It showed how sisal, tea and tobacco were liabilities to Tanzania as they consumed about 50% of their export earnings in foreign ex-

change. Worse still, they were inedible. They only served the imperialists' objective and maintained Tanzania as a producer of raw materials for Europe. It demonstrated how all the money being lent to Tanzania was for promoting Western interests.

The Report exposed the dangers of imperialism through dumping agricultural inputs in Kigoma Region between 1975 and 1976 by NMC and Tanzania Cotton Authority (TCA). The two did so without carrying out any needs assessment amongst the farmers in Kigoma, and without analysing the soil content and the suitability of the fertilisers to the crops. They had failed to consult and explain to the farmers matters related to these fertilisers, the type of fertilisers or manure, their quantity, quality, their loan character, terms of repayment, etc. They simply dumped large quantities of fertilisers on all the farmers and made it mandatory for all to use them. All of them were to pay regardless of whether they applied those fertilisers or not. Some farmers thought that they were on promotional basis as TCA had earlier done. They debited villages even for the uncollected fertilisers. It was found that those fertilisers were not suitable for Kigoma soils, neither were they suitable for cotton and maize. They resulted in poor credit repayment and TRDP blocked any more credit to the debtor villages (Evaluation Report of Kigoma Rural Development Project, 1982). All these demonstrate how capitalism was taking advantage of *Ujamaa Vijijini*. Hyden (1981, 1983) failed to grasp this process through which the peasants in Africa were being captured by the state and capital.

These experiences do expose how African economies remained internally disarticulated and externally exposed to the predatory imperialisms as producers of exports for the capitalist West and importers of manufactured goods. They had been transformed into importers of even what they had been manufacturing locally like hoes, needles and machetes prior to colonialism. The prices of exports were continuously falling while those of imports were sharply rising. This was articulated by Nyerere during his address to the National Party Conference in 1982. He explained that prices of importing trucks in 1981 had risen ten times vis-à-vis the prices for tobacco exports as compared to 1976/77; four times the prices of cotton exports and three times the prices for cashew or coffee exports. He lamented how it was as if Tanzanians had been robbed. 'And the result of any robbery is to make the victim

of it poorer than he was before it took place.' His solution was for Tanzania to start local production of the trucks and be able to save money on imports of oil, spare parts, etc. (Nyerere, October 20, 1982). Another problem which these countries faced was that most of the major export crops like coffee, tea, rubber, cocoa, cashew, sugar cane and sisal were perennial crops. Others like cotton and tobacco required expansive fertile and well-watered lands. The implication of these was that such land on which those crops were growing was detained from production of food crops for the population and for sale. Being eager to increase foreign exchange earnings, all the newly independent countries expanded export production for the same external markets. This resulted in serious competition of exports and sharp falls of prices. The crisis stemmed from the political-economic powerlessness of the farmers and the local states in this unfair structural arrangement. The prices, demand and supply of exports remained externally determined – by the consumers in the North. These structural arrangements transformed these countries into food importers. These conditions and other factors helped in transforming the indigenes into permanent impoverishment. The political classes in Africa have found easy answers in cheap, unworthy discarded second hand goods like cars, fridges, clothes, etc. The GLR has become a dumping ground. Rodney (1972) and Museveni (1986) had criticised colonialism for destroying the autonomy of Africans to produce their productive forces like hoes and subjecting them to importation of the same hoe. Twenty four years have passed since he came to power. Yet, Ugandans in Bugiri District are suffering from jiggers partly because Uganda has failed to manufacture safety pins which Museveni had promised to produce when he came to power.

#### **Shift from Election Politics and Coup d'états to Guerrilla Politics**

The shift from democratic elections and coup d'états to the modular of guerrilla war politics in the GLR has its roots in the rise of NRM in Uganda in 1981. Its capturing of state power influenced politics in the GLR and has resulted in new forms of governmentality.

After its inception, the NRM attracted a lot of youth into its guerrilla activities from 1981 - 1986. Among those who joined it were offsprings of the Rwandese refugees living in Uganda. Though they joined it and fought with determination and courage to the extent that some of them

rose to the highest military ranks which was based on merit, their hidden motive was to gain military skills, become war-hardened to prepare them for fighting their way back to Rwanda. It was this Rwandan nationalist spirit which guided and motivated the combatants to fight hard. This nationalist spirit combined with the Ugandan one and guided the NRM to success on January 26, 1986. This then opened gates for the rise of the Rwandese nationalist spirit through the formation of the RPF and it resulted in the downfalls of Habyarimana. The two movements later on combined to fight Mobutu. They later on resulted in other complicated conflicts in the GLR.

The RPF rose as an Abatutsi-ethnically constituted guerrilla movement and it waged a protracted arduous four year guerrilla war right from October 1, 1990 to 1994 (MurindwaRutanga, 2002, 1996). Being sucked in divisive politics, the *Akazu* political class in Rwanda failed to envision a solution outside the destruction of the Abatutsi. It therefore plotted genocide against the Rwandese of Abatutsi ethnic grouping. They achieved this by mounting a nationwide training of the Abahutu youth into *genocidaire* forces known as *Interahamwe* and *Impuzamugambi*.

Given its history of ethnically based suffering and isolation, the RPF rose and grew as an Abatutsi – ethnically based movement. Its invasion of Rwanda had to be surreptitiously planned until when it invaded Rwanda with heavy weaponry picked from Uganda on October 1, 1990. It inaugurated the arduous guerrilla war for four years before capturing state power in Kigali in 1994. The post-colonial Rwanda had been sharply divided by regionalism. The political class espoused and accentuated ethnicised and regionally-based exclusionary politics. This however did not mean that all the Abahutu were beneficiaries of independence. Only some people from the region where the incumbent president hailed from could benefit. This eventually gave rise to politics of regionalism. By the time of RPF's invasion, the rest of the Rwandese were opposed to the Abahutu from Northern Rwanda – Habyarimana's home. Yet, the political class had sharp intra-class antagonisms. Habyarimana's wife, Agatha and her relatives controlled political and economic power, known as *Akazu* in exclusion of Habyarimana and his relatives. *Akazu* politics was characterised by regionalism, corruption, mass poverty, rhetoric, empty promises and state terror. These sharply divided and disunited Rwanda. The *Akazu* sought to empty Rwanda of all the

Abatutsi and whoever had sympathies for them and send them rapidly through River Kanyaru as had happened from 1959 to 1973.

This group controlled the state, its arms and state resources, military training, controlled the import-export economy, information machinery. They could conclude defence pacts with other states. As the war intensified and threatened this group's hold onto power, this group received financial and technical assistance and advice from France and Belgium to espouse destructive ethnicised vengeful politics. It imported the killing machetes from China. France and Belgium trained the *Interahamwe* and *Impuzamugambi* on how to wipe out the *Inyanga Rwanda* (enemies of Rwanda). Thus, while Europe and China were launching satellites and making advanced scientific explorations in different domains ranging from aerospace technology to biotechnology and genetic engineering, they were at the same time assisting the GLR to wipe themselves out through horrific barbaric genocide. This was effected immediately after the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi were assassinated on April 6, 1994. When the Rwandan Presidential Jet which was bringing back the two presidents from Arusha Peace Talks with RPF was shot down as it approached Rwanda's International Airport. Instead of mourning this tragic loss, the *Interahamwe* and *Impuzamugambi* and FAR inaugurated a horrific, horrendous genocide against the Abatutsi and moderate Abahutu for 100 days.

When the RPF demonstrated their military superiority over the FAR, the French and Belgian forces and captured state power, the FAR, *Interahamwe* and *Impuzamugambi* drove over three million Rwandese out of Rwanda. The aim was to deny RPF victory by taking out the whole population. They were forced into a condition of statelessness. In Marxist language, it is to empty the sea of the water. Thus, RPF was to find the place empty. This however created physical and administrative spaces for the returning Abatutsi from a 35 year exile. Though the RPF started its rule with some semblance of ethnic tolerance, that window dressing soon became short-lived as the RPF deliberately isolated excluded Abahutu from national and local politics. This helped to fuel the abahutu-Abatutsi ethnicised hatred. RPF failed to democratise politics and the economy to the Abahutu, Abakiga and Abatwa ethnic groupings. New realities have begun to overshadow the conjunctural ethnicity in Rwanda. Rivalry amongst the generals over

economic and political power in Rwanda has come to the fore and political scores are settled through gruesome assassinations.

Over time, the RPF and NRM were faced with external insecurity tracing from the DRC. Rwanda was experiencing incursions from the *Interahamwe/Impuzamugambi* and FAR in DRC, while the NRM was facing ADF attacks from the same area. The right occasion for Rwanda and Uganda presented itself when the Deputy Government of Kivu, Lwasi Ngabo Lwabanji ordered Banyamulenge - totalling about 200,000 people - to vacate DRC and go either to Rwanda or Burundi within a week. Banyamulenge were Congolese of Abatutsi ethnic grouping. This move by the state to deprive a section of its citizens of their citizenship and rights and make them stateless and unwanted was rejected right away. It therefore compelled the victims to incept a rebellion against Mobutu's government on September 14, 1996 and they overthrew it on May 17, 1997. This rapid collapse of the 32-year old Mobutu's dictatorship was demonstrative of Mobutu's failure to construct and strengthen the Congolese state. It was a similar problem which had faced Idi Amin.

ADFL was founded around Bukavu as an ethnicised struggle. Unlike RPF's mono-ethnic composition, ADFL like NRM was able to attract many other victims of Mobutu's dictatorship, kleptocracy and pro-imperialism. They were victims of its exclusion, wretchedness, impoverishment, pauperisation, grievances and disaffection. This demonstrated how the rise and success of NRM and RPF instigated emancipatory revolutionary politics in the DRC. What we are not certain about is the actual reason why the Congolese state expelled the Banyamulenge within a week from their historical territory, and why it directed them to go to Rwanda and Burundi. Could it be that they were involved in clandestine insurgent activities against the Congo State, the *Interahamwe*, *Impuzamugambi* and the FAR which were based in DRC? What is also puzzling is how they could acquire weapons so fast and initiate an insurgency within one week of expulsion.

By then, there were guerrilla movements in the DRC. The main ones were the Congolese National Movement (CNM) and Congo National Liberation (CNL). Their aim was to liberate Congo of Mobutu's dictatorship, decay, kleptocracy and murders. These were joined by the

People's Revolutionary Party (PRS) and they formed ADFL. Mobutu's usefulness to western capitalism had come to an end after the collapse of the communist bloc, which wanted the cold war. Given the geopolitical interests that Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda had in DRC, they gave ADFL military and logistical support to oust Mobutu from power. The Zairean transitional Parliament in Kinshasa responded by cutting diplomatic relations with Rwanda, Uganda and Burundi over their support for ADFL. Congo was insisting that ADFL was full of Rwandan and Ugandan troops. To demonstrate its anger, it refused to attend the African Leaders' Summit in Nairobi on the Conflict three days later. Meanwhile, ADFL intensified military attacks in Bukavu and Uvira region in October 1996. Unable to fight back, Mobutu was forced on October 24<sup>th</sup> 1996 to appeal to the UN over this "external aggression". This did not help as Bukavu fell to the rebels four days later. ADFL captured Beni by November 30, 1996. It then captured the gold town of Bunia on January 2, 1997; Shaba Province followed by Kisangani City on March 17, 1997. It captured Lubumbashi City. These unstoppable military advances forced Mobutu to flee the country on May 16, 1997.<sup>5</sup> This movement was threatening Western imperialist interests. Its strength and rapidity did not provide ample opportunity for the western imperialist powers to study it. As such, individual member states of the European Union (EU) pushed the members to defend their interests in the Congo. On November 2, 1996, EU wanted the OAU forces to go to Congo and provide security to the refugees fleeing the war. By November 25, Canada had sent 230 troops to Uganda as a humanitarian intervention force in the DRC but it later failed to intervene. One would wonder as to why it did not send these troops to the frontline.

These agile military victories in terms of territoriality, political support and military gains compelled Mobutu to hire 300 Serbian mercenaries to defend Kisangani from the rebels attacks and check their advance. He also got military support in form of troops from the allied countries of Morocco, Togo and Chad. However, these could not stop ADFL's invincible military advances. These swift military successes compelled Mobutu on April 23 1997 to agree to the peace talks. He conceded to the long denied right for elections, with a proviso that he would not stand. These were signs that the dreaded dictator was on his way out. Eight days later, ADFL ordered Mobutu to quit Zaire that day to avoid

being captured. The ragging fire power and lack of popular support compelled him to flee Kinshasa on May 16, 1997.

Léopold's 28 years of rule followed by 52 years of Belgian rule followed by 32 years of Mobutu's rule had depopulated Congo and transformed this resource-rich country into a poor country full of untold death, sufferings, wretchedness, diseases and abject poverty. If we exclude the centuries of slave trade which Congo suffered, the subsequent 102 years of crude and cruel exploitation of its resources without corresponding benefits; kleptocracy, massive impoverishment and pauperisation made Léopold and Mubutu two of the richest men in the world. Their riches were a result of millions of deaths and other untold sufferings. It also manifested the failure of the independence leadership to address the peoples' concerns - democratic, political, economic, social and epistemological. It also demonstrated the African leadership's incapacity to address their problems and their failure to instil confidence in their people; their weakness of trusting and allying with imperialists, relying on auxiliary armies and mercenaries which Machiavelli had warned against. After thirty two years in leadership, Mobutu had a non-fighting "rag tag" marauding army and he therefore had to depend on troops and logistics from Togo, Morocco, Chad, France, Belgium and 300 Serbian mercenaries. True to Machiavelli's warning, these mercenaries fled for their lives as soon as they sensed danger.

The conflict that followed ADFL's capture of power demonstrated the persistence of wars in the GLR. Kabila did not take long as President before he was assassinated. He was replaced by his son, Joseph Kabila. Joseph Kabila expelled troops from Uganda and Rwanda out of the DRC. They attempted to reinvade Congo through the Eastern DRC with the intention of overthrowing Joseph Kabila's government. He quickly solicited military support from Zimbabwe and Angola and they helped him to beat off the invading forces from Uganda and Rwanda. However, Uganda and Rwanda were not yet ready to leave the DRC. In the process, they came to disagreements on many things including the strategies of fighting the Kabila government over control of diamond rich areas. They fought against each other in Kasangani in 1999. A just released UN draft report on DRC covering the 1993 - 2003 period accuses Rwandan forces of committing atrocities in DRC

tantamounting to genocide against the Abahutu refugees. It also accuses the Ugandan forces of massacring civilian, raping and training of child soldiers. It claims that they could have committed war crimes during the Kisangani clashes where 800 Congolese are said to have been killed. It accuses the two countries of looting several places in Kisangani; accuses Uganda of indirectly assisting Rwanda in the slaughtering of Rwandan Hutu civilian refugees. It accuses the two countries and Burundi of supplying troops, arms and logistical support to ADFL to massacre the Hutu refugees, members of FAR, *Interahamwe* and *Impuzamugambi*. It accuses the two countries of playing key roles in the conflict between the Hema and Lendu ethnic groups in the Ituri region in which tens of thousands of people died (Daily Monitor, September 13, 2010). The accused countries have rebutted these allegations and have threatened to withdraw from the UN Peace Keeping missions. The UN will *ipso facto* have to succumb to their position.

NRM also played a critical role in resolving the perennial Abahutu-Abatutsi Conflict in Burundi. It located the solution in adopting inclusionary politics through power sharing and general elections. Thus, though the military factor has been central in Burundi's politics and economy, still, the key solution was achieved through politics and dialogue.

NRM has also played a very important role in addressing the Southern Sudan conflict. In addition to giving sanctuary to the refugees from Southern Sudan, it assisted SPLM with rare base and logistics to fight the Khartoum dictatorship until when they were able to gain territory and build capacity to protect it. It has been training their Military Officers. They set up GOSS (Government of Southern Sudan) and they are voting in a plebiscite from January 9-15, 2011 to decide whether to secede or remain in the larger Sudan. They have full support of the GLR members and they are likely to break away from the Sudan.

problem. This came through power sharing. His role has continued with the ICC threat to arrest key figures in the Kenya government over the crimes committed in the post-election violence. Odinga flew to Uganda to seek Museveni's advice, intervention and support on this matter.

### Enforcing Bureaucratic Democracy

Although independence was attained through elections and was handed over to the popularly elected indigenes, democracy in Africa became an imperialist agenda. It is a democracy without nationalism and people. The IMF, the World Bank, the US and other western imperialist powers have become the guarantors of democracy in Africa. All they do is to impose elections on the discredited African political classes as conditionalities for loans and AID. They have also created fora on television and radio channels and programmes like Straight Talk Africa, Focus on Africa and RFI for the educated Africans to articulate western ideals of democracy and impose them on Africa. Within Africa, they have sent thousands and thousands of NGOs (jocularly known as Nothing Going Ons) to propagate western democracy in Africa. However, they feed Africans on rhetoric and empty talk as they cannot tolerate any African who professes nationalism, radicalism, anti-imperialism and national culture.

Ake (2000) explains how the post-cold war democratisation of Africa is for legitimising the disempowerment of the people of Africa, for making them worse off than before. He explains how western governments and international institutions depoliticise democracy by reducing it to governance and then reduce governance to technical political conditions for the success of SAPs – the rule of law, transparency and accountability – the three pivots of bureaucratic organisation and efficiency. The western type of economic liberalisation is antithetical to democratic struggle in GLR between those in power and those who want to replace them but without any democratic agenda. Democracy is about money, buying of votes, violence, intimidation, mudslinging and name calling, manipulation, manoeuvrability and vote rigging.

These trace from the collapse of the Soviet Union. Prior to that, the West was busy manufacturing and propping up dictatorships all over Africa. When it collapsed, the West began to sing a song of democracy. It forced the GLR onto the wagon of western-constructed form of multiparty elections. This however was not aimed at empowering the indigenes but at disempowering them as Ake argues. He points out that Africa lacks emancipatory democracy rather than the enslaving, depoliticising or disempowering one. He explains that democracy in

Africa is more in form than in substance, and that ascendancy of form over substance results in great hindrance of democratisation. He sees dangers in the current form of democratisation which makes the agrarian populations worse off than before as it hides their alienation from power and their oppression from being exposed as problems to be resolved. In his view, the post-soviet western impositions of democracy had effaced the old agenda; that the hysteria of democracy was overshadowing the importance of linking democracy to African people's persistent socio-economic hardships.

He underlines how Africa's problems do not stem from lack development but from lack of democratic politics. He links democracy to useful things for the agrarian population facing crisis instead of reducing it to multiparty voting which degenerates to vices like vote purchasing, vote rigging, violence and disappointment. Members of the political class take politics as employment and the state as the inexhaustible source of wealth.

These create hostile conditions with tendencies towards anarchy. They are strengthened by absence of a national bourgeoisie class and hegemonic national political class. More still, neither the local states, nor imperialism are interested in actual democracy in GLR as that would mean dismantling imperialism, its interests and technologies.

The existing realities and the trappings of power have combined to encourage the political class not to relinquish power until when they die like Kenyatta or when they are overthrown by the military of social movements or when they are killed like Kayibanda, Habyarimana and Ndadaye or when they are threatened by the military as in the case of Nyerere. In this bid, Amin declared himself life president. The political classes have over time been remodelling their mechanics of power, amending the constitutions and controlling the military to retain power. Some of them have tried to democratise power at the lower levels without loosening the grips on the top. The only possible challenges to these classes have been through social movements. Some of these movements have anarchic and anti-people tendencies. As example is the Lords Resistance Army (LRA). Then, KANU gave birth to Ford Kenya, Ford Asili (jocularly called Ford Silly), NARC and Rainbow. This was not principled politics as the declaration of the election results

demonstrated. Elections had taken place on December 27, 2007 and the Electoral Commission declared Kibaki winner on December 30, 2007. This immediately ignited post-election violence, which consumed many lives and property and wrecked the existing peace. It was resolved by Kibaki and Odinga signing a power sharing agreement 'the National Accord and Reconciliation Act' on February 28, 2008. A power-sharing cabinet was formed and it was sworn in on April 17, 2008. Some individuals resolved to search for retribution through imperialism by appealing to the ICC in the Hague to investigate and prosecute those responsible for instigating the post-election conflict in Kenya. By then, the country had regained normalcy and it was starting to experience the fruits of stability from the government of national unity. Above all, the political class was not therefore willing to submit to an imperialist power. Another reason was that many of those accused and who had face the ICC were high ranking government officials in cabinet and government. Odinga had to fly to Uganda over the matter. Immediately after his visit, the Kenya Parliament voted on December 12, 2011 to withdraw from the ICC. The aim was to block the trial at the ICC of all those who were accused of participating in the post-election violence.

### Conclusion

While most of them started as developmental states – being sensitive to the needs of the people and addressing them, they failed to take into account their social and political demands. Instead of creating democratic practices for full participation of all people, they developed tendencies to hegemonise single party systems, authoritarianism and dictatorships. These soon resulted into decay and economic decline, collapse of social services and corruption and transformation of public positions into personal gains. Long stay in offices became a vice. It increased the politicians' amenability to political decay, incompetence and lack of political ideas. They also dropped their anti-imperialist rhetoric and started to seek favours from it. Western imperialism found this interstitial for it into these countries' politics. It imposed hostile anti-people policies like SAPs. Put differently, African dictatorship clashing with imperialism lead to imposition of SAPs and other conditionalities. Among these was privatisation of public enterprises, which catapulted the political class to new forms and levels of corruption. Akampumuza

(2007) explains the process through which a country's wealth and institutions are passed into private hands under privatisation policy, which is imposed by IMF and the World Bank and implemented by the acquiescing and obsequious local states. The drive for political offices as full, permanent employment and sources of wealth has resulted in the instrumentalisation of ethnicity in politics, the incessant monetisation of politics, increased lack of social services and vicious political competition.

#### Notes :

- 1 The European cruelties are documented in the colonial files. An example is File No. C54: African Affairs, Emigration of Nations from Belgian Congo to Neighbouring British Territories'; Uganda National Archives. Entebbe.
- 2 He was President of the multi-ethnic UPRONA party which won elections.
- 3 Museveni's speech at his swearing in as President of Uganda on 29<sup>th</sup> January, 1986. Published in '25 Years of Nation Building'; Daily Monitor, January 5, 2011.
- 4 It is worth noting that Uganda honoured Rwagosore with the highest national honour on October 9, 2010.
- 5 The advances of the ADFL war are documented in the Ugandan print Media Newspapers – New Vision, Daily Monitor and Red Pepper.

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