THE SEARCH FOR NATIONALITY – GUERILLA STRUGGLE IN RENZURU

by

Mr. Shauka-Muhindo
Department of Political Science,
Makerere University

Paper presented to the International Seminar on Internal Conflict, 21st - 26th September, 1987; sponsored by International Alert, London; Makerere Institute of Social Research, Makerere University; International Peace Research Institute, Oslo; and The United Nations University, Tokyo.

Views and opinions in this paper are the sole responsibility of the author, not the sponsor nor those of the organisation the author comes from.
Whenever a people decide to wage a struggle, armed or otherwise, there must be a cause and a purpose for the struggle. The history of social movement is full of examples of popular mass movements. Some have been labelled "peasant insurrections"; others, "tribal" movements; others, secessionist movements and others national liberation movements. Whatever the specific category of a popular struggle the ultimate goal is to establish democracy. However democracy means different things from one struggle to another depending on a given social context in which the struggle takes place and also depending on the immediate and long term demands of the people who struggle. How long a movement struggle can be sustained will depend on a number of things. Among them are: 1) Identification of the problem and the demands which a struggling people articulate, 2) organisation and objectives of the movement, and 3) whether or not the principal demands of the movement are answered.

Where a social movement confronts a stronger force, it may be terminated depending on the relative weakness or strength of the organisation and leadership of the movement. But as long as the principal demands of the movement remain unanswered, such a movement is bound to re-emerge at a later point. And when it does re-emerge, it will respond to new objective and subjective conditions existing at the time of the movement's re-emergence, and will be reorganised likewise. It is in this light that this paper seeks to address the search for self-determination embodied in the Rwenzururu Movement. The Rwenzururu Movement is the movement of the Bamba and Bakonzo who are found in the Rwenzori Mountains area in western Uganda. Elsewhere I have discussed the historical development of the movement up to 1962. This paper will focus mainly on the movement and the Rwenzururu Kingdom which was created in the course of the struggle after the movement erupted as a political outburst in 1962. I also intend to discuss certain issues that were not raised in the previous article.

Importantly, the Rwenzururu struggle has existed within the colonial and neo-colonial contexts and also largely in a peasant environment. This is a context in which the analysis of the Rwenzururu Movement and the search for self-determination is to be made.

However, the study of peasants and peasant-based movements took time to be conducted. The first seriously undertaken studies of peasant movements are by Barrington Moore Jr. and Eric Wolfe. Some of the other studies which followed Moore's and Wolfe's are by Joel S. Migdal, Jeffrey M. Paige, F. Lamoide Tullis, and Ngo Vinh Long. I do not intend to give concrete criticism on each of the above studies since they fall outside the main focus of this paper. The studies have been cited for further studies to permit the readers to acquaint themselves with the problematic of analyzing peasant movements. However, general comments on the studies are in order. The first is that the attempt to explain peasant revolts or why peasants become revolutionary, the studies above have located peasants majorly in the marked situation. Their main focus being to analyze peasant situations viz a viz the development and spread of capitalism. Secondly, as James Scott has said of Migdal's and Tullies' studies, the problem has been failure to employ political economy methodology by which it is easier to understand the totality of the life existence of the peasants. Scott has correctly argued that bourgeois methodology can not be useful in
explaining peasant revolutions. He has further argued that peasant rebellions have been studied from a safe distance using theories based largely on models of bourgeois calculus and that this has entailed to prove or disprove the assumptions made about peasants but they do not go a long way to study the human participants.  

Many studies on peasant revolutions which employ bourgeois methodology commonly agree that peasants fight for land, subsistence and against misuse of power. They also commonly agree, especially Nigdal, Paige and Tullis that peasants are incapable of organising themselves. They have to be organised from without.

However, it is not bourgeois social science alone which relegates the peasants to a secondary position in social revolution. Even Eurocentric classical marxists (marx and lenin) visualised peasants as essentially a conservative force, who, if they are to contribute to revolution at all, they must be moved, mobilised and organised by a vanguard party which will know where and when to deploy them. Marx as well as Lenin argued that the proletariat would form the main basis of revolutionary movements. However, contemporary revolutionary situations in the entire world have disproved both the bourgeois social science and classical (European) marxism. In all revolutions which have succeeded (Cuba, Vietnam, China etc.) peasants have been a decisive force. This has been so because revolutionary leaders in these countries took trouble to analyse and understand not only the objective, but also the subjective consciousness of the peasants.

On the African scene two revolutionary theorists (also leaders) have given prominence to the consideration of culture as an important aspect of struggle. 10 This approach to the revolution enables revolutionary leaders to understand the different aspects of social culture that go into the struggles: the peasants' conception of their enemy, different cultures in the countryside, what they claim as their rights and whom they consider responsible for their plight. By so doing, a revolutionary leader takes stock of different responses from sections of the peasantry or the masses to the atmosphere of intimidation and terror and their concept of injustice and how they attempt to fight that injustice. This in turn leads to the identification of the peasants' existing forms of organisation - formal and informal - and their conception of democracy. Thus the peasants own record of history is important if anyone is to claim to organise them for revolution.

It is only when the totality of the life existence of the particular revolting peasants (and the masses) has been grasped that the revolutionary leadership can effectively re-organise and mobilise the people along clearly defined objectives and goals of the revolution. In a situation where the so-called revolutionary leadership does not take into account the peoples subjective consciousness, there is a danger of the masses acting as social 'escorts' to the insurgent leadership to positions of power and chauvinism. When the new leadership is in political control the 'social escorts' - the peasants and masses - will find it necessary to struggle against the new rule. In this case what makes the masses abound with such a kind of revolutionary leadership are the whimsical promises of a better life when the revolution has been accomplished. This shortfall in the process of organisation and official practices of the new leadership may lead to the masses withdrawing their support for the new leadership. Of course, in the process new contradictions emerge and the cycle begins all over again.
Likewise, a social scientist who investigates and seeks to explain revolutionary social movements should attempt to go beyond the formal organisations and institutions. This will carry the analysis a long way to critically summarise the positive and negative aspects of a given movement as reflected through actual historical experiences. It will also help the researcher to identify the extent of failure or success of the movement, make it possible for the researcher to see whether or not a movement could be said to have achieved anything concrete as a result of the struggle.

So far five pieces of literature exist on the Rwenzururu struggle by F. Stacey12, Martin Doornbos13, Nelson Kasfir14, and my own piece15 of the five works cited above four of them, excepting my article, are largely counter-insurgency. The theoretical basis on which Stacey, Kasfir and Doornbos’ analyses are made is modernisation. The modernisation theory simply explains democratic demands and social movements, which by the accident of colonial and neo-colonial history bear a nationality (“tribal”) character, as “tribalism”. It’s method of structural-functionalism is the more limiting for it does not permit the modernisation theorists to see beyond formal institutions and organisations. As a result the contradictory relationships between the people and the institutions of rule is seen in negative terms. Revolutionary insurgency is blamed either on the African state or the peoples or both. Insurgents are either seen as resisting modernity or the African ruling classes have failed to create order (or suppress the disaffected?) in civil society. Not only that, but they have also failed to do so among themselves because of tribalism.

This question of nationalisation in Africa has not been accorded serious independent evaluation. Even among the marxist writers the bulk of work has tended to follow orthodox European marxism17. The main problem with this approach is that the marxist writers regard the national question in the 19th century Europe as the same as those in Africa of the 20th century. The objective conditions reflected in Lenin, Critical Remarks on the National Question ... and Stalin’s Marxism and the National Question indicate that the theory of nationalisation therein was a response to historical conditions particularly in Russia whereby the mature conditions of capitalism highlighted in Lenin’s Development of Capitalism in Russia, and the desire for nationalisation against ‘capitalist’ countries overshadowed national formations of small nations. This kind of nationalism, the nationalism of anti-capitalism, was seen as historical. Hence according to Stacey, a nation, he wrote should have the following factors: it must be historically constituted, have a stable community of people, a common language, a common territory a common economic life and a common culture.16
has rightly observed, "Stalin was unable to predict the dynamic and powerful force of nationalism which would refuse containment into this tightly knit legitimist categorization."15 Hence, the classic Marxist approach to the question of nationalism deliberately overshadowed the nationalist issue.

Northcote's basic idea is that the right of national minorities could be protected through a country-wide law promulgated in a consistently democractic state that does not depart from the principle of equality.20 He also had suggested that in order to eliminate all national oppression it is very important to create autonomous areas, however small, with entirely homogeneous populations, towards which members of the respective nationalities scattered all over the country... could gravitate and with which they could enter into relations and free association of any kind.21

Here both seem to recognize an important point that a national culture cannot be created free of the consideration of the cultures of the component nationalities. This is true because different nationalities have different cultural beliefs which they acquire in the actual process of socio-economic development. Thus the culture of a given nationality corresponds to the level of social development reached among the particular members of that nationality. Therefore, to harmonize society national construction must take into account the need to protect the minority nationalities from national oppression of whatever kind.

Samaranah has made a distinction between the national question in Europe in the 17th century and that of the third world countries, characterizing the national question in Africa one based on colonialism. Thus the national question on the level of social development reached among the particular members of that nationality. Therefore, to harmonize society national construction must take into account the need to protect the minority nationalities from national oppression of whatever kind.23

On an important note, Mandell has made a point which makes sense as far as the nationality issue is concerned. He has suggested that the nationality process are historically linked with the process of the integration of tribal societies. He argues that in the pre-colonial societies, the process of state formation was characterized by internal division and internal differentiation, interlinked in different degrees, depending on the concrete case.

Under colonialism, pre-colonial nationality contradictions were transplanted and sometimes modified to suit colonial interest. New contradictions were also erected, constituting the basis of the colonial question. One would assume that the decolonization process would lead to the re-ordering of the colonially moulded situation, but in practice, no attempt was made to do so in many African countries. The new leadership simply inherited the colonial social order and made little attempt to tackle the nationality questions democratically.
In similar note nationality contradictions which give birth to socio-political movements tend to be sharpest where imperialism, among other contradictions, turned to its advantage and utilized the contradiction between nationalities, "turning nationality into an organizing principle for both the state structure and economic life." And as members of the affected nationalities (minorities) struggle for equality (democracy) two tendencies are likely to emerge as Martin Doornbos has observed: 24 1) where the population of the conflicting nationalities is widely spread over a common territory, protest by the disaffected (oppressed) nationalities tends to be limited to a continuous pressure for participation in the decision-making structure and process. 2) Where the conflicting nationalities occupy fairly exclusive areas like in the case of Baamba/Bakonzo... the tendency is to fight for separate or autonomous administration. Denying a "separatist movement" the principal demand for separation would amount to "national oppression", a suppression of the democratic aspirations of the people of the nationality or nationalities involved. In this case nationality "separatist movement" might be transformed into a "secessionist movement". Hence assertion of independence.

However, it should be noted that not all secessionist movements represent the will of the people. There are some secessionist movements which are initiated from
without the society such as the Katangese secessionist movement which occurred in the Belgian Congo at independence. In the case of the Katangese secessionist movement the initiative came from the Belgian colonialists whose motive was to forestall the creation of a united Congolese nation.26 Another example was the Biafran case where the Ibo sought to preserve a position of advantage which was derived from a high level of education by which the Ibo had become the dominant group in Nigeria but also faced the challenge of other groups.27 The same can be said of Buganda if the Baganda had been given chance to secede from the rest of Uganda as they had attempted to do, round-about independence. All the above three cases are examples of secessionist movements where imperialism has been directly involved.

HISTORICAL AND POLITICAL BACKGROUND TO THE NLENZUNGU PROBLEM.

This can be traced back to the time which bourgeois historiography has called the period of "tribal migrations" in East and Central Africa. The period when groups of people moved from one place to another within the region to find new settlements. This period marks the genesis of technological progress in pre-colonial Africa, the disintegration of tribal societies and the emergence of strong centralised states. It is also the period when the present nationalities began to take shape as a result of intermingling.
There were contradictory aspects as different groups of people came together. Sometimes there was cooperation and sometimes conflict. However, cooperation or conflict depended on the level of social development reached by either group:

1) Where a migrating people felt itself strong than the inhabiting community the relationship between the two became antagonistic. Such was the case when the Himis migrated southward. In the process they displaced the weaker Bakonzo to the mountains.

2) Where the two groups coming into contact represented an equal level of social development and shared productive roles, the tendency was to intermingle peacefully. Such was the case when the agricultural Banyoro came to live among the Bakonzo in the eastern part of the Rwenzori mountains before the 19th century. In this case the new society represented a balance in the peoples culture.

3) Where the migrating people were the weaker, the tendency was to make concessions and such peoples lost their cultural identity. Such was the case when the Bakunja migrated from the islands of Lake Victoria to the Kutsuru range of the Rwenzori mountains and became absorbed by the Bandunde. However, even then some cultural aspects of the migrant group are taken up by the home group.

All the three modes of interaction in the pre-colonial era are represented in the oral history of the Bakonzo. This history begins with the legendary Konjo and how he led his people from Buganda to the Rwenzoris about four centuries back. Konjo is said to have fled Buganda (on the islands of Lake Victoria) in a dispute between the Kabaka of Buganda and the people of the islands. Fleeing westwards to Kutsuru (one of the ranges of the Rwenzori mountains in Zaire) it is said that Konjo found another people there called Bandunde. He made peace with the chief of the Bandunde and settled in the mountains. Generation after generation the Bakunja (as Konjo's descendants were called) intermingled with the Bandunde who spoke a language known as "Lukodi". That about 400 hundred years ago the Bakonzo, a bi-product of the Bandunde and Bakunja began to migrate north and eastward on and around the Rwenzoris. That the agricultural clans (Baswagha) took the mountain course and other clans (Basakili clans) took the east direction until they settled in the Lake region (around Kabolya and Katwe), while the agricultural clans spread all over the mountains. (one important aspect of this history is that the Bakunja had introduced a tradition of water transport and this should explain their preference for the lake region).
That about 300 years ago, Kibiniro led Bakonzo, chased the Baamba from Bunyangabu and Burahya driving them to present Bwamba (in Uganda) and Bujumbura (in the Congo, now Zaire). He drove them further into the Ituri forest and set himself as chief of the mountains of Bwamba etc.

Later, people from Bunyoro came and found Bakonzo settling on the lowlands all around the mountain to River Muzizi. The two groups of people (the Bakonzo and Bunyoro agriculturist migrants) intermingled on the eastern side of the Rwenzori and formed a new people on the lowlands called "Banyanaa". Lukobi flavoured by Luganda, composed with Ruyoro to produce a new language called "Ruyanaa". This is what lent Ruyoro words to Lukonzo (the language of the Bakonzo). That when the Babilito of Bunyoro came, their Bilito language was watered down. They spoke Ruyanaa. On being rejuvenated by the British who made them rulers, the Babilito developed "Rutooro" as a chiefly language. But Rutoro is corrupted with Ruyanaa. The conclusion to this part of the oral history of Bakonzo argues that the Bakonzo/Bwamba are the rightful inhabitants of the Rwenzori mountains and the surrounding lowlands. So they have the right to that "country" and must fight to rule themselves.

PRE-COLONIAL SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND THE 19TH CENTURY RATIONALITY CONTRADICTIONS

By the 16th century the Bakonzo had developed technology for production at two levels. In the first place they produced their own farm tools - hoes. The basis of this innovation was iron-smelting. Besides technology for agricultural production, the Bakonzo had advanced the technology of water transport. This was the means by which bakono groups from Kivu Province and the Kabyak crossed Lake Edward to join the Basongora, a pastoral group then living in the area stretching from River Rwimi (Kabale) to the lake region. It is commonly believed that the Basongora are a 'stray case' who arrived late after the Hima invasion of the area and were unable to proceed further south. When the Hima invasion had displaced the Bakonzo to the higher altitudes of the Rwenzori (Busongora side), the Basongora roamed the lowlands with their cattle. A similar group of people called Bataka roamed the lowlands of Bwamba. They are also cattle keepers. Other groups of people who came to Busongora during the 18th century were the Banyamwezi. When these groups of people arrived in Busongora they became responsible for increased commodity production in the lake region. They were involved in salt mining at Kasenye and Lake Katwe. At first, they carried out some agricultural production mainly on the crater lake banks and in crater.
That many groups of people came to Busongora has been documented elsewhere. Although Ingham does not say who the other groups were he nonetheless records thus:

"The Bago and 'Bakingo' are new groups of people who came to Busongora to re-orient economic activities there. Initially dominated by the Basingura, the Bago settled on the islands in Lake George under the rule of a break-away dynasty, the Banyamana. The other group the Bakingo occupied the two islands in Katwe Bay, in Lake Edward, and the shores beside Lake Kavwe. They did not challenge the overlordship of the ruler of Hisaka, but they at once immersed themselves in salt trade. They had brought with them, lightweight canoes and in them they began to transport salt to the further shores of Lake Edward and George, shifting the main markets away from the salt lakes and making the trade more accessible to travellers on foot from distant lands. The ruler of Hisaka was delighted by the enterprise and loyalty of these new subjects whose efforts resulted in a still more rapid growth in trade and increased the income from the activities of the tax collectors. By the 19th century the Bago and Bakingo had ceased to grow their own food and were fully engaged in commerce and in mining salt."

At this point we can establish two important facts: one, that the development of productive forces (technology) amongst the Bakingo groups led to both increased agricultural food production mainly on the mountains and among the Banyoro agricultural migrants in Bunyanga-bu and Burakya counties; and two, the development of water transport was the prelude to long distance trade or it stimulated it. Water transport on Lakes Edward and George (Muhonya) facilitated the movement of people who became the main salt producers from other areas to the lake region. In turn the salt trade sensitised the ruling classes of Bunyoro-Kitara overtime exposing the entire economic potential of the region. A concrete understanding of the relationship between the rulers of Bunyoro-Kitara and the people of Busongora region which was not part of Bunyoro can only be reached from this standpoint.
Once there were products of labour then there was exchange. Some iron-impliments were brought to Busongora via Bunyagabu and Burahya from Bunyoro in exchange for salt and grains. What must be noted is that Bunyoro was not the only source of iron impliments. The technology which produced salt came mainly from Congo (Zaire) and the mountain parts of the southern part of the Ruwenzoris, i.e. the highlands above Busongora, otherwise known as Bukonzo.

SALT TRADE: PRELUDE TO FEUDAL CONTROL.

We have noted the commodity exchange was a result of increased food production, in turn, a result of the development of productive forces. Commodity exchange first harmonised the society which comprised the pastoralists (Basongora) and agriculturalists. The Basongora pastoralists were the original consumers of salt produced at Kasenyi and Lake Katwe. Among the Basongora salt became important for feeding cattle. To the agricultural people it became important for everyday use, in cooking and for medicinal purposes. Once its uses were known the demand for salt developed and the product entered commodity exchange market, both within Busongora and distant places in Bunyoro and elsewhere. As the demand for salt from Lake Katwe expanded salt production was intensified.

Given that salt was first of all largely utilised by pastoralists in Busongora, it is also true that salt trade was first undertaken by Basongora pastoralists and pastoralists in other places - the Bahuma of Bunyoro and the Bahuma of the kingdoms of Ankole. The use of salt subsequently reached the agriculturalists of those areas through commodity (and labour) exchange between Bahuma and agriculturalists.

According to the above three propositions are immediately derived:

i) The 19th century relationship between the people of Busongora and the people of Bunyoro was at first a relationship between pastoral groups - the Basongora and Babito/Bahuma. It was not a relationship between the rulers of Bunyoro and the entire people of Busongora and the mountain region.

ii) This relationship arose on the basis of trade, i.e. exchange of commodities, but not on the basis of production or control of the means of production. Production was still controlled by the non-pastoralist working groups.

iii) The agricultural groups (in Bunyagabu, Busongora, Burahya, Mwine and Bunyoro) joined the trade mainly as producers (of salt at Katwe and Kasenyi, grain) and labourers. The agricultural Bukonzo who lived higher up in the mountains then did not participate in the regional trade.
To facilitate a smooth process of regional commerce and long distance trade the "omukago" or blood-brotherhood system evolved. Yosigwa explains the rationale of this system as being the conditions to bring about a sense of trustworthiness between buyer and seller who came from different places on the one hand and a condition to ensure security for both parties on the other. Here we can rightly say that the system of blood-relationship as a response to demands of long distance trade was first of all purely on a commercial basis, entered first by traders and progressively by chiefs and traders. Blood-relationship was not an inter-state relationship as such. So Busongora did not enter any form of political pact with Bunyoro when trade developed between the two. This is what I meant when I argued that the 19th century contacts between the people of Busongora and the 'Babiito' were not Jakonzo but Busongora, and also that the cooperation between the chiefs of Bunyamwera of Babiito origin like Kasoro and Busongora like Nyamungo and Buragga could have been limited to trade and not overlordship.

At this stage it is conceivable that the "omukago" system as it was carried out embraced class interests. Class relationships which are based on material property relations will always transcend kinship relationships which are only consanguine, not necessarily based on property. In the case of Busongora, once the Busongora traders and chiefs had entered "omukago" relationships with traders from the other areas, and since these were the less numerous, they had, too, to enter blood-relationship with the chiefs of the agricultural groups and those of the salt producers, to ensure security and labour from them. In that process the agricultural chiefs and the salt labourers (carriers) could quicken the rate of acquiring cattle and cattle products, and other exchangeable commodities from Bunyoro such as iron implements and bark-cloth. This explains the class relationship between the pastoralist-traders and chiefs of agricultural groups on the one hand, and the agricultural population and the Sakwila on the other. It is therefore not surprising to note that the chiefs of Bwakonzo and other producer groups could take sides when later the struggle for feudal control of the wealth of the region emerged during the 19th century between the Babiito break-away groups and the rulers of Bunyoro-Kitara.

Through trade the wealth of Bunyamwera, Bunyamwera and Busongora was exposed to the rulers of Bunyoro-Kitara. It was after that the rulers of Bunyoro sought to extract tribute from those areas. The Babiito rulers of Bunyoro could thus send agents to those areas to collect
tribute. Tantalised by the wealth of the region the agents were encouraged to aspire for feudal control. Kaboyo, a prince of Bunyoro Kingdom thus could break away from his father the king of Bunyoro-Kitara to create his own territory while he was on a tribute collecting mission.

Not until this is established as the historical development can we accept the view that Busongora and associated areas west of the present-day Busongora county had long before been vassal areas for the rulers of Bunyoro-Kitara. Those who assert the position of vassalage to Bunyoro of these areas before commodity exchange had developed beyond the enclaves of producers have misrepresented the facts of history.34

KABOYO AND THE FOUNCING OF A PRINCEDOM

Kaboyo was inspired by the wealth of Mwenge, Burahya, Bunyangabu and Busongora. We have noted already that the first contacts were made by traders from Bunyoro who came to look for salt to take to Bunyoro market and beyond. What is noteworthy here is that the traders were not necessarily of royal origin, but came from the Bahuma group. These traders also paid rent on salt to the rulers of Bunyoro. Payment of rent to the rulers of Bunyoro limited the traders commercial freedom.

During the 15th century, to the salt trade was added the ivory. Bunyangabu and Busongora were the main producers of ivory. Ivory trade had attracted the attention of coastal traders to the area via Buganda and Ankole. Trade in ivory connected markets in Busongora and Bunyangabu to coast markets. With coast contacts established cowrie shells had been introduced as a medium of exchange. The use of cowrie shells was a progressive development in commerce of the entire East African region. Such were the changing circumstances in which traders of Bunyoro origin might want to establish a territory for themselves separate from Bunyoro-Kitara, to control the trade routes with distant areas without the interference of the rulers of Bunyoro. It was on this basis that the chiefs in the area which became Toro supported Kaboyo when he broke away from his father's kingdom.35

An important point which writers of the history of the kingdom of Toro have not stressed is the development of internal forces. The development of internal forces at different levels within the region in the pre-capitalist—(pre-colonial) setting led to the emergence of broad 'zonal' occupational groups among the people. There were those who became purely
subsistence producers, particularly in the agricultural areas. Those produced mainly for the market. Also there were those who became pastoralists. In between these major occupational groups or alongside them, other economic and non-economic activities were also done. The non-economic activities and specialisations involved such pre-capitalists beliefs and practices such as weanmaking, magic power to heal and kill and surgery. Economic specialisations included iron-works; smelting and tool making. Class differentiation takes place in the fold of all these activities. So we have a society differentiating into social classes as a result of internal forces. This process continues alongside other process which we see below.

The other occupational group developed as a result of trade. In this group we find both local and foreign participants. This is the group of traders. It included members of all nationalities: Bantu, Basongora, Banyoro (including migrants) and Barima. Within this group it was easier for an individual to establish his influence on the basis of his economic performance.

The 19th century chiefs of Busongora came from this group. However, there was significant overlap between the first category and the second. There was a tendency of the successful traders to establish themselves as traditional chiefs – and traditional chiefs to become important traders such as Kakuli of Lake Katwe, and chief Kalakara who controlled the mountain trade route from Bugeye (Bughoye) to Rwamba.

The third category were the representatives of the omukama (king) of Banyoro who were charged with the duty of collecting tribute. These had feudal tendencies wanting to be in political control. However, they did not exact tribute by force all the time. They were assisted by the local chiefs. Their influence did not extend to Busongora (the present Busongora county) and beyond.

The problem of understanding the recent history of Toro arises from the fact that social dynamics of the pre-capitalist or pre-colonial societies therein were not treated seriously by western scholarship, of the descriptive nature. According to the history written by colonial and neo-colonial scholars, states were formed simply by breaking away from parent kingdoms and the reasons being either the weakness of father-king or ambition of son-king. The real history underlying state formations is never addressed seriously.

Kaboyo broke away from his father, Nyanutukura, the king of Banyoro-Kitara roundabout 1810. Akingbade has given the reasons for the break-away as being a combination of the factors for Banyoro’s weakness during the 19th century: external, the existence of Buganda
as a compact, strong and well organised kingdom; inter-

cal, the administrative difficulty, economic considera-

tion and rising ambition of some local chieftains - the

major factors for secession; size, that the size of

Bunyoro-Kitara militated against any move to contain

rebellion and the continual succession of strong rulers

of Buganda kingdom - like Junju, Kayima etc. and above

all the economic potentiality of Toro. (However, a

political state of Toro did not exist before the sece-

ssion!)

Kaboyo first established his princedom among the

Bahuma of Mwenge to the south of his father kingdom.

This is where the Toro princedom first existed when

it was created in the 19th century. Kaboyo was forced

to run westward when the forces of Bunyoro charged to

retain control over the area. When Kaboyo was attack-

ed the chiefs who supported his secession in Burahya

and Bunyangabu quickly mobilised their forces which

helped Kaboyo to ward off the Bunyoro attack. So the

force that fought against Nyamutukura was a combined

force of the Bahuma of Mwenge and other groups of

people west of Mwenge county - the Bakonzo inclusive.

Furley quoting Wilson argues for the remarkable invol-

vement of Bakonzo and Baamba in the fight to whom the

wounding of Nyamutukura was attributed. He writes:

"Nyamutukura himself followed in

a litter as he was too weak to

march, but in the defeat that

followed he was actually wounded,...

The wound was inflicted with an

arrow, and this points to an interest-
ing feature of the Toro victory:

they won partly because they used

bows and arrows as well as spears.

Wilson argues strongly that this

implies that Baamba and Bakonzo

helped in the victory, for the

bow was their weapon...."

Nonetheless Kaboyo moved westward to settle.

He mobilised further support in Bunyangabu. He

set up his headquarters 30 miles south of Buhesi,

according to Furley.

The Significance of Kaboyo's Rule.

Kaboyo's rule marks the beginning of the demise

of a freely developing society in Toro, in the 19th

century. It resulted into the disintegration of society

along nationality and clan lines. Kaboyo's rule ani-

mated the hitherto diminishing role of clans in the

society then molding. This unfortunate interjection

in the history of the people of the area had serious

negative consequences on the various groups of people

found there. It was horizontally divisive and verticall-
dilution of the nitherto emerging class society. Katuyo brought with him his own ruling aristocracy and his clan hierarchy of chiefs to Babiito, the Balisi and Basita on the top. Other Banyoro clans, the Enyamwe, Ashalengo, Engobii, Obuni and the like fared as worst as the Bakonzo clan. Members of these clans were generally discriminated against until the collapse of the kingdom of Toro in 1967. The clan animosity first implanted in Toro kingdom by Katuyo in the 19th century and perpetuated even under colonial rule in the 20th century could drive Samson Rusoke, the last Prime Minister (umuhikire) of Toro to repudiously retort that “only a butoro proper” (umuteere nyakacura) shall be Katikire of Toro” in 1962 when Bakonzo and Bamba leaders suggested that the post of Prime Minister should rotate among the major nationalities in the kingdom, i.e. Batooro, Bakonzo and Bamba.

Having surrounded himself with his own people, Katuyo undertook to assert his authority over the local chiefs. He had brought with Bamba soldiers and recruited other soldiers from Kwengo whom he used to suppress other chiefs, after setting up a complete state system around himself. Katuyo’s attempt to subdue local chiefs created resistance against him. Even Kasore who had championed the planning of the secession for him is said to have resisted the new developments until Katuyo’s forces pursued him to death. The era of peaceful co-existence between pastoral and agricultural populations was gone! Step by step Katuyo attacked chiefs of adjoining areas. Some chiefs gave in, other completely resisted him. According to Turley, Katuyo attacked Mairanga, the chief of Mulindi, in whose

KABALAGE DESTROYS THE BABITU DYNASTY BEGAN IN TORU BY KABUYO.

The rule of the Babiito dynasty in Toro was terminated by Kabalage during the 1880s. During that period Kabalage re-annexed Toro to Banyoro and his power extended to Busungura. Kabalage’s wars of the 1880s explain the final pre-colonial retreat of the Bakonzo to the mountains. Kabalage first raided Toro in 1876. For two years his forces harried the people of Toro, overrunning the kingdom in 1878. By this time Kabalage’s advancement was checked by two main non-Batooro forces, one, was chief Kalikura’s guerrilla forces which repulsed Kabalage’s forces led by Kikule when they tried to pursue Mukurusa into the mountains. Kalikura was a Mukonzo chief who supported Mukurusa against Mukabirere in a succession dispute after the death of Nyaika. He was also Nyaika’s brother-in-law. Nyaika married Kaluju, Kalikura’s sister. Kaluju was the mother of a boy named Kihika.
Nziwa, who became known as Kasagama.

Mukurasa's seat was in Kalikura's chieftdom in the territory adjoining the mountains in Bunyamwera. However, Kalikura and Mukurasa were coerced into making peace with Nyanagungu, Kikule's assistant by making blood-brotherhood with him. Kusengye then cynically betrayed this brotherhood by persuading Kalikura to go with him to Bunyoro to visit Kabalega, and hopefully to normalise relations. But they were promptly murdered on arrival. The second force which contained Kabalega's advancement was the Baganda mercenary army in aid of Nyanagongo Kakonde under whose rule Kabalega crushed the Babilo dynasty in 1869. Kakonde would have sustained the monarchy but the war situation that resulted from succession troubles and Kabalega's incessant raids resulted in turn into a major 19th century famine in Toro known as "Bagwerekere" in 1868. The Baganda army withdrew and Kakonde could not face the "aburasura" (Kabalega's soldiers) alone and so he abdicated and fled to Buganda. His defeat marked a final triumph for Kabalega's long drawn out effort to re-annex Toro.

In Busongora, the situation was compounded with the effects of famine and the outbreak of small pox and rinder post in 1890. Kabalega's forces, it appears, did not have to fight during the period 1890. But Kabalega could only reorganise the administration of Toro thereby extending Bunyoro state control to the area. He appointed chiefs in Toro under his control and very tactically he avoided appointing people of doubtful loyalty. The appointed chiefs were from his maternal clan or war leaders. During the war against Kabalega, chief Ruhandika of Bwamba hid Nyanagongo and his mother at a place called Kigunga, where Baganda chiefs had earlier hidden and defended Nyanagongo against his opponents. The fugitives were hidden under a large stone locally known as "Ibwetina Nyanagongo" which is found in the Rwenzori mountains, on Bwamba side. Having hidden the boy, Kasagama, Ruhandika, together with Kiyanzana and other Bakenzo chiefs organised a force which repulsed Kabalega's forces after inflicting heavy casualties on them. A series of battles were fought as Kabalega's army attempted to root Kasagama and his mother from their hiding place. During one of these battles, Ruhandika killed Kayita, one of Kabalega's friend commanders. This incident took place at River Kyengura during the battle of Kikule in the highlands of Bwamba. Ruhandika's guerrilla forces, armed with spears, bow and arrows pursued and completely routed the "Aburasa" from the mountain region, killing many of them, thereby making it possible for Kasagama to be smuggled to Ankole via Bakenzo and Busongora, escorted by Bakenzo chiefs.
Colonialism and Nationality Contradictions

The nationality contradictions began with the return of Kasagama to Toro. He was returned to Toro by Captain Lugard, an official of the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEA). Lugard found Kasagama in Budu. He brought him back to Toro via Ankole, entered the Toro region via Busongora and installed him as ruler of Toro in 1891. The Kingdom of Toro which had been destroyed by Kasagama was established with the help of British Colonialism.

Kasagama became ruler of Toro by a series of treaties/agreements signed between himself and the colonialists/imperialist agents. These agreements and treaties had both theoretical and practical implications for the people of Toro Kingdom. This is in so far as they formed the basis on which the people of Toro were engulfed by British colonialism and also as they lay the basis for the political framework in which various nationality contradictions were to be shaped and expressed in the next century.

With the coming of British colonialism and by the support of the imperialist agents to the Batoro faction of the pre-colonial ruling class, the latter found a new ally - an external ally - British Imperialism. The new social relationships which emerged in Toro were not as a result of internal historical process. Under colonialism political control was reorganised. Rather than remain the preserve of the old pre-colonial ruling classes among the different nationalities, it became a preserve, more or less, exclusively of the members of the Batoro nationality. Batoro chiefs were appointed to all areas (of the old kingdom), including those areas where Toro authority had never been experienced before, once these areas had been "annexed" the Toro Kingdom such as Bwamba, Bukenze and Busongora. The result was the development and aggravation of contradictions of a colonial type between the Toro rule and the formerly outlying areas into a major nationality contradiction embracing even those Bukenze of Burinya and Bunyamwamba, who had during the 19th century co-existed with the Batoro, under Babito rule. Not only that, the people of these areas had a kinsmen relationship with Kasagama since his mother was their daughter.

According to the 1900 agreement, Bwamba and Busongora were annexed as counties of Toro Kingdom hitherto a confederacy of the chiefs of Kwengo, Kitaganda, Kataga, Kyaka and Mubiroba according to the treaty of 1894. The 1904 treaty affected practically the people living in the areas of the confederacy.
The 1894 treaty bore serious implications for the people of Toro. In it three important elements are introduced for formalization:

1) land alienation or the privatization of the most important means of production and resources. Kasagama was entitled to hold private land in all the Sazas, but with initial emphasis on "Toro Proper". Thereafter all land which at the time of signing the agreement was waste (sic) or uncultivated, together with all minerals and salt deposits, was to become the property of the British Crown.

2) Kasagama was granted the right to receive 10% of the taxes collected throughout the whole district, as well as a further 10% from "Toro Proper", while the Saza chief's in their own counties. Hut and gun taxes were to be paid by all adult males in the district...

3) The administration of justice between Africans was to be placed under the monopoly of Kasagama's appointed Saza chiefs, to be subordinated only to the "Rukururu".

Briefly these three components of the treaty point to one important thing, namely that a state externally doctored was instituted in Toro and a class rule imposed in the context of colonialism. And once the 1900 agreement brought Busugura and Swala into the fold of Toro Kingdom, the people there would be subjected to the whims of the Toro state.

Immediately Kasagama was made ruler of Toro be appointed administrative chiefs of the areas which immediately fell under his control, i.e. Toro Kingdom, as it existed under the rule of Nyaila. He made the first appointments at Muyoro in December 1901. Yusuf Kusoke of the Mubale (Mvito) clan from Butanaka was appointed Prime Minister, Kachauri, son of Ratu Kukide I was appointed chief of Rukururu, Baganza, sister of Kachauri was appointed chief of Rukura (i.e. "Queen Sister"), Mubira was appointed chief of Rubiga, and Rukwagwa was appointed chief of Nyakato. He did not appoint a Bakonzo chief. It is not clear why Kasagama did not appoint Bakonzo chiefs, given the history of his escape to Kabitende, coupled with the fact that he partly descended from the Bakonzo through his mother.

Some people argue that the Bakonzo were excluded from Kasagama's list of chiefs for three reasons: Firstly, the Bakonzo chiefs fled their stations to the mountains during Kabalega's brief control of the region after he conquered it. Secondly, that some Bakonzo chiefs had made peace with Kabalega, because Kabalega had appointed his chiefs carefully and had made sure that he did not appoint a Mubito. Many of Kabalega's chiefs were recruited from his maternal uncle, from Bulegga (Bulenga).
the fear that Bembae might betray Kasagama to Kabalega.
and thirdly, Kasagama himself fled from Toro at the
attack of Kabalega in 1691. He however, fled to the
mountains where many of his people died of cold.

Then the British heard of Kabalega’s attack on
Kasagama towards the end of 1691; Clive sent Owen and
Waller to re-occupy Fort George (at Lake Kato) and
Fort Gerry at Kabalega, and after the defeat of Kabalega,
Kasagama returned to Kabalega on 3rd March 1694 Owen
and Kasagama signed a new treaty to replace Lugard’s
Company treaty. This was the 1694 treaty. This treaty was
of protection but it also accorded Kasagama the status
of King of Toro (sic) and its dependencies.

Furley argues that:

"...the treaty was by no means a guide
and text for his future peaceful rule
over the kingdom, but it at least
gave Kasagama the breathing space to
develop some other characteristics
of his rule, especially his personal
influence over his people, which are very noteworthy."

However, contrary to Furley’s submission Kasagama’s
innovation did not involve charting an independence
ideological line. He simply adopted protestantism
which was also the colonial state religion and attempt-
ted to impose it on his subjects. By 1896 Kasagama’s
appointment of chiefs was taking a clear sectarian line
based on this new religion. He strengthened the position
of Protestantism as the “established” religion by
appointing Protestant chiefs wherever possible, and all
administrative regions except Kitgum were under the
rule of Christian chiefs by the time Bishop Tucker, the
Anglican Bishop, visited Toro in 1896.

This development is important in the history of Toro kingdom because it marked a radical shift in recruiting for administrative function, paving the way for the
development of a colonial administrative stratum. Whereas in 1891 Kasagama had appointed chiefs from those
with whom he had socio-historical relationship in 1896
he was appointing “brothers-in-Christ”, thereby over
locking the historically dominant classes – the so-called
traditional chiefs. Thus through the ideology of the
imperialists Kasagama was able to de-link with chiefly
notable unless they gained his new religion. This enabled
him to develop a purely colonial administrative or bu-
reaucratic stratum: independent of the hitherto established
socio-economic classes. It is not surprising therefore
that between 1896 and his death in 1928, even commoners
who had embraced Christianity, mainly protestantism rose
to the rungs of the upper classes. 55

THE BAKONZO REBELLION OF 1919-21.

This was the climax to the initial resistance to the colonial situation. Resistance to Toro rule began immediately Batoro chiefs were dispatched to Busongora and Bwanda areas. The local chiefs then resented the idea of Batoro chiefs being superimposed on them.

Hierarchically, Batoro chiefs were accompanied by Batoro akasiris. When they arrived in Busongora and Bwanda they began to exact tribute and corvees. Initially Bakonzo/Basoga labour was required for the building and maintenance of public projects. Soon they were required to labour on the official and private chiefs’ estates. Then a system of taxation was introduced alongside numerous forms of tribute. The new situation affected both the peasants and clan chiefs - the peasants by expropriating their surplus labour and the clan chiefs by encroaching on their interests and privileges - the control of peasant surplus product and labour.

Before monetary taxes were introduced all men were required to hunt elephants and once they killed one, the tusks and tails were handed over to the chief. Then those who participated in a successful hunt would be regarded as having paid tax. Likewise those who surrendered a minimum of three skins of an animal locally known as “Isuka” were exempted from hunting the elephants. This pre-monetary system of taxation turned out large quantities of ivory and hides and skins which were expropriated by the colonial state. Besides, all families were required to pay tribute to the Toro chiefs through their local village headmen who had been turned into tribute-collectors and organizers of labour for their new overlords. Sometimes clashes occurred between Bakonzo chiefs and Batoro agent chiefs. But those were isolated incidents and often un-coordinated.

Towards the end of the decade (1910s), two new developments took place. One, was the “land-grabbing” by the Toro oligarchy, and the other was the introduction of a tax, the latter introduced in 1919. Large tracts of land were declared “Chamukwa’s land”, “Crow land” and Toro official estates. Also individual chiefs and their friends attempted to grab land from the people. This infuriated the Bakonzo chiefs who had been controlling land but were reduced to tribute-collectors and labour organizers and were being subjected to paying taxes to a ‘foreign’ authority. Forced labour, taxes and tribute paying angered the peasants who were readily mobilized by their clan leaders to fight the Toro rule.
Chief among those who organised the revolt of 1917 were Tibawwenda from Bukonzo and Ruhandika from Bwama. Others were Nyanutsa, Kapoli, Kijungo, nyubwa, Ngalala and Ngalala of Bwama. However, chief Ruhandika did not actively participate in the revolt because of old age. He deployed Nyanutsa to join hands with the chiefs of Businge and Bukonzo, especially Tibawwenda. Nyanutsa was not a clan leader as such.

He was a medicine man and as a young man he had gone to be apprenticed in Bwama where he became a confidant of chief Ruhandika. His real name was Kihakulu but he was named Nyanutsa (Nyauncha) by the Butoro when he began to agitate against the new Toro rule. Kapoli and Kijungo were Nyanutsa’s aides. Nyanutsa engaged Butoro forces in a series of fierce encounters on his way to Bukonzo beginning with the battle of Ndalibana in 1917.

The revolt quickly died out in Bwama because the king of Toro and the colonial state managed to manipulate the old ties between Ruhandika and Kasgama. Kasgama promised Ruhandika a post in the new administration, which his son, Samwiri Bukonzo took as sub-county chief in Bwama following the suppression of the revolt. There is also Ruhandika street in the Town of Kabarole (Fort Portal). But most important is that the colonial state intervened in the land issue and Butoro chiefs and other interested parties were urged to stop grabbing land in Bwama in 1920.

Also the collection of hut tax was temporarily suspended.

Nyanutsa had taken with him several Bukonzo chiefs from Bwama. He hoped to link up with Tibawwenda and Nyanubwa of Bukonzo. His back-link with Ruhandika was curtailed by the new development between chief Ruhandika and Kasgama and also the fact that the more active chiefs had followed him. While in Bukonzo, Tibawwenda, Nyanutsa and Kapoli emerged as the main leaders of the revolt.

Tibawwenda attacked the sub-county offices at Kisinga and burned them down. He quickly advanced to burn the sub-county of Bwama which was then located at Manyera west of Kisinga. He wanted to turn and rejoin Kapoli who was operating in the western parts of Mukyala and Kabale to push the struggle towards Kabarole when the colonial state intervened to quell the revolt. Towards the end of 1920 eight Bukonzo leaders were captured including Nyanutsa, Kapoli and Tibawwenda. Mukalua and Kijungo Kyamakha who had accompanied Nyanutsa from Bwama and others were killed in various ways. It is alleged that some had their eyes gouged; others were burned to death and thrown in Lake Katabarunge near Mukyala in Kabarole.
Tibamwenda, Nyamutswa and Kapolli were hanged in public at Nyabirony in Tibamwenda’s territory and buried in one grave as punishment for leading the rebellion.

Unlike the others who were killed either while fighting or otherwise, Nyamutswa, Tibamwenda and Kapolli were the ones whose case ever reached the colonial court of law. In spite of this they were executed without trial after their appeal had been dismissed by the East African Court of Appeal. So the resistance was suppressed by British Imperialism.

The method used by the Bakonze in the resistance included refusal to provide free labour to the Toro chiefs, refusal to pay tribute to Toro government, desecration of administrative posts and to chase away Baturu chiefs and individuals from grabbed land.

The real weakness of this movement was the class character of its leadership. It was bedevilled by internal divisions as a result of local feuds among rival chiefs. Kigheri, brother of Tibamwenda, betrayed the leaders of the movement to the colonial state. Internal divisions in turn put limitations on the leadership’s organisational capacity.

However, after the suppression of the resistance an administrative reform was introduced in Toro. But it was also a reform which opened avenues for co-optation in the Toro oligarchy. Some Baturu and Bakonze were appointed chiefs in the lower administrative positions, mainly as parish chiefs.

With the reorganisation of the Toro oligarchy, also beginning in 1923, the colonial state instituted fixed salaries for all grades of chiefs in lieu of tribute, rents and rent. Tribute, rents and sometimes rent formerly pocketed by local chiefs, government chiefs and private land owners were now to be paid into central supervised coffers of the District Native Administration. In the revolt areas, private acquisition of land by chiefs and individuals had been temporarily halted during the strife in 1920 (in Bwamba). But even this halt was part of the colonial land policy. However, land grabbing continued elsewhere in the kingdom, causing a peasant outcry in Toro to which the colonial government responded by appointing a Committee of Inquir in 1920. Nonetheless, colonial land policy formulation for Toro was part of the general Land Policy for the rest of the Kingdom areas, and aimed at boosting peasant production during the inter-war period. So ideally after 1923 the land issue was not a crucial problem in the revolt areas.
TRANSITION TO THE SECOND PHASE OF THE STRUGGLE 1921 - 1950s.

There are main issues to address. The first is that after 1921 Turo government administration was consolidated in Bwamba and Busenga. The second was the development of the colonial economy in which new contradictions emerged.

We have already said that one of the outcomes of the 1919-1921 revolts was the inclusion of Bamba and Bakonzo chiefs in the oligarchy of Turo. However, rather than being the representatives of the masses of the oppressed, this inclusion was a mere co-option of individuals, whom as members of the oligarchy operated within the framework of Turo kingdom government. They became part of the oppressive state of Turo kingdom.

But even within the Turo oligarchy the Bamba and Bakonzo chiefs, neither had the capacity to influence the Turo government decision-making process nor did they have the capacity to expand their numbers within the oligarchy. Whereas their Batofo counterparts were able to prepare their children for entry into the ranks of the oligarchy as chiefs, the first batch of Bamba/Bakonzo chiefs were never succeeded or did not have their children become chiefs after them. Yet this was the trend among the Batofo chiefs.

Kasir has noted the following on this subject:

"A study of chiefs in the 1950s revealed that the royal clan provided 12.5% of high or low rank, 45% of the chiefs were sons and of chiefs, while 40% of the county chiefs were grandsons of chiefs. At the same time 6 out of 2 county chiefs and 10% of all Turo chiefs (down to parish level) had secondary education, while 35.5% had some primary education. These figures suggest that under colonial rule chiefs who were mainly Batofo at the sub-county and above were forming an elite based on education and bureaucratic position, but not on traditional system." 63

However, the Bakonzo and Bamba chiefs in the Turo government were not able to undergo this class transformation. Thus the relative importance of Bakonzo and Bamba chiefs diminished over time as they could rise to higher ranks, and also they could not numerically increase in relation to the number of Batofo chiefs who were becoming an elite group based on education and bureaucratic position. Because the Bakonzo and Bamba chiefs could not rise in the ranks they never held positions of major decision-making. Major decisions were made beyond their reach. As a result Bamba and Bakonzo areas became disadvantaged. This characteristic of the
Baamba and Bakenze chiefs discredited themselves as a group. So any hope of improvement in the political conditions of the two nationalities would have to await new leadership, the petty bourgeoisie.

Beginning in the 1940s a petty-bourgeoisie class began to form on the basis of the colonial economy and education. The emergence of the petty-bourgeoisie among the Baamba and Bakenze and the development of the colonial economy in the two areas was a simultaneous occurrence. During the 1940s, the Gaukana of Turc, on the instructions of the colonial government sought to improve the education conditions of Baamba and Bakenze in the kingdoms. Chiefs in the Baamba and Bakenze areas were ordered to pay for the education of a minimum of two Baamba or Bakenze children. So towards the end of that decade a number of them went to school in and around Kabarole. Most of those who benefited from that development became primary school teachers in the 1950s. It was from them that the initial leadership of the Kwanzurura Movement of the 1960s came.

On the other hand the period between 1940 and 1960 is the period in which intensified agricultural activities took place in Busongera, Bukonzo and Bwamba. Colonial cash crops were introduced in these areas during this period, and commodity production for the external and internal markets in these areas was relatively advanced by 1962. Within Bwamba coffee (Arabica and Robusta), rice production and some amount of fishing on Lake Albert were the main income generating activities. Busongera and Bukonzo produced coffee (Arabica), cotton, salt from Lake Katwe and Cassia and fishing activities were taking place on Lakes Edward and George. The opening of Kilimbi mines took place in the 1950s, adding to the domestic market for locally produced food products. Also county townships emerged during this period leading to commercial activities. Society in Busongera, Bukonzo and Bwamba became sufficiently monetarised as a result of increased commodity production and exchange.

At the same time as economic development i.e. production advanced the Turc government correspondingly over-remedied on these areas for revenue. As a result these areas bore a larger proportion of the tax burden. Consequently the people became sensitised and demanded for social services - education, health etc. changed. This brought about the issue of political representation, economic exploitation - in short the question of democracy. The emerging petty-bourgeoisie was to champion the struggle for equality, i.e. democracy.
The petty-bourgeoisie among the Bemba and Bemba approached the political question quite separately from each other at first. The Bemba faction were the first to express political dissatisfaction in the 1940s, and their method of struggle began with the formation of associations (agitation groups) which sought equal opportunities with their Zambian counterparts. At that time the demands of the Bemba petty-bourgeoisie were exclusive to this class and did not originally include popular demands for the emancipation of the entire Bemba nationality. The first of the Bemba agitation groups to be formed was "Masana Society" (i.e. the Sun), founded in the 1940s by Brian Nyamasasa, a Bemba clergyman. Its objective was to demand the appointment of Bemba to government jobs. In 1957 "Masana Society" split into two equally militant groups: The "Bemba Students Progressive Association" and Balyebulyn. As Devonbuss has already argued: "the importance of these organisations lay in their articulation and stimulation of a consciousness of social inequality and the reflections which they induced about the future role of the Bemba (Bemba) in Toro Society".

Criticising Edward Winter, Devonbuss further argues that:

"Although in the nature of the concerns of these groups caused them, at that time, to avoid official (i.e. Bantu) scrutiny, it is surprising that an anthropologist who spent considerable time during the 1950s in Bemba did not notice anything of this activity."

Winter had erroneously submitted that:

"of enormous importance, since it affects almost all contemporary questions, is the fact that the Bemba, far from resenting the altitudes which the Toro hold toward them, admit that they are inferior people. Their greatest desire at the present time is to emulate the Toro and to become as fully Toroised as possible. One important implication of this is that the Bamba are by no means restive under the rule of Toro but are more than willing to submit to their authority."
It is apt to submit that Winter neither understood the forms of political resentment nor could he understand the dynamics of the society he studied in a dialectical perspective, a limitation imposed on him by the structural-functionalist method of analysis which he used in his study.

The Bakonzo Life History Research Society (BLHR).

The most important agitation group in the history of the Rwenzururu struggle was the Bakonzo Life History Research Society (BLHR), founded by Mw. Sanwiri Bakumbi in 1954. Its approach to the political question was different from the Bamba organised groups. Its starting point was to research into the history and culture of the Bakonzo in light of the social and political problems the Bakonzo community was suffering under Toro kingdom.

When Bakumbi set up the organisation, the Omukama of Toro challenged its existence and Bakumbi explained that it was not a political organisation, but a goodwill association set up for purposes of mobilising the Bakonzo to raise funds to educate their children. This, he argued, was in line with the Omukama's call to the Toro chiefs to promote education. Bakumbi alluded to the Omukama that if properly organised for the purpose the Bakonzo themselves were capable of educating their children.

However, the Omukama's initial response caused the Bakonzo leaders to rethink the question of re-organising the leadership of the BLHR. This was necessary, because Bakumbi was a government chief in the Omukama's government. So, within 1954, a few months after the formation of the BLHR, Isaja Muhaimin took over its leadership. With Muhaimin as the leader of the group, a clear sighted leadership was inserted in the process of political agitation. He transformed the goals, and re-organised the BLHR, leading it into political activity. He set up branches of the BLHR from Bamba to Busongori. Each branch was led by a chairman and Muhaimin became the president of the organisation. In each of the branches different people researched on different aspects of life - History, politics, culture and the economy in the context of Toro Society.

All types of people - occupational groups - among the Bakonzo were consulted - medicine men and women, blacksmiths, clan leaders and the public. The information collected was selectively used when writing the numerous Rwenzururu memoranda, particularly the one of 15th August, 1962 addressed to the rulers of Uganda and the bulk of the evidence given to the Semabagal Commission.
TRANSLATION OF BLHR ACTIVITIES INTO POLITICAL ACTION.

The first active political role of the BLHR came in the wake of the 1955 ordinance which provided for direct elections. In 1955 and 1956, the BLHR presented to the Toro government memoranda demanding direct representation in the Toro/Rukurur, and recognition of the Bamba, Bakonzo and Batope as the three main nationalities in Toro. However, the rulers of Toro kingdom refused to reorganize their political system along the proposals laid down in the 1955 ordinance. Instead they insisted on a new agreement which would secure more local control (similar to Buganda) - a ministerial system, a bicameral Rukurura and reduction of the powers of the District Commission.

Nonetheless realizing the gravity of the matter the Toro government attempted to defuse the Bakonzo pressure. In 1957 a Mukanza and an active member of BLHR was appointed musubula chief and several Bamba and Bakonzo were appointed to lesser administrative positions in the Toro government service. They were deployed in parts other than their home-areas.

In 1958 a general meeting was held of the BLHR at which the findings of the research were aggregated; and a decision taken to step up the struggle for democracy.

PROCLAMATION OF THE RUKURURU MOVEMENT.

Following its general meeting in 1958 the BLHR began to send memoranda to the Governor at Entebbe, petitioning for democratic representation in the Toro/Rukurur. In 1961 Bakonzo/Bamba 18 representatives were elected to the Rukurur. The number became 21 including two specially elected members and a minister of the Toro government. For the first time Bamba/Bakonzo were to voice their grievances democratically to the Government. And as the Sembegya Commission noted, given an opportunity for the first time to air their grievances, they quickly attempted to show their strength.

A critical point in Toro politics came when the new Rukurura appointed a Constitutional Committee on which no Bamba/Bakonzo were included. Upon agitation from Bamba/Bakonzo representatives the Batope dominated Rukurura reluctantly included two of them on the committee, Mr. Isaya Mukirania and Mr. Yoshiya Kyanwara. The Bamba/Bakonzo members on the committee made among others two principal proposals:
1) that the names of Bakonzi, Bambo and Batoro should be entrenched in the new Independence Constitution under negotiation. The Toro Agreement of 1900 did not even acknowledge the existence of nationalities other than the Batoro. 2) All posts shall be shared equally among the nationalities with the post of Prime Minister rotating. Both demands were refused by the other members of the committee. When this happened Kawanara and Mukirania walked out of the meeting to brief the other Bambo/Bakonzi leaders. Instead of persuading them to return to the subsequent meetings the Toro government began to intimidate them. Mukirania was arrested and detained for two days at Bundibugyo Saza headquarters (February 6th-7th, 1962).

Meanwhile political tension developed in Toro, the Governor invited the Toro Constitutional Committee to discuss its proposals. The Batoro members of the committee went alone, leaving the Bambo/Bakonzi representatives behind. But when the Bambo/Bakonzi leaders learned that the Constitutional Committee was going to leave for Entebbe without their representatives, they got in touch with the D.C. at Fort Portal. Mr. R. Purcell was assisting the Bakonzi/Bambo party to meet the Governor before the Batoro delegation returned. Isaya Mukirania and Mr. Stephen Kyabihiire went ahead of Mr. Kawanara and Mr. Mupalya. Mr. Kawanara and Mupalya delayed because they were making final touches on a memorandum which demanded a separate district, i.e. separation from Toro kingdom. This document was handed to the Governor on 28/3/62 while the Toro Constitutional Committee was in session at Entebbe. Thus interrupted the meeting. Thereafter the delegations returned to Toro.

On 13 March 1962, a special meeting of the Nukurere was called to review the proceedings of the Constitutional Committee and the growing discontent among the Bambo/Bakonzi leaders. The Toro party reported that they were disturbed by Mukirania's
call for a separate district while at Entebbe.
At this meeting (of 13 March 1962) the Bakonzo/Bakonzo leaders proclaimed the Rwenzururu secessionist
movement and walked out of the Mukarate. They
returned to their constituencies to mobilize the
masses for an armed struggle in case their demands
to the Governor were not answered.

Soon they learned that the Uganda Constitutional
Conference held in London during the month of June,
1962, was going to be the last round of the con-
stitutional debates. On 25 May 1962, they wrote
to the Governor asking for permission to send
representatives of Bakonzo/Bamba to the Conference.
On failing to be granted this permission, the Bakonzo/
Bamba leaders declared the Independence of Rwenzururu on 30th June 1962. Intentions to declare and
install complete independence for the Bakonzo and
Bamba from Toro kingdom and earlier been communicated
to the Premier by telegram with copies to the Gover-
nor and the Colonial Secretary. In a letter that
accompanied the telegram they further demanded
that Toro authority be destroyed within a fortnight,
emphasizing that after June 30th, Bakonzo/Bamba would
neither pay taxes to Toro government nor serve it.
By this time the three main leaders of the movement,
Isaya Mukirania, Yeremiya Kawamara and Mugalya
had been arrested.
The first violent activity broke out in Karangii Gombolola in Busongora county. The auto Toro Gombolola chief there had

gone to the field to collect taxes and this triggered off

a wave of mass violence. Within one week mass violence had

spread all over Bagamba/Bakonjo areas. It was directed

against Toro government institutions and officials. Large

crowds of Bakonjo and Bagamba attached Toro chiefs, burned

chief’s houses and administrative buildings and destroyed other

government property. In other words Bakonjo/Bagamba masses

in action concentrated on the destruction of Toro state.

Central Government Response

Initially the central government responded by sending
troops to the area. But this did not deter violence.

Secondly, it instituted a commission of inquiry “to in-

quire into and report to the government on the underlying

reasons for the recent disturbances amongst the Bagamba and

Bakonjo people of Toro District and to make recommenda-

tions in light of the investigations”. The commission opened

its hearings at Fort Portal on the morning of 10th September

and subsequently had evidence in the counties of Busongora,

Babagamba and Bwanga. It concluded its work in Toro with

local hearing of evidence at Fort Portal on 25/9/62.

However, the problem of the members of commission was their

inability to grasp the problem from its historical roots

and their failure to address the question of democracy. The

commission saw the issues as essentially bureaucratic. It

ignored the key political issues (rights, democracy)

and even economic issues (land, taxes and labour). It

did not even make a distinction between the demand

for a new district and accession. Once these issues were

not properly tackled and no concrete recommendations made,

violence which had subsided during the investigations was

resumed in October 1962 and the struggle acquired new

dimensions.

The central government responded by sending more troops to

what became known as the disturbed area— Busongora and

Bwanga. By 14 November, a total of four Special Force Units

had been deployed in the area. Each unit comprised 50 men and

officers which made up a force of 200 men and officers.

By January 15, 1963 massive reinforcements were sent to the

area including six Special Force Units (i.e., 500 men and

officers), two and half companies of the 1st Battalion of

Uganda Army, five additional CID teams, three dog teams and

even part of the Fire Brigade. This information was reported

to parliament by the Minister of Internal Affairs, Mr. Felix

Onwam. Other forms of state repression and intimidation

were employed including detention without trial, but this
did not break the movement. By 25 February 1963, 354 arrests
had been made to put an end to 269 persons had been hurriedly
convicted on various charges.99 Here repression was not
against the Bamba and Bakongo people.

The nature of central government intervention broadened the
scope of the struggle. The central government was soon
part of the very forces which frustrated the struggle for
independence in Toro. As a result the Bamba/Bakongo struggle
was transformed from being merely a nationality issue
into a struggle for self-determination.

The 1963 Reform and the Guerrilla Struggle

In January 1963, the central government invited and deploy-
ed Fay Stacey, a British journalist, to assist in resolving
the Rwenzururu problem. He had had personal contact with
some of the leaders of the Rwenzururu Movement in 1964 when
he researched among the Bakongo. Isaya Bukirania, the
president of the Movement had then served as his guide. Jow
Bukirania was leading a political movement. Before Stacey
arrived in the country, Bukirania had escaped from Kampala
where he was being restrained in October of the previous
year. He had gone into hiding in the Rwenzori Mountains
where he was leading the movement Stacey was able to
find Isaya Bukirania and tried to persuade him to negotiate
with the leaders of the central government.

However, Bukirania gave three conditions which would have to
be fulfilled before negotiations could take place. The first
was that a conference of all leaders of the Rwenzururu Move-
ment would have to be held to consider the content of the
settlement. Secondly, he suggested that the central govern-
ment must withdraw all the military forces from the town and
passageways to allow for free movement of the delegations and
create a state of peace in which such a conference could take
place. Thirdly, Uganda government would have to release
persons arrested in connection with Rwenzururu activities,
notably Kayemera and Hapyaya, the Bamba leaders to participate
in the "All Rwenzururu Leaders Conference" before meeting
with any Minister of the central government took place.

Short of that, he concluded the whole arrangement would be
a trick. He asked further, "How can we feel in a meeting
which will help Rwenzururu? What can we do unless we have
discussed it with all our leaders everywhere? We ourselves shall
talk first before we say we shall talk with Uganda - before
government." Finding Bukirania rather difficult to manip-
ulate, Stacey searched for the petty bourgeois leaders on
the low-lands and sold the idea of peace talks to them. By
then he had proposed to the Prime Minister of Uganda, M.
Obote,

"...that Bamba & Co. should henceforth be placed
under the charge of the central government, with
Bambas and Bambas taking the administrative posts
as 'central government agents' and the administrative
power on the spot would be the District Commission,
representing the central government." Obote accepted
this proposal. So did the petty bourgeois leadership
of Bakonzo and Bwegha who lived in the lowlands.

But there was a problem. Obote feared to bring the above proposal to parliament for discussion its implementation would spark off a wave of similar demands in other parts of the country, especially in Buganda where there was the issue of lost counties. Obote knew that even within his UPC party which was in power, the proposal might be opposed by some members. So to give it constitutional dressing a commission of inquiry would be appointed to inquire into the administration by the government of the Kingdom of Toro in some parts of that kingdom. The recommendations of the commission of inquiry would then be basis for government action. This was the rationale behind the "Commission of Inquiry into the administration by the government of the Kingdom of Toro of the services for which it is responsible in certain counties of the kingdom", which was chaired by L. Lubowa. The Commission was appointed on the 26th, February, 1963, under the commissions of inquiry ordinance (Cap.37, Revised Edition, 1951) to cover the counties of Bungoma, Buwara, Ntiru, and Buwala. And the scheduled services to be investigated were: education, medical and health services, roads, water supplies and prisons. Masese had also signed prominently in the Bwegha and Bakonzo grievances during the Senkaguda Commission.

The report of the Lubowa Commission was submitted to the government in March 1963. The commission’s report is interesting. Evidence was taken only from the lowlands of Bunyoro. Ngoro-Ngoro and Bwegha - Bukirima’s group then effectively controlling the mountain parts was opposed to the sanitization of the inquiry. It was also too empiricist and lacked any historical approach or analysis but it largely implicated the colonial government.

Immediately the report was submitted to government, central administration was introduced in Bwegha and Bunyoro. The District Commissioner of Toro was empowered to appoint an ADC to administer each county and to ensure for the people to select ‘agents’ who would carry out the duties of sub-county and parish chiefs. The exercise of selecting ‘agents’ was undertaken in Jan 1963. They were not elected by the people but selected through arrangements made by the ADC. One of the leaders of the Rwenzururu Movement, the Lowlands pettio bungalow became ‘agents-chiefs’. This development resulted into a complete split in the leadership of the Rwenzururu (Seesionist) Movement. The Lowlands factions, leadership in the mountains led by Basaya Bukirima opposed the reform. But since the movement was now split the militant leadership in the mountains could no longer organise openly. It therefore resorted to armed guerrilla struggle supported by the governmat in the mountains. A government of Rwenzururu was set up in the mountains with 'parallel hierarchies.' In 1964 an attempt was made to unite the Bwegha (Bendando) living in Zaire with their brothers - the Bweghas of Uganda. Hence an attempt to create a nation of Bwegha. These were split by colonial boundaries during the 20th century.

Over time the Kingdom of Rwenzururu was created. A discussion on the Rwenzururu Government would require a separate paper.
Evaluation and Summary

This paper demonstrates that there is no such a thing as tribalism for tribalism's sake. Pre-colonial societies were formed by people of different ethnic origins coming together. Nationality contradictions among them emerged only when a dominant class in one ethnic group sought to dominate corresponding classes in other groups or nationalities. Also, demonstrated is that a peoples struggle is rooted in their history and that a people have begun a struggle and have made concrete demands, the struggle will not end until principal demands have been answered. These demands are made on the basis of concrete socio-economic and political conditions.

The Baruma/Bakongo demand for separation from Toro Kingdom arose from the socio-economic and political problems of the two nationalities. Before resorting to violence, the leaders of Baruma/Bakongo had tried to struggle for the rights of their people through peaceful means—petitions. Colonialism in Toro, the nature and process of decolonisation in Uganda and the neo-colonial state created the conditions which drove the Bakongo and Baruma to seek self-determination. The example of the Twenkururu struggle demonstrates that nationality contradictions can not be resolved in countries which lack a national democratic process. The absence of national democracy encourages some leaders to turn to their nationalities for support.


15. Syahuka, M., op. cit.

16. On this subject see Ramakrishna, *Race of Counterinsurgency* in *Subaltern Studies*, II, Delhi, OUP, 1983.
17. See for example, D. Yoade Makubura, Imperialism, the Social Sciences and the National Question F.R.S., 1977.

19. See Joseph Stalin, Lenin & the National Question.


28. Spir Amor, Class and Nation, p. 117.


31. Ibid.

32. Nyanza is a small village found 2km north of Buwera sub-county headquarters.


41. See Ibid, p. 11.
42. See Ibid, p. 11.
43. See Ibid, p. 10.
44. See Ibid, p. 23.

46. See Sysuku, M. *op. cit*; and Tom Stacey, *op. cit* p.12.

47. Setting off from Litendi on the foothills of the Bumunzi Mountains, north of Nakaso, Mabagana and his party were escorted by Baganda chiefs to chief Mulinya’s place in Buhaya, then to Kyanga where Muwaha suyita at the home of the chief of Bunghinzi; to Katwe, Bulinya and finally to Nabulwala at Lake Katwe, from where he set off for Ankole.

48. Sysuku, M. *op. cit*

49. 

50. Ibid., *op. cit* p. 81.
51. Ibid. pp. 93
52. Ibid. p. 91-92.
53. Wilson quoted in Furley *op. cit*.
54. Furley, Ibid. p.29.

55. The case of Naima Nuna and Kitiikibbi who were royal attendants. Kitiikibbi was appointed sub-county chief of Bwasa (in Busunja) and Nuna, parish chief of Bulungumyina in Bwasa. Both had been captured and taken to Bwasa where they served as domestic slaves by Baganda soldiers. They later returned to Toro and stayed in the kings palace as attendants. They were among the first subjects to be converted to Christianity. Nuna came from Bwasa and Kitiikibbi from Bagunga (Busunja).
The period 1920 - 1960 was full of such incidents and the battles of Mpyanyera and Akabola were in this category.


71. See reference 50 above.

72. See Jongoss, op. cit, pp.125-126.

73. Kusulir, op. cit p.111.

74. Isd, op. cit, p.123.


76. Original branches and their chairman:

Buhagira Branch - Mr. Y. Msukuru
Bukwambwa (in Budalila) - Mr. C. Ssengo
Kaguta in Gombe - Mr. G. Kyompe
Burere Branch - Mr. M. Angonzi
Bunyamwe Branch - Mr. C. Mwanyekya
Busungugu Branch - Mr. S. Mutesi.

Source: Interview Mr. Y. Msukuru.


78. See Annual Report, Toro Kingdom, 1965-66.

79. Source: Interview with Mr. Y. Msukuru the one who was appointed Gombuluma chief.

80. Source: See note 56. See Ibid. For the chronology of violent activities.

81. See Ibid.

82. Ibid, p.8.


This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution – NonCommercial - NoDerivs 3.0 Licence.

To view a copy of the licence please see: http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/