

The growth of Fascism in Uganda was not a mere accident. It was a policy which had been followed both intentionally and unwittingly right from the onset of British colonial rule.

Fascist institutions proliferated during and after colonial rule until they exploded in naked candidness during Amin's era. Two factors assisted the Amin regime to consolidate itself: first, the inherent and chronic conditions in Ugandan society, most of which were colonial in origin; second, and perhaps more important, the big international powers who came to its rescue, notably Israel, Britain, France, the US; the Soviet Union and Arab proxies such as Libya and Saudi Arabia. Later, through inter-imperialist rivalry for political and economic dominance, the US and the Soviet Union emerged as the main life-support mechanisms of the regime, the US giving the regime an economic leverage through trade, while the Soviet Union propped up its military machine.

Meanwhile, domestically, the regime faced perpetual crisis through lack of legitimacy and resorted to terror as the ultimate weapon to subdue the people.

Although Mamdani's analysis of both internal and external factors which gave the regime sustenance is accurate, there are some flaws in his analysis of specific issues. For example, he departs from his class analysis and succumbs to the eclectic argument that Amin's Clash with the Chief Justice Benedicto Kiwanuka was just over a mere court injunction (p. 44). Nothing can be further from the truth. The power struggle between Kiwanuka and Amin began almost right from the time Kiwanuka was released from detention. Because of the prestige Kiwanuka had acquired due to his past political activities, he came to be seen as the unofficial leader of the middle-class petty bourgeoisie after Obote had departed from the political scene. One of the reasons why Amin appointed him Chief Justice was to contain his influence. The clash between the two men was inevitable especially when the question was raised as to who would control the spoils of the 'economic war'. Therefore, it was no surprise and no accident than Amin, sensing this power contention, used his military advantage to purge his rival during the initial state of the 'economic war'

The author again fails to use his ideological framework in explaining why church leaders spoke out against the regime as late as 1977 (p. 56). Was it because some of them were deeply involved in the spoils of the economic war and, when they saw an anti-Amin coalition gathering momentum, they decided to throw in their lot with the masses lest they be vindicated for having latently abetted an anti-people regime.

These imperfections notwithstanding, Mamdani successfully poses the case that the Amin regime was the brainchild of Western interest and Soviet social imperialism.

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