THE DIFFERENT CONCEPTS OF REVOLUTION IN EAST AFRICA

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There is a very articulate school of thought in East Africa, which believes in 'revolutionary policies' as the only adequate response to the needs of these countries. The term 'revolution' has itself become a persistent theme in the rhetoric of social reformers in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania. But what does this quest for revolutionary transformation really mean? Are there important differences in the revolutionary phraseology between the three countries? If there are, what can explain these variations? And what of the meaning that these words hold for the speakers and their audience?

The first challenge lies in the very concept of *revolution* itself. What kind of phenomena does the word describe?

REVOLUTION: STRUCTURAL OR SYSTEMIC; SPONTANEOUS OR INSTIGATED

There are a number of ways of classifying revolutions, but two sets of twin classifications may be particularly significant in East Africa. In this regard, revolutions can be called either structural or systemic; they are also often described as either spontaneous or instigated.

A *structural revolution* is one which brings about major transformations *within* a given system without fundamentally changing either the main outlines of the system or the power relations on which the system rests. A structural revolution could entail rapid urbanisation; important new trends in common beliefs; a fast rate of industrialisation and the growth of new social groups and classes; a rapid rise in standard of living and swift changes in style of living —while the main outlines of the socio-political system remained relatively constant.

The rapid industrialisation of Japan after the Meiji restoration was a case in point. It is true that Japan was changing in its political and social institutions in spite of apparent continuities. But what is being suggested here is that

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Japan as a social system remained substantially neo-feudalistic, while the internal structural content of the system was changing rapidly through industrialisation and modernisation. Japanese Confucianism, which had been substantially influenced by Shintoism, Buddhism and a feudal military society, put a social premium on each man's recognition of his own place in the social universe. The phenomenon of *deference* as an organisational resource and as a basis for discipline became one of the factors behind the industrial miracle of Japan. The highly structured class system of the Japanese was transferred into the work relations of the factory. In some ways feudalism in Japan was modernised without necessarily being abandoned. Feudalistic relations moved into the workshop conditioning relations of production in a modern economy almost as deeply as they had once affected relations of production in pre-Restoration Japan. It is these considerations which made the Japanese ascent to industrial and military pre-eminence from the 1860s to the Second World War a matter of structural revolutionary change, combined with systemic continuities.

No less revealing as an example is the case of the Industrial Revolution in Britain in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The main outlines of British society did make adjustments to meet the kind of changes which were affecting the structure of that society. But the changes in the inner content of British life were more revolutionary than the changes in the British political system and power relations. The rapidity of the Industrial Revolution in England could have resulted in a political revolution, committed to a transformation of the system itself. But although there was much social unrest and demand for reform as a result of the structural dislocations ensuing upon industrialisation, the British system of government was not overthrown but it was modified. The great Reform Bill of 1832 and the succeeding legislation later in the century extended the frontiers, and increased the boundaries of political participation but it did not profoundly alter the rules of the game. Walter Bageshot drew attention to the political role of class difference in preserving the stability of Victorian society. The acquiescence of the workers in the leadership of the upper classes has been a major contributory factor to the stability of the British system and the return of Tory governments. The dislocations coming with industrialisation and urbanisation did not result in a systemic upheaval although anxiety about discontent remained to recall its possibility.

Of the three countries of East Afrca, it is Kenya which comes nearest to being an example of a structural revolution unaccompanied by desertion of the system. Structurally the Kenyan economy is changing faster than that of Tanzania. The movement of people from the countryside to the cities, the growth of the cities themselves; the emergence of new indigenous entrepreneurs and the rise of a new social elite; not excluding the more rapid growth of an educated cadre,—are all aspects of a transformation in Kenya which is in some respects more fundamental than anything as yet experienced in either Uganda or Tanzania.

However, Kenya's revolution is, like the Industrial Revolution in England in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, a revolution without *revolutio-*

naries at the helm. Major structural modifications in the society and the economy are taking place largely by the sheer momentum of unguided social change.

This brings us to the other set of twin distinctions concerning revolutions; the distinction between an instigated revolution and a spontaneous revolution. An *instigated* revolution is one which does have revolutionaries in positions of influence and effective activation. An instigated revolution is also quite often a guide revolution. The instigation is primarily what happens before the actual initiation of major change; the guidance is what is provided to ensure that the change follows a purposeful direction and does not lose impetus. A revolution which has been instigated and guided by revolutionaries tends to have at the back of it a set of idealised objectives, sometimes even a coherent ideology, although the revolution in action may have to compromise with these.

East African examples of instigated or guided revolutions now include Uganda in the last year of Obote's rule, as well as Tanzania. Both Uganda under Obote and Tanzania under Nyerere committed themselves to a socialist approach. The idealised objective seems to be primarily a systemic change, leading hopefully to structural transformations as well.

Nationalisation of certain industries is change in the *system*,not by itself implying any structural revolution. After all even a coup is merely a takeover of the state — by itself it need not result in a revolution. Likewise, nationalisation of the means of production is a takeover by the state. In itself this change of ownership is not a revolution structurally, though it may constitute an important change systematically and pave the way for further pressures.

Sometimes nationalisation in East Africa has seemed at best to be aimed at transforming the legal basis of ownership. The ownership passes from one bunch of impersonal owners (the indigenous state) without fundamentally changing either the work relations within the particular industry or the nature of the industry's interaction with the world of consumers.

By contrast, a policy which seeks to promote an indigenous entrepreneurial culture and create successful African businessmen where none existed before might well be a policy which seeks to transform the economic man in East Africa. There is a familiar distinction between the prestige motive, discerned as animating much of the economic behaviour of traditional communities in East Africa, and the profit motive, which is more individualistically oriented as a spur to economic action. The Trade Licensing Act in both Kenya and Uganda passed in 1969, and the whole complex of inducements and protection for African businessmen as potential successors to Asian entrepreneurs — were measures which could result in a drastic revolution in the economic behaviour of indigenous Kenyans and Ugandans. The involvement of a new group obliged to learn the tricks of commerce and trade and the philosophy of 'business is business', might result in precisely the kind of fundamental psychological and sociological changes which form the foundation of structural transformation. In other words, creating successful

African entrepreneurs in Kenya could be structurally a more revolutionary process than the mere nationalisation of a particular industry — in spite of the fact that ideologically it may sound less revolutionary than the legal exercise of changing the ownership of an industry.

On History and Change

But what factors have determined whether Kenya embarks on structural or systemic transformations? What has produced spontaneous structural revolution in one East African country and instigated systemic transformation in another?

There is a good deal which is still inconclusive in the history of East Africa, but as so often happens in our evaluation of post-colonial Africa, we find that some of the differences between one country and another could conceivably be explained in terms of the immediate colonial past. It could, for example, be explained by the kind of colonial policies which had operated in that particular country, and the distinctive features of the local response. How pertinent towards understanding the different levels of revolutionary commitment in Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya is the imperial factor itself and its variations in the three countries?

The experience of Eastern Africa as a whole would seem to suggest that the more an African country suffered in the struggle for independence, the less 'revolutionary' in a leftist ideological sense it is inclined to be after independence. Kenya suffered most in the great battle for sovereignty. She paid for that independence with blood, death and humiliation. Yet Kenya today is the least 'revolutionary' in that leftist sense of socialistic instigation.

Tanzania struggled least for independence. Nyerere's leadership was brilliant, but there were no detention camps in colonial Tanganyika with hundreds of miserable freedom-fighters held in them. There were no dark, wet nights in the depths of jungles, for men and women hiding from colonial security forces. During the latter half of the British period in Tanganyika there were no mutilations ordered by sadistic colonial officers, nor any record of castrations inspired by a sense of political revenge against an indigenous community. The sacrifices which were made by Tanganyikans for *uhuru* were modest as compared with what was being exacted on the other side of Kilimanjaro. There can be no doubt about it—Tanganyika had a smooth approach to independence. She was led by a man widely considered at the time as the moderate African par excellence. Yet it is now this country, once regarded a paragon of moderation, which is carrying the torch of socialist revolution in East Africa.

Uganda suffered more than Tanzania, but less than Kenya. Some of the agonies of Uganda were concerned with internal divisions. Others, however, were more specifically rooted in imperial relations. Uganda did know the death of nationalists, the imprisonment of freedom fighters, the exile of kings over the generations. Yet in the actual nationalistic movement the casualty rate

in Uganda was drastically smaller than in Kenya, though still higher than in Tanganyika.

Is it a consequence of these differences in experience that Uganda has, so far been less revolutionary in its commitment than Tanzania but perhaps more so than Kenya?

The question which is being raised here is whether we can as yet infer with Fanon that the experience of agonising suffering for independence is the best preparation for socialistic fervour once independence has been won. Is there a degree of suffering in the fight for independence which is *deradicalising* in its consequences?

The evidence on the African scene as a whole is by no means conclusive. But the experience of Eastern Africa is suggestive enough to make us pose this question, even if the answer remains unsure.

Malawi is another good example in Eastern Africa from this point of view. Hastings Banda suffered more under colonialism than either Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia or Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. The real leadership in the struggle for the break-up of the Central African Federation was taken by Malawi (then Nyasaland) rather than Zambia (then Northern Rhodesia). Many Malawians were imprisoned or detained. Makerere has one Malawian who was once a nationalistic detainee in colonial Nyasaland. This is Mr. David Rubadiri, who later represented his country at the United Nations when independence was won. Hastings Banda himself was also detained. There is no doubt that Banda is a prison graduate in a way neither Kaunda nor Nyerere ever were.

Again it appears as if those who really suffered for their country's independence are not prepared to force their people to make further sacrifices in the name of socialism after independence, or perhaps more easily feel that with independence won their work is over and the battle won. And yet it may be too early to be sure whether the agony of fighting for freedom simply delays a taste for further change and upheaval or whether it really kills it altogether.

It is possible that Malawi will one day go the way of Zambia in a leftward direction. It is also possible that Kenya will one day have its 'Move to the Left'. It is also possible that other factors will accelerate the trend towards radicalisation, but for the time being it appears that socialism involves sacrifices and commitment to change and of the three East African countries Kenya sacrificed the most for independence. There may well be important sectors of opinion within Kenya who feel that they must pause and reflect before pursuing further horizons of sacrifice, and that those who gave so much to win back their lost heritage should now be allowed to enjoy it undisturbed.

In the early 1960s Tanzania achieved historical distinction by the attempt to bring about East African Federation. Mzee Kenyatta supported Mwalimu Nyerere in his vision and Dr. Obote joined them in the federal declaration of June 1963 made by the three leaders. The declaration asserted a readiness to form a federation before the end of that year and urged the British Government to grant independence to Kenya so that this federal ambition could be fulfilled. But two years before that formal declaration I was having a conversation with a young Kikuyu in New York. Nyerere had already declared himself publicly on the side of an East African federation and my Kikuyu friend observed:

> It is easy enough for Nyerere to take the larger view and offer to give up Tanganyika's sovereignty before he has even won it. Only someone who has not suffered for his little plot of land can be so cosmopolitan. How can Tanganyika be expected to know what it is like to suffocate under humiliation? Tanganyika never suffered the way Kenya did.

For my young Kikuyu friend 'Kenya' was at the time the broadest loyalty he was honestly capable of feeling. I disagreed with him then, I still feel he was wrong. But I was struck by the argument that those who had suffered so much should not be asked to enter into further agonies of self-denial and visionary ambition, and his argument is, perhaps, a fragment of the explanation why independent Kenya, with a Kikuyu pre-eminence in government, should be a country which is, for the time being, devoid of self-conscious revolutionaries at the helm and yet a country nevertheless which is undergoing structural change at a dramatic pace.

On Culture and Change

It is not merely imperial experience which helps to shape post-independence orientations. It is also the texture of the values and customs inherited from the traditional life of the dominant tribes.

From the Kenyan perspective the Kikuyu provide a striking example. The evidence since independence would seem to suggest that, on balance, the Kikuyu are politically conservative but economically innovative. The conservatism of the Kikuyu has, in part, lain in their rural nationalism. During the colonial period Kikuyu rural nationalism, combined with economic dynamism, helped to give the *Mau Mau* movement the image of a revolution. The Kikuyu uprising in the *Mau Mau* insurrection seemed inspired by radical fervour as well as by a rebellion against racial humiliation and foreign control.

At that stage it almost appeared that the Kikuyu might have been animated by the same kind of peasant radicalism as the Chinese under Mao's leadership just a few years earlier. The *Mau Mau* insurrection, like the Chinese Communist Revolution, has been interpreted in historical perspective as basically a peasant revolt. The argument has been to the effect that land hunger in Kenya created a situation of peasant grievance, and this initiated a transformative self-assertion.

Sometimes the term 'peasant' is used to denote a person who already owns a modest piece of land. But much of the agitation behind the *Mau Mau* insurrection was by people who were landless, living as squatters on European estates, and eyeing hungrily large tracts of land, sometimes uncultivated and unused, or sometimes richly cultivated and foreign owned, all beyond their capacity to acquire. As Donald L. Barnett put it in his introduction to Karai Njama's *Mau Mau From Within:*

> It is not only the brute fact of landlessness, land hunger, and insecurity of tenure which conditioned Kikuyu involvement in the nationalist movement and peasant revolt; it is also the fact that for a people who attach such sacred meaning to the land the areas alienated remain within their field of experience, unattainable yet in considerable measure unused by its new (White) owners.[1]

The final outcome was the revolt of the rural dispossessed and the long years of Kenya's state of emergency in the 1950s. This rural assertion in Kenya had a garb of traditionalism which was at times almost primeval. The nature of *Mau Mau* oaths administered as a way of commanding loyalties was an indication of profound traditionality in Kikuyu nationalism, which was, in turn, to remain the basis of Kikuyu political conservatism after independence. But, for as long as the battle was directed against the elimination of colonial rule and the British settler presence, the Kikuyu uprising did manage to acquire the reputation of a radical and even revolutionary movement.

It is true that even at that time many could not quite reconcile Kikuyu radical assertiveness with the strange ritualism which consolidated it. Western observers at the time could understand killings and torture having used that sort of thing themselves on many occasions, including fighting the *Mau Mau*. Even Elspeth Huxley (hardly a friend of African nationalism, let alone of *Mau Mau*) concedes that atrocities during the Kenya Emergencies were perpetrated by both sides. Anyone who expected different standards from Government forces had, according to Mrs. Huxley, 'read no history'. Rebellions could not be put down 'without brutalising'.[2]

What Western commentators and observers could not stomach were not the brutalities of the war but the bad taste of the *Mau Mau* rituals. There did not seem to be precedents in history books for these oaths to console those who, like Mrs. Huxley, had 'read their history'. The range of rituals invoked was from drinking menstrual blood to taking the *Mau Mau Batuni* oath, standing naked with the male organ inserted through a hole in the thorax of a goat.

The Chinese peasant assertion had culminated in a Marxist revolution. But the Kikuyu peasant assertion came to assume a more conservative orientation on attainment of independence. The nature of those oaths during the insurrection might have been an indication of the innate ruralism of Kikuyu political behaviour and its roots in the past.

The tendency to invoke oath-taking and sacred ritualism manifested itself again after independence. In 1969 the Kikuyu began to feel once again insecure, partly in the face of a growing challenge from the second of the major ethnic groups. Oath-taking erupted once again. There was a tendency to seek reassurance in the solidarity of shared rituals. There was a determination not to permit the Kikuyu to be in the political wilderness ever again. The Luo challenge had taken the place of settler intransigence as an igniting factor behind the re-emergence of traditionalist assertiveness among the Kikuyu, but this time it did not carry the radical overtures of the yearning dispossessed.

1. Barnett and Njama, *Mau Mau From Within: Analysis of Kenya's Peasant Revolt* (New York and London: Monthly Review Press, 1967), p. 34.
2. Elspeth Huxley, Review of *Mau Mau Detainee*, *Sunday Times* (London), August 4, 1963.

The traditionality of Kikuyu political behaviour in this respect had led to other problems associated with such an orientation. In recruitment to the civil service and the parastatal bodies, in the awarding of licences for trading, in the allocation of land rights in areas other than those reserved for individual communities — in all these instances of the distribution of benefits and priviledges Kikuyu traditionalism has, at times, come into conflict with modern criteria of merit and rational eligibility. Ethnic nepotism in Kenya has sometimes been more frank than elsewhere in Africa partly because the universe of values of the dominant tribe still puts a premium on solidarity rather than on rationality as a principle of distribution. There has been widespread concern in Kenya that powerful positions and fruitful opportunities are disproportionately, though not exclusively, allocated to fellow Kikuyu, and a traditional tribal morality amongst the Kikuyu that would still claim that to do otherwise was a betrayal of life's purpose.

There is, then, in much of Kikuyu political behaviour a kind of traditionalism which distrusts both an excessively rationalistic approach to political arrangements and an excessively egalitarian tendency. The relative anti-rationalism, as well as the relative anti-egalitarianism, of Kikuyu traditionalist behaviour in a modern context have been important conditioning factors behind the attitude to Communism which has been viewed merely as alien and destructive and has retarded the development of a radical ideology.

But in the case of the Kikuyu the other side of their political conservatism is their capacity for economic innovation. There seems to be little doubt that the Kikuyu are among the most economically dynamic of all tribal communities in East Africa. They are rapidly responding to the policy of Africanising commercial activity in Kenya and thrusting themselves out into different parts of the country in a bid to establish themselves economically. In many ways the Kikuyu have become once again, reminiscent of the Ibo in Nigeria. The readiness to go out into the wider world for economic opportunities, the greater economic acceptance of the need for risk-taking, the mystique of self-improvement as a traditional imperative, have all contributed to an economic resurgence among the Kikuyu. Perhaps it goes back to the colonial days and the extent to which the Kikuyu responded more positively than some of their neighbours to the impact of modernity and western educational challenges. They built their own schools during the colonial period in a bid to acquire the necessary skills for modern success and they are now eager to employ them.

Even land, in some ways a profoundly sacred entity among the Kikuyu, was more a commodity to the Kikuyu than other tribes in Africa as a whole. The idea of parting with land as an exercise in exchange was by no means an alien doctrine among the Kikuyu and has allowed land to change hands.[3]

Even in the midst of the *Mau Mau* Emergency entrepreneurship was seeking

3. See Greet Sluiter, *Kikuyu Concepts of Land and Land Kin* (M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1960 — manuscript); J.F.M. Middleton, *The Kikuyu and Kamba of Kenya* (Ethnographic survey of Africa, East Central Africa, Part 5 — 1953), London, pp. 52-56; and Jomo Kenyatta, *Facing Mount Kenya* (1938), pp. 20-40.

new outlets among those not directly involved in the war. In 1955 L.S.B. Leakey observed:

> The Kikuyu have over the past ten years developed an absolute craze for 'company' formation. There are hundreds, possibly thousands of unregistered 'Companies' as they call them, comprising anything from three to ten shareholders, who invest their money with the hope, often a forlorn one, that it will multiply much more quickly than it would in the Post Office Savings Bank or in any other organised concern.[4]

The range of companies and types of enterprise attempted were indeed quite wide and they ranged from commercial transport to small grocery shops in the villages. The mere fact that they preferred to invest in such companies rather than put away their money in a Post Office Savings Bank augured well for the spirit of risk-taking and entrepreneurial success. There was no doubt that something in Kikuyu culture made the tribe potential commercial masters of the country as a whole, should the political climate one day become more congenial to their full economic maturation.

And then independence came. The principle of personal success as a measure of social achievement began to find legitimacy in Kenya under African rule. In the first two years of Kenya's independence the term 'African Socialism' still featured as a part of the official vocabulary of politics. But meanwhile changes were taking place in the direction of greater African involvement in the economic organisation of the country which would act as a constraint upon restricting capitalist growth. The policies of giving Africans more of a share in the former White Highlands of Kenya; the policies of encouraging more efficient forms of land settlement among Africans; the policies of bringing under cultivation land which was before underutilised; and finally the policy that led the Kenya Government to push harder than ever the idea of creating an African commercial class to replace, at least in part, the cadre of businessmen which had previously consisted of Asians and Europeans, all were aspects of a vigorous move to Africanise more substantially the commanding heights of Kenya's economy. The Kikuyu traditional predispositions, activated in part by Jomo Kenyatta's style of leadership, helped to determine that Africanisation would simultaneously create African capitalism. Kenya took the highroad towards an African private-enterprise system partly because within Kikuyu traditional predispositions was an ethic which accepted personal success as a measure of social achievement. President Kenyatta himself once tried to 'disgrace' a prominent Kenya leftist at a public meeting by pointing out that the leftist did not own a big house or a private business. The leftist, Mr. Bildad Kaggia, was himself present at the meeting. President Kenyatta compared Kaggia with other old colleagues of his who had since become prosperous. Addressing Kaggia directly Mzee Kenyatta said:

> We were together with Paul Ngei in jail. If you go to Ngei's home, he has planted a lot of coffee and other crops. What have you done for yourself? If you go to Kubai's home he has a big house and a nice shamba. Kaggia, what have you done for yourself? We were together with Kungu Karumba in jail, now he is running his own buses. What have you done for yourself?[5]

What is significant here is the conviction that failure to prosper is an argument against a leader. As a socialist radical, Kaggia was, at the time, urging a distribution of land in Kenya to the poor. Kenyatta was suggesting that a person who had failed to prosper through his own exertions should not be 'advocating free things'.[6]

From this kind of reasoning it was an easy transition to the feeling that enforced economic equality was an insult to the dignity of labour. The principle of 'to each according to his work' made sense — but it did not make sense to strive for a principle of 'to each according to his needs'. The official distrust of Communism in Kenya's ideological orientation is, therefore, to be traced not so much to the western influence in Kenya as to the influence on political behaviour of traditional *mores* among one of the dominant ethnic groups in Kenyan politics. The Kikuyu distrust of economic egalitarianism was sometimes shared by other groups or by specific individuals from other groups converted to a similar orientation. From all this emerged the official conviction crystallised in Minister Ronald Ngala's assertion that 'Communism teaches people laziness'.[7]

Marginality, Centrality and Innovation

Both the Baganda and the Kikuyu are heartland tribes. They are communities important enough and central enough to have been at the heart of major events in the history of their countries. But the Kikuyu were an underprivileged heartland tribe during the colonial period. Their nearness to the white settlers of Kenya made them vulnerable to some of the more brutal aspects of settler colonialism. The Baganda, on the other hand, were a relatively privileged community under British rule, and enjoyed a degree of autonomy and attentiveness from the imperial authorities which were the envy of others. But after Independence the Baganda began to decline, especially following the 1966 confrontation with the Central Government of Uganda under Milton Obote.

We have suggested earlier in this paper that the Kikuyu have been politically conservative since Independence but economically innovative. To some extent the same can be said of the Baganda both before and after Independence

4. L.S.B. Leakey, 'The Economics of Kikuyu Life', *East African Economic Review*, Vol. 3, (1956), pp. 177-179.

5. See *East African Standard* (Nairobi), April 12, 1965.
6. *Ibid.* This point is discussed more fully in my article, 'The Monarchical Tendency in African Political Culture', *The British Journal of Sociology*, Vol. XVIII, No. 3, (September 1967). The article occurs as Chapter 10 in Mazrui, *Violence and Thought: Essays on Social Tensions in Africa* (London: Longmans, 1969).
7. See B.B.C. Monitoring Service Records of African Broadcasts, Nairobi in English, ME/1892/B/2, June 22nd 1965. In Lenin's terms the principle of 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his work' is a transitional principle characteristic of the lower phase of Communism. But the ultimate aim of justice in Communist terms was, according to Lenin, 'from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs'. See Lenin, *State and Revolution* (1917).

but with some important variations. The Baganda have a record of effective response to political reform.

One question wich arises is whether the very quality of being a heartland tribe, central and important regardless of being privileged or under-privileged, promotes the kind of self-confidence which would facilitate, psychologically, a capacity for economic risk-taking. Such a hypothesis may go some way towards explaining the positive economic responsiveness on the part of both the Kikuyu and the Baganda who have enough self-confidence to face a loss and pain of loss. But what about political conservatism? Being in power now, the Kikuyu have a vested interest in the continuation of the political *status quo*.

During the colonial period the privileged position of the Baganda also gave them a vested interest in the political *status quo*, while at the same time facilitating economic risk-taking. After 1966, the Ganda decline in power inevitably determined their interest in the Obote regime and even under Amin the evidence so far is that the Baganda's response has been nostalgic rather than revolutionary, a desire to restore the past rather than a commitment to create a new future. Ganda political conservatism has therefore persisted in spite of the new situation of relative decline. But what has happened to the innovative capacity in the economic sphere? The evidence is incomplete, but there are signs already that Ganda economic innovativeness may be enhanced as a result of their political decline. Many of the best minds, skills, and entrepreneurial qualities of the Baganda before 1966 were diverted towards competing for office within the Kabaka's system of government, rather than in engaging in economic investment and trade. Attempts during the 1940's and the 1950's to promote vigorous commercial activity on the part of the Baganda were seldom spectacularly successful, though often more successful than those undertaken by some of their neighbours. Commerce and trade enjoyed limited prestige as compared with the opportunities of land-ownership or entering the Mengo establishment.

If it is indeed true, as the evidence so far seems to suggest, that Ganda entrepreneurship has increased since 1966, this could be a case of a community becoming more economically vigorous because of political decline and the closure of some of the alternative opportunities.

If the Kikuyu economic upsurge is, on the other hand, partly due to their centrality in the power structure at the moment, this would be a case of economic vigour deriving its sustenance from political ascendancy rather than political decline. The Ganda have been forced to *specialise* if they are to retain some pre-eminance in the Uganda society as a whole; but, the Kikuyu are still in a position to *diversify* their hegemony.

The example of the Baganda belongs to that category of economic success sometimes attributed to sociological marginality. Marginal communities are those on the borderline between belonging and not belonging, those who have to specialise in a particular area of endeavour in order to make a social impact on the wider society. The case of the Jews in Europe and America as a marginal people is one illustration in point. The case of the Asians in East Africa, though in some ways less clear, is also a viable illustration.

And yet there is a difference between such cases of marginality and the case of the Baganda. The Jews were never privileged and then cut down to size. But the Baganda were privileged earlier in Uganda and then lost some status. The coup of January 1971 could not restore the Baganda to their former pre-eminence. Economic assertiveness arising out of this latter phenomenon of losing status must therefore be regarded as somewhat different from the pattern of motivation characteristic of continuously marginal communities.

The case of the Baganda is more like the case of some categories of the Samurai in the history of the modernisation of Japan.

> In Japan, the feudal group known as Tokugawa, who gained national power in 1600, imposed a peace which deprived the Samurai of some of their traditional functions; imposed rigid distinctions among social classes which had the effect of relegating the so-called wealthy peasants, descendants of the lesser elite, to the rank of the peasant; and to some extent demeaned other feudal groups, so-called other clans. It was the lesser Samurai and wealthy peasants, apparently of the outer clan, who were the innovators of the industrial revolution.[8]

The Baganda represent a similar case of creative demotion—a withdrawal of political status which results in renewed readiness to experiment in alternative areas of endeavour.[9]

Radicalism and the Uganda Nilotes

If traditional culture helps to determine responsiveness to an entrepreneurial ethos in a particular African community, does it also help to arouse socialistic radicalism in others? Much of the debate about African socialism in Africa has already been tinged by a socialistic idealisation of traditional society. Nyerere's concept of *Ujamaa* is itself an assertion that traditional collectivism and the solidarity of kinship systems could provide a foundation for socialistic endeavours in the modern world. But, in fact, not all African communities in East Africa have, by any means, displayed a responsiveness to socialism as a matter of course. The word socialism enjoys wide respectability even among those who pay no more than lip service to it. But in the empirical situation of East Africa we remain as yet inadequately informed about the precise relationship between the cultural background of an individual and his potential response to socialist values.

What the short history of independent East Africa so far illustrates is the simple fact that in Uganda and Kenya much of the left wing radicalism has been initiated or led by sections of the Nilotic peoples.

In the case of Uganda, Nilotic radicalism, where it has existed, has been partly structural and partly cultural. It has been structural because of the

8. Everett E. Hagen, 'How Economic Growth Begins: A Theory of Social Change', *Journal of Social Issues*, Vol. 19, pp. 30-34, (January 1963).
9. For wider issues concerning motivation and economic performance consult David C. McClelland, *The Achievement Motive* (Princeton N.J.: Van Norstrand, 1961) and Bert C. Hoselitz and Wilbur E. Moore (Eds) *Industrialisation and Society* (The Hague: UNESCO and Mouton, 1963). See also Chalmers Johnson, *Revolutionary Change* (London: University of London Press, 1966).

relative under-privileged position occupied by Northerners in relation to Buganda and other Bantu kingdoms until relatively recently. The Nilotic readiness to engage in the politics of radicalism might in part be a rebellion against a tradition of under-privilege. But the Nilotic response to radicalism has at times also been culturally defined by egalitarian and republican elements in their traditional system of values.

The respect and autonomy Buganda received from the British helped to arouse in some of her neighbours the desire for similar monarchical systems. But by the time of independence this had become less fashionable and Obote was coming to the view that one day it might be possible to establish parity by abolishing all the Bantu kings rather than creating new kings for Nilotes. Ideologically, as well as by virtue of cultural background, Obote had reservations about centralised monarchies. The idea of having chieftains was of course very much part of the Lango heritage. Obote himself came from a chief's family. But these dignitarian and influential institutions were not the same thing as centralised kingdoms. In general the dominant structures in the Northern communities were segmentary and neo-republican. The fact that such societies suffered in comparison with the respect accorded to the Kings increased their self-conscious republicanism soon after independence.

Nevertheless, Obote was prepared to let the Bantu retain their kings for as long as national cohesion was not threatened. But with the crisis between him and the Kabaka of Buganda in 1966, he became more convinced than ever that regional kings could impede national integration. In general, it is probably true to say that what forced Obote to impose republicanism was not a quest for equality, but a quest for unity. Most fanatical opponents of the institutions of kingship develop reservations about such institutions in the name of human equality. The very notion of royalty and its power and splendour evokes the idea of special privilege, and opposition to monarchical institutions has therefore very often been part of general assault upon the privileged.

This egalitarian element was certainly present in Obote's republicanism, and yet less strongly than the hope of integration. As a national leader Obote was opposed to kings less because monarchical institutions in Uganda seemed to him incompatible with socialism than because monarchial institutions in Uganda seemed incompatible with his vision of a united nation.

The Nilotic peoples themselves vary significantly in their social structures and cultural patterns. At one end we have the Nuer, the Dinka and to the south the Masai, as examples of high egalitarian individualism. But on the other hand we have the Acholi and the Alur, with more elaborate principles of stratification. But even these later societies were relatively simplified models of ranking as compared with some of their Bantu neighbours. There was a tendency among the Alur and the Acholi for political ranking to coincide with the ritual stratification.

> Thus, in Alur all those belonging to lineages descended from Chiefs are collectively called *rwodhi* the term of the Chiefs themselves . . . . Alur commoners are commonly called *Iwak*, which etymologically suggests the masses of subjects. In Acholi the same distinctions are made between *kal* lineages, or those derived from and focused upon the palace or home-stead of the chief, the *lobong* or subject, a word that in other neighbouring Nilotic languages refers rather to serfs.[10]

But Southall goes on to warn us against assuming that these 'nobles' in such societies were a select minority. On the contrary they could often be a majority in a particular community.

> This was always in the nature of the system, although it is true that colonial rule weakened or broke the bonds between serf or commoner clients and their noble patrons . . . Nonetheless, given the principles of unilineal descent, cattle bride-wealth, exogamy and polygamy, noble lineages always on the average grew at a much larger rate than commoner lineages, thus constantly diluting their nobility to the point of virtual extinction at the margin, preventing the development of a very hard line of distinction between all noble and all commoners as such.[11]

The Kenya Luo are even less hierarchical than this. Their degree of decentralisation bears comparison with that characteristic of the Eastern Nilotes,[12] and may have a bearing on their radicalism.

Egalitarian individualism as a cultural inheritance can be mobilised either in the direction of a private enterprise system or in the direction of socialism. It depends upon whether it is the component of *individualism* or the factor of *egalitarianism* which gains ascendancy in unfolding political interaction and this may depend upon the socio-political context.

As we have indicated, the Nilotes of Uganda were easy to mobilise into a mood of opposition to feudalism. Not only were they more culturally egalitarian than the neighbouring Bantu kingdoms, but they had also been placed structurally, during the colonial period, in a relationship of relative deprivation as compared with the monarchical south.

The Nilotes might be agreed on the abolition of feudalism, but after the feudalist era it was less certain whether it would be the egalitarianism or the individualism in their cultural heritage which was permitted supremacy. On the eve of Independence important Nilotic leaders were already sure that some degree of socialism was needed, but they were far less certain that this should go to the extent of trying to suppress the spirit of individualism. Mr. Naphlin Akena Adoko, who later became one of the most powerful political figures in Uganda, captured the Nilotic dilemma in a speech he gave in Gulu on the eve of Independence. He was addressing a meeting of leading residents of the town, and he said that land-ownership in Lango and Acholi before the advent of Europeans had both socialistic and individualistic characteristics. Land was under the umbrella of the tribe or clans, but personal property was still permitted.

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10. Southall, 'Rank, and Stratification in Africa', A. Tuden and L. Plotnicov (ed.) (N.Y.: The Free Press, 1970), p. 38.
11. *Ibid.*
12. The Nilotic peoples are scattered around a contiguous area which encompasses north-eastern Congo, northern Uganda, northern and western Kenya, south-western Ethiopia and southern Sudan. The area used to be divided by analysts into the Nilotic, and the Nilo-Hamitic segments. But the appellation which has been gaining currency is that which emerged from the linguistic classification of Greenberg. The Nilotes of old are now described as western Nilotes, and the Nilo-Hamitic groups are described as the eastern Nilotes.

> It is my submission that what we need now is a judicious mixture of individualism and socialism. We in Uganda have a degree of a mixed economy — what we need is a golden mean between socialism and individualism.

The meeting was held under the Chairmanship of the Secretary General of Acholi. It was so successful that its organiser, Mr. Okot p'Bitek, assessed that there was enough interest in such meetings to warrant one a week in Gulu.[13]

The factor which for a while came to tip the scales in favour of greater radicalism was the personality of Milton Obote and his own scale of priorities, meshed with a national history which made it possible to utilise anti-feudalism as an argument in favour of socialism. Much of Obote's *Common Man's Charter* was explicitly directed to fighting the remnants of feudalism in the country. There was a persistant warning in the Charter against the emergence of neo-feudalism. There was an insistence that birth and heredity should forever cease to be determinants of status and privilege. There was a turning against the past.

But a capitalist need not be in favour of feudalism either. To some extent that was what the American revolution was all about. It was at once a great initiation of a capitalistic civilisation and a strong rebellion against British feudalistic tendencies. The American capitalist political culture has included a persistent theme of opposition to a hereditary aristocracy. The idea of social mobility as an imperative is well and truly within the complex of values of the American civilisation. That civilisation is pre-eminently capitalistic, solidly derived from concepts of rugged individualism and private enterprise. But at the same time that civilisation remains, at least in relation to its own domestic preference, opposed to feudalism and hereditary titles.

The asset which Obote had in his mission to move Uganda towards socialism lay ultimately in the availability of anti-feudalism as a mobilisational resource. But did Obote really stand a chance of success in persuading his supporters that only socialism is a ligitimate alternative to feudalism? The answer to that question had begun to unfold before Obote was deposed in January 1971. Understandably, he seemed to have greater support among his own people in Lango for his socialistic policies than among some of the other northerners in the country. The Acholi are adjacent to the Lango, but indications at the time seemed to suggest that their enthusiasm for socialism was still limited.

Could the reason lie partly in the fact that the Acholi were less culturally egalitarian and were less structurally under-privileged during the colonial period? The relevance of culture for ideological attitudes continued to remain important. But it also remained difficult to measure its influence with any degree of certainty.

Radicalism and the Kenya Nilotes

When President Kenyatta visited Luoland in October 1969 to open the Soviet-financed hospital in Kisumu, he gave a speech which provoked a political

13. *Uganda Argus*, May 16th, 1963.

reaction from the supporters of the Opposition Party, The Kenya People's Union. Mzee Kenyatta accused the people of Nyanza, the Luo, of deficiencies in their commitment to nation-building. His taunts included the charge of 'laziness'. It was quite clear that the Luo had been commercially and even agriculturally less innovative and less dynamic than the Kikuyu. The President suggested that the relative slowness of economic development in that region was, in part, due to inadequate exertion by the local people.

The President's analysis of Nyanza behaviour was exaggerated, but he was pointing to an important element in what appeared to be aspects of Luo social behaviour and cultural orientation. The history of the Luo in Kenya did seem to indicate that their cultural genius in the modern period might lie more in proletarian organisation and intellectual excellence and less in entrepreneurial vigour. While the Kikuyu soon displayed a readiness to move out of their tribal areas and establish business in Luoland and other regions, the Luo had an even longer history of mobility with longer distances traversed in search of opportunities. But the opportunities which the Luo sought were not in business and commerce. The Luo were great proletarians and great intellectuals without being great businessmen.

On the intellectual side, the Luo soon established a presence at the University in Nairobi disproportionate to their numbers. Tensions in University politics were sometimes created by the simple fact that many of the academic leaders seemed to be disproportionately drawn from Nyanza. Recruitment had not been distorted to produce such a result. It just so happened that the Luo tribe in the first few years of Kenya's independence produced more academics than any other single community in the country or indeed in the East African region as a whole.

On the proletarian side, the Luo of Kenya have been exceptionally mobile as a labour force, crossing boundaries and establishing their presence in important fields of employment outside their homes. Of course, the Luo, like the Kikuyu, are in some important respects basically a rural people. And yet the role of the Luo in Kenya's nationalism has been basically the role of an urban class. The impact of the Luo on trade unionism in Kenya and Uganda has been impressive. The mobility of the tribe across national frontiers has helped to give them a cosmopolitan dimension rooted in relative urbanism. Tom Mboya, a Luo, emerged as a founding father of African trade unionism in Kenya and a great fighter for fair wages in the towns.

The fact that the socialist party of Kenya, The Kenya People's Union, had its base in Luoland was due to a variety of factors, some of which might have had nothing to do with the cultural predispositions of the Luo as a people. And yet it seems almost certain that these cultural predispositions were not entirely irrelevant in sharpening the confrontation between the Kikuyu and the Luo in Kenya. Kikuyu conviction that the Luos were lazy and needed advantages disproportionate to their exertion were based on Kikuyu values in relation to agricultural innovation and entrepreneurial vigour. In these fields the Luo had not proved especially outstanding. They were neither great farmers nor great businessmen like the Kikuyu.

And yet it is these same Luo who have a history of mobility in search of better opportunities, and who establish their presence in university institutions as well as in trade unionism. The conclusion to be drawn was that some of their cultural predispositions oriented them towards these alternative fields of endeavour. The question which arises is whether the proletarian orientation of the Luo was a contributory factor towards their ideological radicalisation under Oginga Odinga. As for the attitude of Luo intellectuals to radicalism in Kenya politics, it is not quite clear that this is either prevalent as an ideological position or culturally determined. But the question persists that Luo intellectualist leanings might also turn out to be especially congenial to ideological radicalisation in the years ahead.

Luo orientation towards urbanisation was connected with their attitude to land. In the words of B.A. Ogot:

> This was concrete, matter of fact, and utilitarian. Such mystic categories as Earth cult, Goddess of fertility, or the mystic connection between the Mother soil and the man working it—so often attributed to the peasantry wherever they may be—were signally absent from their minds and civilisation . . . The people had thus no great love for the land on which they lived, as long as there was enough of it for their cattle and their crops. A man would readily leave his father's grave and build a new home several miles away, if the land in the latter place was better, and enemies fewer.[14]

Ogot goes on to observe, however, that some important changes in Luo attitudes to land had taken place. The Luo migration from the north had taken them to areas where rearing cattle was not quite as profitable, and the agricultural economy had begun to foster some attachment to settlement. The acute shortage of land in western Kenya had accelerated this tendency and given land a little more mystique in the Luo complex of values than it had once enjoyed. But even after making allowances for these changes, there is still a hard core of relative utilitarianism in Luo attitudes to land, and readiness to move elsewhere in pursuit of alternative opportunities. The Luo component in migrant labour across territorial boundaries in East Africa has been disproportionate. The Kikuyu after independence gained new mobility in the pursuit of commercial opportunities. But the Luo for many years before independence had sought to explore new economic areas as mobile proletarians. Trade unionism both in Kenya and in Uganda was partly spearheaded by Luo initiative.

Innovators versus Revolutionaries

But is there a potential clash here between political radicals and economic innovators? We have so far attempted to indicate some lines of interaction between cultural factors and political dispositions. Out of this interaction distinctive political systems are emerging in East Africa. The question which

14. B.A. Ogot, *A History of the the Southern Luo*, Volume 1, *Migration and Settlement* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967), pp. 38-9.

now arises is how these systems in turn would affect economic and political perfomance in the countries concerned.

A major premise of this analysis is that while Tanzania has in its political revolutionary fervour, moved towards centralised political systems, she has *ipso facto* also moved in the direction of reduced potential for economic innovation. Kenya, on the other hand, is likely to develop in the direction of a high level of economic innovation and inventiveness, partly because it has so far fallen short of a political system centralised enough to control the economy.

Nevertheless it is feasible for a centralised system to produce important political or economic innovations. It is arguable that Obote's *Document No. 5* concerning four constituencies for each parliamentary candidate would not have been conceivable as a proposition in 1964 or 1965 when Uganda was a neo-federal polity. Obote produced such an innovative document in a situation where at least power had been centralised, even if the policy itself was not completely centralised.

And yet in spite of this centralisation, it is precisely in this period that some of the most important political innovations took place. Does not this nullify the argument I had advanced about centralisation and its lack of congeniality to inventiveness and innovation?

It does not really nullify that proposition in this case, for the simple and very obvious reason that Obote was the head of the state and the head of government. He was at the apex of power. Institutions of an original kind can be invented by the top men in a centralised system, partly because they are the least subject to the centralisation of power. They retain the freedom to innovate and experiment. They retain the freedom to be bold in their imagination. It would have been a more convincing argument against our proposition if a new electoral system had been born out of the imagination of the discontented Baganda under Obote seeking ways of reconciling their lot with the new political situations.

A generalisation could be attempted from the outset by saying that settled traditional communities have a lower potential for innovation than rapidly modernising states. The pull of custom in a traditional community can itself be a form of centralisation. Just as a centralised policy in a modern state can too often stifle secondary innovation, so can the blanket of custom suffocate a spirit of secondary or even primary inventiveness. As Horace M. Kallen once pointed out, innovators are not necessarily rebels and the temper of innovation is not by any means the temper of revolt. Nevertheless a situation which demands a good deal of conformity is one which minimises responsiveness to innovation. There is in the case of all innovation an initial inclination towards resistance within the social organisation. As Kallen put it:

> . . . innovators are forced into a combative position. For their novelties enter a social organisation most of whose establishments are going concerns and enter as competitors and deprecators of one or another . . . Since all innovations animate readjustments in the distribution and organisation of social forces they automatically evoke the antagonism of those who are disturbed. If the antagonism is pervasive and

deep, the innovation per force lapses. If however, it satisfies a want or nullifies an annoyance, however illusorily, it gathers a following . . .[15]

Of course all this exaggerates the degree of conformity demanded in individual African communities in East Africa. In any case there are important variations within the communities themselves. As we have indicated, the Baganda and the Kikuyu are similar in many respects, being heartland tribes, big and central in their respective territories in which they are situated, and cast in significant national roles in the histories of Uganda and Kenya respectively.

Yet the Baganda's capacity to take advantage of the new culture and its skills was greatly facilitated by the relatively privileged status they were granted almost from the outset. The Kikuyu, by being decentralised when the British arrived, lacked the kind of institutions of large-scale organisation which should command that side of the British temperament which admired such organisation. In addition the Kikuyu had to face the nearness of a settler community. There could be no question of enjoying the type of autonomy and vigorous independence, accorded to the Baganda. They were already a threat to the settler community even in their relative submissiveness. And the settler community proceeded to devise ways and means of containing the apparent cultural vigour of the Kikuyu. As a result the Kikuyu are only now beginning to come forth with a vigorous entrepreneurial culture that is changing the economic picture of East Africa.

It might well be that had the Kikuyu been permitted the same latitude of reponsiveness to the new skills which came with colonialism, their range of innovativeness and development might well have been greater. There are certainly a lot of indications of semi-suppressed enthusiasms and vigour. Some of the schools which they experimented with during the colonial period are an indication both of latent reponsiveness to the western impact and of inner innovation. In trade there were also indications of a community waiting to burst out and experiment with economic risk-taking and entrepreneurial adventure. It needed the release of independence to liberate these energies of change.[16]

Elite Initiative Versus Mass Spontaneity

We are, in fact, back to our distinction between structural and systemic transformation, for it is partly the heightened experimentation and innovativeness in Kenya which is releasing structural change without the aid of revolutionary planning. Along with all its disruption and social costs, Kenya's experience remains one of a revolution without revolutionaries at the helm.

But are there no prospects of a total revolution in East Africa? Must a revolution be either structural or systemic? Can it not be both?

15. Kallen, 'Innovation' in Edwin R.A. Seligman and Alvin Johnson (eds), *The Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), Vol. 4.
16. See Margaret Katzin, 'The Role of the Small Entrepreneur' in *Economic Transition in Africa*, edited by Melville J. Herskovits and Mitchell Harwitz (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964), pp. 184-5.

In fact, East Africa does have an example of such a phenomenon, however imperfect the model. The example is that of Zanzibar. The island has indeed been transformed both structurally and systemically. And yet this introduces us to another important distinction when we are looking at instigated revolutions. Revolutions can be instigated either from above or from below. When a revolutionary outburst is instigated from below what we have is an assertion at the grass roots level of high militancy. In such cases the line separating spontaneity from instigation can be very thin indeed.

East Africa's experience would seem to suggest that revolutions instigated from above are safer and more manageable than revolutions instigated from the grass roots. This may sound elitist, but the evidence is compelling in the East African context. Grass roots revolutions can be devastating, but revolutions led by an elite would appear to stand a better chance of realising their objectives.

The two parts of Tanzania offer a perfect illustration of this proposition. Zanzibar experienced a grass roots revolution, instigated from below. The result has not been a transformation of the political system as such but a devastation of the polity, a dislocation of the economy of the country, a general sense of insecurity in the population, a lack of sense of direction in national policies and a rapid erosion of human values.

The revolution on mainland Tanzania, on the other hand, is calmly led by an intellectual, Mwalimu Julius Nyerere. There is a purposefulness in it all, a sense of direction, a sense of balance, a sense of popular support and an elegant sensibility to human considerations. The lesson which East Africans seem invited to draw from this experience is that if they have revolutions, let the ultimate instigation and guidance come from the top rather than from the grass roots. Revolutions may indeed be best carried out for the sake of the masses, but they are not necessarily best initiated by the masses themselves.

Uganda was much more like mainland Tanzania than Zanzibar. The Obote 'revolution' might have been *for* the common man, but in the initial stages it was not *by* the common man. There was no doubt that the Obote 'revolution' was being instigated from the top for there was as yet no revolutionary fervour at the grass roots.

The revolutionaries were drawn from the ranks of the elite. And why not? The paradox of successful revolution is that it is at its most creative when it is fundamentally elitist. That is what happened in Russia when it was decided that the proletariat as a whole could not be entrusted with the revolution; responsibility had to pass to a *vanguard* of the proletariat. And V.I. Lenin — like Julius K. Nyerere and A. Milton Obote — was a member of the intelligentsia rather than a common man drawn from the ranks. There developed among Russians a rapid awareness that the masses by themselves do not constitute the best breed of revolutionaries. Lenin once quoted with approval Karle Kautsky's assertion that it was absolutely 'untrue' to regard socialist consciousness as a direct result of the proletarian class struggle. Kautsky went on to say:

> Modern socialist consciousness can arise only on the basis of profound scientific knowledge . . . the vehicle of Science is not the proletariat but the *bourgeois intelligentsia.* It was in the minds of individual members of this stratum that modern socialism originated; it was they who communicated it to the more intellectually devoted proletarians who, in their turn, introduced it into the proletarian class struggle where conditions allowed that to be done.[17]

Lenin credited the working classes with a capacity for spontaneity, but not with an automatic capacity for socialist consciousness. And the birth of socialism was, according to Lenin, inseparable from the history of intellectualism.

> The theory of socialism . . . grew out of the philosophic, historical, and economic theories elaborated by educated representatives of the property classes, by intellectuals. By their social status, the founders of modern scientific socialism, Marx and Engels, themselves belonged to the bourgeois intelligentsia.[18]

The theory here does not imply that it is necessary to keep the masses out of revolutionary creativity. All that is being asserted is that the role of the masses is to be responsive to guidance, leadership, and discipline from the top. In the Russian context there grew up the formula that in order to get action a nation needed *unity*; in order to get unity the nation needed *discipline;* and in order to get discipline the nation needed *obedience.*

It was out of such assumptions that the whole doctrine of *Democratic Centralism* came into being in Russia after the Communist Revolution. The term implied what has been called: 'A combination beteeen the principle of mass participation at the bottom and the concentration of leadership at the top'.

None of the East African cases has yet approached the Soviet intensity either in structural or in systemic transformation. Nor is even Nyerere's ideology as yet at the level of comprehensiveness and cohesion which characterised early Soviet Communism. But East Africa is rich enough to give us so far one country undergoing rapid structural change, Kenya; one country which briefly attempted systemic change but had yet to accomplish structural transformation, Uganda; one country, Tanganyika, which has carried out systemic change, and has initiated important structural innovations, including *Ujamaa* villages; and finally an island, the isle of cloves, which has undergone the agonies of both systemic and structural transformation, but with a devastation partly accountable for by the fact that this particular revolution was a revolution from below and therefore less manageable than its counterpart on mainland Tanzania.

In conclusion, we should bear in mind that a revolution both brings to an end an old order and seeks to initiate a new. Until the new order is clarified and has consolidated itself the revolution is incomplete. This is particularly true of systemic revolutions, where we seek to know what new socio-political

17. Cited by Lenin in 'What is to be done?' See Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. 1 of three volumes (Moscow: Foreign Languages Press, 1960), p. 156. Consult also Hannah Arendt, *On Revolution* (New York: Viking Press, 1963).
18. 'What is to be done?' *Ibid.*, p. 149. A useful analysis of the social origins of revolutionaries also occurs in Crane Brinto, *Anatomy of Revolution* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall, 1938).

system has replaced the old. It is even more true when the systemic revolution is clearly instigated by a set of idealised objectives. We then seek to know whether those objectives have been fulfilled.

The three systemic revolutions in East Africa have been those of Zanzibar, mainland Tanzania and the Obote attempt in Uganda. The case of Zanzibar is one of brutal termination of an old regime, but, as yet, there has been inadequate institutionalisation of any new order. The arbitrariness of authority and the sense of drift in Zanzibar are signs of an inconclusive revolution.

In the case of Tanzania something approaching a new order is coming into being under Nyerere's leadership. In the case of Uganda we know that 1966 ended the neo-federal and monarchical Uganda. That might well be Obote's most enduring legacy to Uganda. But although an old order was ended, the country has yet to create a stable alternative and a new post-feudal sense of purpose.

Kenya is undergoing a structural revolution, involving rapid and fundamental change. Tanzania, on the other hand, is experiencing systemic transformations instigated from the top. Uganda has fluctuated between different experiments.

But while Tanzania might have more political revolutionaries than are apparently available in Kenya, Kenya might conceivably have more economic innovators than there are in the other two countries. The precise relationship between political decentralisation and economic experimentation is a subject too vast to be adequately attempted in a single paper. Nevertheless, this essay has attempted to draw attention to the propensity for centralised systems to reduce the range of innovative experimentation, while a decentralised political system endowed with the right additional incentives demonstrates a tendency towards innovative diversity.

It is not merely conscious modern ideology and political systems which determine the interplay between political change and economic performance. It is also the cultural background of a given people, the complex of values which condition their response to economic and social stimuli. I have attempted to demonstrate in this paper that the traditional value pattern of the Kikuyu has been congenial to vigorous private enterprises and individualistic ambition. During the colonial period this resulted in pent-up entrepreneurship, as the frustrations of being near to settler dominance in Kenya crippled Kikuyu initiative while feeding Kikuyu ambition. But Kenya's independence and the centrality of the Kikuyu in the power structure of the country, have facilitated the full expression of their economic innovativeness for the time being.

The Luo in Kenya, on the other hand, have excelled more in proletarian and intellectual activities, than in commercial endeavours. Their proletarian leadership goes back to the colonial days, as the migrant labour from Nyanza influenced labour organisation in both Kenya and Uganda, and often captured the leadership of these movements of workers. The most prominent figure in this early upsurge of proletarian organisation among the Luo was the late Tom Mboya, a dominant trade-unionist in East Africa, and one of the leading organisers of labour in the history of Africa. In intellectual activities the

Luo have also excelled, producing in the initial phases more than their fair share of Kenyan academics. It is just conceivable that the combination of proletarian and intellectual tendencies could be a breeding gound for political radicalism. The debate will continue as to whether Oginga Odinga was a genuine ideological radical, or simply a politician driven to adopt a particular leftist stand because of the nature of the cause espoused by his personal opponents. It seems probable, however, that there was an element of 'leftism' in the value structure of Oginga Odinga, in spite of significant inconsistencies in his actual behaviour. His ability to mobilise significant support from Nyanza might also have been facilitated by the kind of values he was espousing. Among Luo intellectuals a tendency towards radical criticism of the social structure of independent Kenya is even more clearly discernible. The debate might again continue as to whether this is a case of disguised Luo ethnic consciousness resenting Kikuyu dominance, or it is a clear conflict of ideologies in a newly independent country. Again there is no need to opt for only one of those explanations. Ideology and culture, ethnicity and ethical commitment interact constantly and influence each other in a host of imperceptible but nonetheless significant ways.

In Uganda too, Leftist radicalism has been led by Nilotic individuals, though its support has by no means been limited to Nilotic peoples. The personality of Milton Obote and the backing he enjoyed for a while were critical in determining this Nilotic leadership in Ugandan socialism. But also important have been the value patterns of the Nilotic communities, as contrasted with the Bantu kingdoms. The Nilotes were capable of being convinced about the undesirability of feudalism, if by that was meant elaborate monarchical institutions and hereditary privilege of the kind ultimately symbolised by Buganda. *But after feudalism, what*? It was possible to be anti-feudalistic, and still be pro-capitalist. The Northern populations of Uganda were by no means automatically committed to the pursuit of a socialistic utopia. They shared with Milton Obote his opposition to feudalism but many needed further arguments to convince them that only socialism was a viable alternative to feudalism. Milton Obote had some significant successes in his efforts to mobilise support, though there were reservations about the sacrifices demanded. Such reservations were softly expressed both in Obote's native North and in the southern Bantu sectors of the country. After the coup of January 1971, the reservations were more bluntly articulated and are at this time constraints upon the new regime.

Behind the experience of all the three East African countries is the simple factor of the pain caused by any social change. Of special interest in this regard is the view of Mr. C.S.K. Tumbo, first and last leader of the Opposition in independent Tanganyika. In 1963 Tumbo seemed to combine both a pessimism about what was happening in Tanganyika under Nyerere's leadership and a feeling that somehow the pain which was being inflicted had potentialities for subsequent creativity within the nation. In September 1963 Mr. Tumbo dedicated himself afresh to the task of fighting Nyerere's Preventive Detention Act. He proceeded to reaffirm that 'Pain is the only creative factor

in the life of the nation'. But to Mr. Tumbo the national pain in Tanganyika was coming *after* Independence.[19]

In the case of Kenya and Uganda, as we indicated, there was also profound pain *before* Independence. But what matters from the point of view of this conclusion is the potential role of disruption itself in sharpening the wits of men and enhancing their creative potential. The challenge of disruption and social need is not by itself enough to engender creative transformation. But it could sometimes constitute a powerful motivating force for one kind of revolution or another, for one pattern of innovation or another. In the final analysis, the full lessons of East Africa's experience in this regard can only be drawn in the fullness of time.

19. See *East African Standard*, October 1st, 1963. Mr. Tumbo's choice of authority on the role of pain was unfortunate from his own point of view — he was frankly quoting Benito Mussolini. Mr. Tumbo was the leader of the small Tanganyika opposition to Dr. Nyerere and TANU.