One party, one pulpit, same tyranny

The 49th anniversary of the murder of Archbishop Janani Luwum during Idi Amin's rule comes when Uganda has just witnessed one of the ugliest election cycles in the country's history.

Many sober citizens cannot figure out how the ruling NRM will design and engineer its continuity in power without resorting to naked barbarism.

The NRM has virtually abolished the civilising spirit of the 1995 Constitution. But if many reflective citizens tend to hold powerful NRM politicians and soldiers largely responsible for this betrayal, some apologists of the regime and its horde of opportunists hide behind the notion that the very idea of democracy (the concept itself) is bad for Uganda. Or that Uganda is not mature enough for the concept to succeed here.

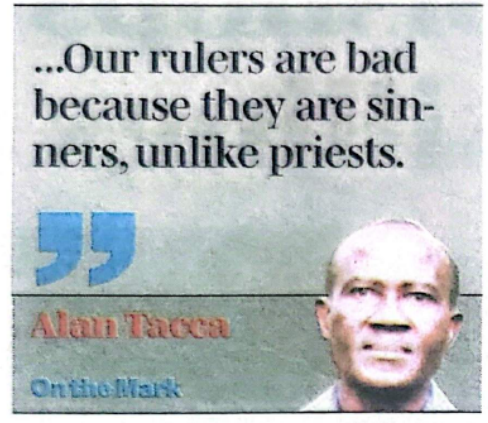
They imply that the rulers are good men forced by our constitutional arrangements into a system where failure was 'inevitable'. Anyone else would also fail.

What alternatives do these regime apologists and opportunists propose?

On the Sunday (February 15) before Luwum's day (February 16), Pastor Joseph Serwadda's breakfast talk show on Impact FM/Dream TV started by reeling off extracts from several speeches by European Union (EU) politicians condemning Uganda's elections and oppressive political environment.

Predictably, Serwadda subsequently rubbished the EU critics, reasoning that he had not seen a single European at the Lubowa Electoral Commission tally centre.

It is funny reasoning, because the EU probably has several contacts and information



sources around the country, and rigging an election can start several years before tallying day. The rest is common sense.

Anyhow, not for the first time, the pastor gave his solution for Uganda as turning the country into a theocracy.

It is such a ridiculous idea that I believe the pastor only dangles it as a distraction.

Otherwise, is Serwadda visualising a neo-pagan Christian theocracy led by Pentecostals in coalition with witchdoctors? Or a theocracy led by Catholics and Anglicans? Or is it a theocracy led by Old Kampala Mufti's, with the military helping to bring Kibuli into line?

The simplistic argument is that our rulers are bad because they are sinners, unlike priests. But if many pastors are unscrupulously fleecing their followers, why would they not bleed taxpayers if they got political power?

If they cannot objectively observe an election, will holding power make them less hypocritical?

The only peaceful theocracy on earth is the ultra-mini oddity called Vatican City.

At 121 acres in area (population, under 600), Vatican City is smaller than a very tiny tribe. If you somehow devised to place the whole of Italy under Vatican rule, the Italians would probably design your imprisonment.

The only other theocracies, Iran, Afghanistan and (partly) Saudi Arabia have very depressing stories.

On the same Sunday, in the evening, on Simba FM, ('RDC'?) Fred Bamwine recited his old idea that Uganda should have retained the no-party 'Movement' system.

Bamwine wants Ugandans to see all our political worms as products of pluralism.

But it was under the Movement that Kalangala Action Plan goons terrorised candidates challenging President Museveni.

It was under the Movement system that Supreme Court judges first pronounced themselves on election rigging that 'did not substantially alter the result...' and so on.

It was under the Movement system that corruption was engineered to become endemic, and loyalty elevated to be more important than competence.

The Movement (virtually a one-party State concept) and theocracy would almost by their nature lead to tyranny.

Even the ultimate theocracy, the biblical phantasmagoria of Heaven, is a dictatorship, established after the mass extermination of religious faith dissidents.

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