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Uganda tardy over agriculture

Christians in Rome shivered every passing day when it was their turn to be fed to lions made ravenously hungry for the purpose. We have seen the movies. I, a once-Christian, am shaking like a leaf at molesting the country I love by accusing it of being slow to appreciate the fabulous gift bestowed upon it by The Creator (or Nature, for those who prefer it!) at the time of Creation. Even there I am employing namby-pamby words in laying the blame on Uganda as a whole. So, like a man (as we used to say before Women annexed our language) I will come straight out and lay the blame where it is most deserved: the venerable Uganda Leadership! I feel better already.

When the National Resistance Movement (NRM), following its victory in the five-year Bush War took over the running of our latently great Nation, our population was in shreds: including, needless to say, in its daily wear. The first, second, third (and any other figure you care to nominate) move concerned its Security. Otherwise the defeated would start (had already started) molesting our new State. Thirty years might seem an inordinately long period to spend on this one need, but not if seen in its true light. That is, that a whole people's view of themselves was being forged afresh, after long years of neglect: a true re-birth, and much needed.

We knew, especially by the clearly damaging actions of those who fell off the Movement Bus, that the job might prove excruciatingly slow, as indeed it has proved. Also that human envy being involved, the repairing exercise can seem like an end in itself, worse: as the overweening desire by those in power to cling to it regardless of any other consideration. Unless those in charge had clear vision of where the journey should lead, it might seem easier to give up or take popular alternatives. Then the job would remain unfinished. Indeed Uganda has often appeared to be a staging of Becket's Waiting for Godot, in which no proper ending



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appeared possible. In saying this, I am not under-playing what has happened, or where we have already reached, by virtue of the Movement. In fact, Ugandans have over virtually a third of a century showed their appreciation by returning the Movement government to power in every succeeding Election. Those defeated sank to every trick, including their dirge that they would make, not better, but ungovernable, their Land of Birth. As they grow daily weaker in achieving their ambition for political power (power for its own sake, no programme attached!) they naturally seek for the Movement's Achilles Heel. (This is from the legend of the warrior Achilles, whose weak heel made him vulnerable in battle.) What is the Movement's Achilles Heel?

It must be in the Creation of Wealth for the country and its people. Uganda, bet your bottom shilling, is "not backward in coming forward" to find ways in which to improve its people's lot. There's even a slogan for it: *Bonna Bagaggawale*: Let Them All Become Rich. It is well-meant but a clear impossibility, indeed it smacks of mockery, more so for the majority who won't be kissed! Better to say, *Ensi Egaggawale*: Let the Nation become Rich;

to its citizens' gain.

There are many different combinations that will make Uganda richer. But logically the starting point must be through its great gifts from Nature. (We've been here before!) When you have a country with the fertility and climate of Uganda it appears perverse not to start the quest through its Agriculture. Instead we were invited to imitate the course taken by the Far East Tiger economies, such as Singapore and Malaysia. We were told South Korea had been poorer than us but had overtaken us. True enough, but what were our best means to do this? Each of these nations had looked at their latent prowess and used it to advance. Not each tiger had exactly matching stripes!

Uganda did not have to look much beyond its nose to discover that the quickest and easiest way forward was through its Soil. But a kind of primitive pride seemed to indicate that this was lowly when others were manufacturing computers and suchlike. Oh ye of little faith in what was to hand! Government is already on the right path by seeking powers to if necessary compulsorily buy land from its citizenry. But the approach must be tempered with caution and information on what is at issue. And the prices to be paid must be fair.

Starting yesterday Government must hire the best in the world to set up organisations on how to best achieve holistic methods of improving our agricultural capacity to where we are suitably a leading force in feeding the world. The other Stripes can follow! The manpower needed is freely available: thousands of school leavers roam our streets. Cooperative unions, comprising hitherto mere subsistence farmers, must be brought back and improved. Besides, by carrying out these measures, we would be forestalling the rapidly worsening relationship between governors and the governed, which threaten to pull Uganda back to where it was before the coming of the Movement Government. If that doesn't quicken your pulse you might as well be dead!