THE FUTILITY OF BLAMING AFRICAN STATES FOR FAILURE TO UNITE

We often spend much time splitting hairs about which states drag their feet or are eager on the unity of Africa. Political work has never been based on compelling reluctance to accept what it hesitates on. It can only flow from actions of the various political forces in a society which cultivates the most appropriate equation over social needs.

Immediately after Uganda's attainment of independence, we saw that the Uganda People's Congress (UPC) officials then in government no longer mentioned what we had assumed was the purpose of African struggles. The focus shifted from fighting colonial domination in Africa to 'maintaining stability' in order to fight poverty, disease and ignorance by the state.

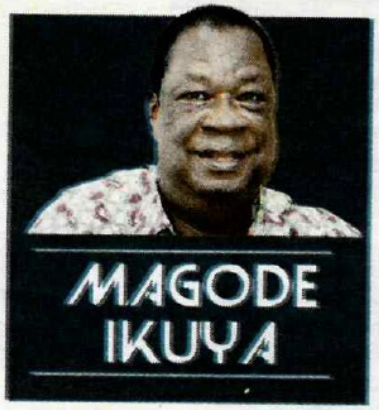
It was clear that 'stability' was a subterfuge to ensure the silence of everyone else except Obote and those dear to his heart. No forum actually existed within the structures and practices of the then UPC for party stalwarts to interact in a discourse of increased different ideas about the way forward.

Only the chanting of slogans of "fighting poverty, disease and ignorance" and "UPC everywhere" defined party activity. The actual growing disenchantment in the population from failed expectations was countered with frontal arm-twisting of any expression of contrary views amongst UPC membership.

Usually, the UPC sloganeering was sandwiched with chants about constructing famed 22 hospitals, the tarmacking of roads and proposals of building more primary and secondary schools. This is how it was perceived that breathtaking strides could be made towards delivering the country from colonialism to the promised land.

For the record, UPC leaders were not the only ones acting so. Even in quite sizable number of countries across Africa were politicians, military rulers and bureaucrats of similar vein. Those who engaged in such dabbles forgot to add that the colonialists were the first to organise slashing the bushes of Africa to build railways, post offices, road network, hospitals and the Owen Falls dam.

If doing so could be deemed charity and love for the African people entitling governing, the British had more credentials to have demanded gratitude from the African population for the long lists of outcome from their forays.



Yet, the Ugandan population had decisively rejected colonial rule. This had been because colonialism had deprived Africans of every basic role necessary for propagation of their lives befitting any community of humans in the world.

Therefore, the purported development of the country without first examining in earnest what exactly needed to be done about the aspirations of the African people to extricate their society from colonial strangle-hold implied omission of valid questions.

This was why a number of us who were not even in limelight of the ladder joined in the quest for answer. Our impulse into politics at a young age was not simply out of the familiar desire for the lure for public offices, but the intimate sharing of ideas and gaining clarity on shaping the practices which could change Africa from the humiliating status of colonial underlings.

We soon saw that colonialism had not been just an occupying military garrison which had readily been rid of by quiet withdrawal as implied in the orderly decolonisation of Africa which set the present independent states.

It had been an octopus made by financial and industrial magnates of the colonising countries to uproot the colonised from the resources and social culture of their lives to service further enrichment of the robbers.

Colonialism asserted its control through numerous threads which held the colonised in a firm all round grip. A cleverly woven spider's web or a python's coiling around a prey inflicts so much powerlessness on the prey that it ceases to wriggle out for its life.

This was why the eventful declared decolonisation of Africa in 1960s was never thought could be over and complete without Africa's striving to cut off the many strands by which African society remained shackled to deprivation of things vital for its well-being.

Africa's unity cannot be finished without organisation of thinking within the people to re-link Africans to themselves and to their resources in the rekindled hopes of rebuilding a dignified prosperous culture in a re-united Africa.

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Museveni's moment to reset East Africa's strategic future