Introduction: Tracing Politics, Religion and Power in the Great Lakes Region

One of the aims of this book is to publish in contemporary literature fresh evidence that Africa has always had a history that is worth studying. The work highlights how individuals and groups of both genders defended the continent and its values by fighting wars using various tools at their disposal. It explains why and how they were invaded, conquered, disorganised and then reorganised to serve European capitalist interests.

The conditions that influenced both their protracted resistance and subsequent defeat are analysed and documented to give the reader useful insights into those factors that define Africa’s political structures, processes and destiny. The objective, of course, is to further provoke a dialogue on Africa’s history to negate uncritical acceptance of imperialist justification for their invasion and plunder of Africa. The book counters the patronising claims of religious institutions, which they teach in schools and institutions of higher learning, that Africans invited the Europeans to come and colonise Africa so as to preach Christianity, ‘civilise’ the Africans and save them from barbarism. They argue that these were vices which had been fuelling internecine wars and that they came to stop the human tragedy characterising Africa. They cited the sacrificing of twins and other forms of infanticide, slave trade and so on.

This work contains a systematic detailing of the brutalities that were meted on Africans for resisting European enslavement of Africans on African lands.
It demonstrates that the reorganisation that was undertaken gradually deprived the inhabitants of their capacities – history, military, economy, knowledge and independence.

By exposing the literature informed and dominated by colonial propaganda through juxtaposing colonial and African perspectives, this book brings out the missing picture of an Africa founded on love, devotion and a renewed realisation of the strength and historical mission to defend it through all ways even when they are enticed by the attractions of modernity, development, industrialisation and globalising the world into a single village.

It also aims to explain why and how alien powers – the English, the Germans and the Belgians – invaded the GLR area, struggled amongst themselves over it to impose their power over it, and the resistance by the indigenous peoples and their reactions. It analyses the shortcomings of the resistances, the consequences of their defeats and the reforms that emerged from the arduous encounters.

Given its nature, this study adopted a retrospective study design. It relied heavily on historical and documentary sources and was supplemented by information from respondents. It began with a library-based research, mainly for secondary and documentary sources. This was followed by archival research both at the National Archives, Entebbe and at the District Archives in Kabale. This availed the study rich historical documents for review and analysis. This was then followed by interviews in South-Western Uganda.

This study benefited enormously from seminars and discussions at CBR, Makerere University, the University of Lund, Sweden, the Centre for Studies in Social Sciences, Kolkata, and Jadavpur University.

This study was confronted by a series of challenges. Some of these arose from incessant agrarian tensions and struggles in the research areas. Topical among these was the horrendous lynching of a rich farmer and the destruction of his property in broad daylight by a group of male peasants. The cause was the victim’s implementation of a High Court ruling which was in his favour. His killers were his immediate neighbours. They, however, belonged to a different oruganda (lineage or clan). The resultant tensions, feuds, state repression, arrests and flight compelled the people that did not flee the area to become reticent. The timing and the prevailing circumstances made the motives of the research suspect.

There was also the challenge of broken appointments, plus the operations of different social movements. Another problem was the lack of written records by the Nyabingi\(^1\) resistance, who were predominantly illiterate. Both the leadership

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\(^1\) In this book, Nyabingi is variably spelt as Nabingi, Nya-bingi, Nya bingi and NyaBingi.
and the membership did not leave behind any written records about their struggles, their history, plans, actions, military encounters, views and outlooks about the Movement. This limitation forced the use of combined information from archival sources and oral sources - narratives, histories, and interviews with respondents.

The records at the National Archives were scattered and mixed up in heaps, sometimes under obscure titles, or unlabelled. This increased the time spent working through these records. It, however, enabled the researcher to come to grips with the reality of the dangers of colonialism and how the colonialists were able to hide, forever, their crimes in the colonies, as obviously, they were not ready to leave behind any incriminating records. Yet, there were very important records on the nature and magnitude of the atrocities and crimes committed in the GLR. Recently, the Bunyoro Kingdom accused Britain of massacring over two million Banyoro in the war of invasion of the 1890s.

The above created an inter-related problem of the possibility of erroneous or falsified facts in the colonial materials, to cover up and explain away the missing records since the colonialists were writing the history of the victors. These documents were written by the colonialists to inform the colonial project. The study held on to the belief that they would not write deliberate lies for their administrative purposes and actions as their intention was to ensure the success and longevity of the colonial system and its exploitation of Africa. Though cognizant of the fact that belief implies absence of facts, still, our ground was that colonialism was a serious political, economic project which had to be founded on solid facts. As such, false records would have implied self-deception, which \textit{ipso facto} would have meant sowing seeds for the destruction of the entire colonial system.

The researcher carefully examined the representations in the colonial texts and contexts which were highly racialised. Archival materials were combined with the responses by the respondents, the narratives and songs about these struggles and the other secondary sources.

The other major challenge revolved around the political assaults and social stigmatisation that the pre-colonial African religions had undergone since the inception of colonialism. Many respondents were not willing to talk about them freely. Some could have been under actual fear of these religions, while others, especially the formally educated, could have developed duplicity, pretence and disdain towards them.
In fact, this field research brought to light how and why many of these people lived dual or multiple religious lives. They worshipped African gods in secrecy and so on, and were Christians or Moslems openly. In other words, they found having different religions neither contradictory nor conflictual but rather empowering, and at times enabling their manoeuvrability, concealment and benefits. Thus, converting into Christianity became handy for many of them. People took on European or Arabic cultural names to show their new affiliation with the Western religions and their search for ‘modernity’.

This shows the resilience and persistence of old beliefs, gods and religions in the face of concerted demonisation by the colonial authorities and their agents. It also demonstrates a crisis of identity which was created by colonialism and its ideological arms – Christianity and Muhammedanism. This issue of identity is well-handled by Castells (1997). Quoting Calhoun, he explains the locus, functions, usefulness and imperativeness of names, languages and cultures to all peoples. He argues, correctly, that names stem from and do constitute people’s origins of meaning and experience. These are the ones where ‘some manner of distinctions between self and other, we and they, are not made… Self-knowledge – always a construction no matter how much it feels like a discovery – is never altogether separable from claims to be known in specific ways by others.’

The book is organised into nine chapters. Chapter One deals with the introduction of the study and the theoretical perspective. It examines the various functions of religion in society at different levels of development and its roles to different social groups and classes. This is followed by Chapter Two, which attempts to reconstruct the pre-colonial setting, the existing modes of production, the forms of ownership, the social set-up, the levels of production and exchange, and the mode of politics. Chapter Three then analyses the nature of the religions, the material base of Nyabingi religion that facilitated it to gain supremacy over other institutions, its exploitative and oppressive character and the events that precipitated the Nyabingi Movement.

Chapter Four examines the colonial invasion, the complexity of the colonisation of this region – inter-colonial rivalry, on the one hand, and the anti-colonial struggles by the indigenes, on the other. It explores the factors underlying this phenomenon and its course. Chapter Five then deals with some factors underlying the Nyabingi Movement, its objectives, its course and the various phases it went through. The chapter examines part of the Nyabingi leadership, the reasons why these resistances were defeated, and the effects of these defeats on both the actors and the movement.
Based on some cases, Chapter Six analyses the role of women in these struggles, the contributions of some individual women in the leadership and the factors that led them to leadership. Chapter Seven analyses the emerging political coercion and human rights issues. It analyses the contributions and limitations of the Nyabingi Movement, and the factors that led to its decline.

Chapter Eight explores the new methods of struggle, the colonial methods to undermine the movement, and the new survival methods adopted by the Nyabingi Movement, while Chapter Nine concludes the study.

Though history is a lived experience that cannot be erased, as Tajudeen (2007) correctly observes, it however faces possible dangers of disputation, denigration, misrepresentation; or of being forgotten, mythologised or transformed into tales, stories and scares, if it is not captured and recorded by those interested in its narrative, dissemination and preservation. The varied rich histories of the people in the Great Lakes Region (GLR) seem to be headed towards that fate if intellectuals do not come forward to take on the mission of digging them out, recording them and disseminating them.

The countries of the GLR came into formation through the European colonisation of Africa. This project resulted in the Anglo-German-Belgian colonial rivalry and it was concluded diplomatically in 1910-1911 through the signing of the Anglo-German-Belgian Agreement. It was then implemented through the demarcation of the British Uganda, Belgian Congo and German East Africa. The latter later became Ruanda—Urundi, after the World War I. They are today independent nation states under the names Rwanda and Burundi. Part of the then Belgian Congo is the DRC.

With the exception of the DRC, all the other five countries have embarked on a regional integration project politically and economically, by reviving the East African Community. This had originally been formed in 1967 by Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania but it was dismantled in 1977 because of the irreconcilable political and economic disputes amongst the political leadership of the three member states.

The GLR has been characterised by vicious, bloody and conflictual politics. These are ethnicised, social, religious or individualised differences. The most horrific and memorable one is the recent ethnic conflict in Kenya, arising from disputations over electoral malpractices and irregularities after the elections of 27 December 2007. These resulted in unprecedented ethnic cleansing.

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2 Rwanda was variably written by the colonialists as Ruanda.

3 Burundi was also variably written by the colonialists as Urundi.
But do these conflicts have an origin? To understand their origin one requires a historicisation of the European invasion, the colonisation of Africa, and the establishment of its rule. This will provide explanations as to why and how the same peoples were divided and confined to different territories belonging to the competing imperialist powers, while at the same time combining different peoples, with differing modes of production, cultures, outlooks, organisations and politics.

This book, therefore, focuses on the European invasion of the GLR. It analyses the factors that underlay the invasion, the demarcation process that followed and the indigenous people’s responses to it. What is worth noting is that most of the anti-colonial struggles in the GLR were anchored in religion. Reference is made to the Maji Maji Rebellion, the Nyabingi Movement, the Lamogi Movement, *Dini Ya Misambwa* and the different independent churches that arose in the GLR during colonialism. Even the more secular Mau Mau Movement integrated religious cultural practices in its bondings through oath taking.

The most pronounced was the Nyabingi Movement, which covered almost the whole region – Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC and Uganda. Its modes of politics and resistance influenced the inhabitants and politics in the whole region and it forced the colonial powers to reform their *modus operandi* in the GLR. Its *abagirwa* (mediums) paralysed the colonial system as they spread their operations to different parts of the GLR. Some of them ended up being arrested and charged in kangaroo courts and within a few hours or days convicted and sentenced to imprisonment with hard labour, or fined and imprisoned, or deported. This will be demonstrated with a few cases from Tanzania. In colonial Uganda, the Nyabingi Movement covered the whole western region and spread to parts of Buganda.

This work investigates why they resisted, the nature of their resistance and the reasons why they were defeated. It explains why and how the European colonisation of this region created material conditions and seeds for the subsequent recurrent conflicts in the GLR. Cabral (1976), Fanon (1966) and Canale (1988) provide insights into the inevitable tensions and contestations between the repugnant and malignant colonial master, and the indigenous people during their encounter. Colonialism presupposes belligerency between the contending forces. On the one hand is the invading force which is struggling for occupancy and control of that space in order to impose its technologies of power, demands and hegemony. On the other hand are the inhabitants who wage arduous struggles of various forms to liberate themselves, their domain, property
and rights. Right challenges might, which reproduces unending tensions and conflicts between the colonisers and the colonised.

This book is about these processes and contestations – right from the initial colonial encounter to resistances, the processes through which the colonisers established their modus vivendi and hegemonised it. It brings to light the causes, nature and intensity of the conflicts and military confrontations amongst the colonisers, and between them and the colonised people. It examines the diplomatic and strategic manoeuvres by the three imperialist powers - whose interests were clashing within this territory - and the methods through which the imminent possibilities of a fatal inter-imperialist war were averted. It analyses the processes through which the British imperialists outmanoeuvred and ejected Germany and Belgium out of their positions. It also examines why and how non-capitalist, non-commodity producing peoples organised themselves against a highly developed, well organised, well armed and resourced capitalist adversary, and the material conditions that facilitated religion to provide them with leadership. It exposes the socio-political programmes of this movement, its forms of mobilisation and recruitment into its membership and leadership, and the locus of gender in the movement. It examines the course of this movement, the various tendencies characterising it, the attempts to pre-empt, fight and defeat it. It analyses the internal reforms that were undertaken by the belligerent contestants and the consequences of the subsequent defeats. It demonstrates the primacy of the rights and sovereignty of a people and their mode of existence, irrespective of their level of development.

The book uncovers the different forms of conflicts – endogenous and exogenous, popular and individualised, legitimate and anti-establishment, anti-imperialist and inter-imperialist, passive and militant, benign and virulent. It brings out methods through which the belligerent imperialist powers did respond to anti-colonial movements. Anti-imperialist movements did at all times compel the rivalling imperialists to unite, suspend their conflicts or transfer them to the metropolitan centres for diplomatic transaction and resolution in order to fight their common enemy. These responses clearly demonstrated the gravity of anti-colonial movements to imperialism as compared to their inter-imperialist rivalries. They also demonstrate that whereas they had to try all diplomatic measures to contain and resolve contradictions amongst themselves so as to avert any bloodshed, they did not take any diplomatic initiatives to resolve their conflict with the indigenous peoples. Instead, they applied maximum force ‘to put sense into them’. This reflected the character of the racial dictatorship that
characterised colonial imperialism. The imperialists considered the peoples as primitives. The study also brings out the different colonial responses to the movement and the different forms of divisive colonial administration that were put in place. It explains how all these were conflictual seeds being sown in the GLR. It also exposes the reasons, positions, roles, costs and benefits of individuals who abandoned their people to collaborate with the invading colonialists.

Through these brutalities and processes, colonial technologies of power were instituted. Labour processes were instituted through taxation and force. This was gradually strengthened by the introduction of money. Over time, money became a social power as it became a conduit for exploiting resources from the colonies. That way, colonial imperialism was established and it would last till the 1960s.

Its demise in the GLR first came to the open with Sudan’s independence in 1956. This was followed by Congo’s ill-fated independence in 1960, with Patrice Lumumba as Prime Minister. This government was tragically overthrown within a few months by Kasavubu, Tshombe and Mobutu. Being the blue-eyed boy of imperialism, Mobutu soon outmanoeuvred the other two, took over power and he ruled for thirty-two years. The DRC was followed by Tanzania in 1961, Burundi, Rwanda and Uganda in 1962 and Kenya in 1963.

Thus, the time of formal occupational imperialism or the so-called colonial modernity project came to an end. Imperialism developed into a borderless, roaming predator under the self-acclaimed labels of partners in developments, agents of international development, donors, poverty alleviators and globalisation. Globalisation is known in the GLR as global lies for global pillage. Imperialism has thus taken on a new character, where occupation of physical space has become obsolete and irrelevant.

The concept, Great Lakes Region, was coined by the colonialists to refer to the territory in East and Central Africa. This region was endowed with a heavy concentration of large lakes and rivers. In an effort to export their history as they created their legacy, the British colonial invaders renamed four of these lakes after their English rulers. These were Lake Nalubale which became Lake Victoria - the largest lake in the world with clean water. Lake Rwitanzigye was renamed Lake Edward and Lake Katunguru became George. Another lake on the border between DRC and Uganda was renamed Lake Albert. The other big lakes in the GLR included Tanganyika, Kivu, Kyoga, Bunyonyi, Mayanja, Mutanda, Magadi, Rudolf, and so on. This is the region where the River Nile - the longest river in the world – begins. Other gigantic rivers include Congo, Kagera, Ruzizi,
Nyabarango, Kiruruma, Rwizi, Ishasha, and so on. The region is famous for its large swamps and equatorial rain forests, including some impenetrable ones.

This region is also endowed with enormous natural resources. These include precious minerals like uranium, diamond, gold, petroleum and tanzanite, columbium (niobium), cobalt, zinc, cadmium, manganese, tanzanite, nickel, limestone, tungsten, tin, iron ore, petroleum, natural gas, tantalum, cement, fertile soils, fertilizers, soda ash, salt, waters, equatorial forest resources and fertile soils, fresh waters and waterfalls, hot springs, and fishes, rains, livestock, and so on. Others include daily sunshine and excellent temperatures, equatorial rains, and equal days and nights. Yet, it is paradoxically ranked as the poorest in the world, being characterised by economic retardation, political misrule, corruption, authoritarianism, dictatorships and malpractices. It is also ranked as the region leading in non-gainful, destructive and anarchical, incessant conflicts, horrendous massacres, which in the worst cases deteriorate to genocide, and so on (Mamdani, 1991; Bayart 1993; Bayart et al, 1999).

These works are riddled with flaws (See Sunday Vision of 6 July 1997). Bayart’s work of 1993 reduced everything in Africa simplistically to politics of the belly. His two works were all out in search of crimes and failures with no room for inclusion of anything to the contrary. Their message is that nothing good ever comes from Africa. But would Africa still exist if everything was so negative right from independence? Put differently, was Africa better off during colonialism than in the pre-colonial period and after independence? Is it a characteristic of Africa?

The GLR continues to be ranked among the most volatile regions of the world, with great possibilities of inhuman massacres and genocides. Cases in Rwanda, Burundi, DRC, Uganda and Kenya are cited as evidence of such destructive possibilities.

The persistence of all these negativities, together with low levels of education and lack of committed thinkers and nationalists have changed this region to the Great Conflicts Region.

GLR evokes and resonates varying notions and memories. These range from the different anti-colonial struggles which targeted the three contending colonial powers in the region – the Belgians, the Germans and the British – the suffering, cruelty, oppression and exploitation experienced by the colonised peoples, and the resultant conflicts, authoritarianism, dictatorship and other forms of misrule by civilians and the military elite. These were the categories which certain strands of the modernisation discourse, spearheaded by Janowitz (1964) and Huntington
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(1968), had identified and heralded as the guarantors of stability and modernity in the post-colonial era. The military elite had been trained in the colonial military disciplines. Examples included Colonels Bokassa, Idi Amin, Marcius Nguema, Mobutu Sese Seko and Juvenal Habyarimana.

The GLR’s continental contributions became pronounced in Tanzania under Mwalimu Nyerere. Tanzania took up a pan-African historical-political role of assisting oppressed Africans in their efforts to liberate their countries and peoples from the oppressive and exploitative yoke of colonial imperialism. Tanzania became the centre of liberation activities for Eastern and Southern Africa, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, Namibia and Uganda. Within the GLR itself, Tanzania waged war against the military dictatorship under Idi Amin in 1978/79. She, together with Ugandan guerrilla forces which were based in Tanzania at the time – mainly Kikosi Malum and Front for National Salvation (FRONASA) – defeated the military dictatorship and flushed it out of Uganda (Museveni, 1997).

With the new developments in Tanzania, following Nyerere’s exit from presidency in 1985, Uganda, under the leadership of the National Resistance Movement (NRM), from January 1986 took up the Pan-African leadership role. It provided the Southern African liberation forces with logistics and terrain to establish bases for training. It was not the first time.

In 1969, the Obote Government declared diplomatic support for the liberation of South Africa and Rhodesia from the white supremacy rule without taking any practical steps to actualise it. Idi Amin later inherited this politics of rhetoric which was specifically directed against ‘Apartheid South Africa’ and ‘Zionist Israel’.

The difference between those two and the NRM was the level of commitment to the declaration. The NRM demonstrated practically, its commitment to this promise. After capturing state power, it allowed the Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK) – the armed wing of Africa National Congress – to establish bases in Uganda for military recruitment and training against the Apartheid South African dictatorship. It was doing this at the same time and within the same space with the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF/A). It is noteworthy that both of them came to power in the same year. In 1994, South Africa got independence and RPF/A captured state power in Rwanda. The RPF/A had launched its military attacks onto Rwanda from Uganda on August 1, 1990 and it used Uganda as its dependable rear base till it finally captured state power. The RPF guerrilla activities in Rwanda
resulted in masses of refugees, many of whom had been involved in genocidal criminalities (Mushemeza, 2007).

It was on this ground that the founding of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for Liberation of Congo – Zaire (AFDL) under Kabila’s leadership enjoyed political, military, logistical and diplomatic support from Rwanda and Uganda. This enabled the newly formed AFDL to cross the vast forests, rivers and swamps of Congo while fighting. They defeated the 32-year-old decadent Mobutu regime and captured state power in Kinshasa within seven months. This was made possible by the weaknesses of the Mobutu regime in Kinshasa. This regime was characterised by a multiplicity of vices, most of which had been cautioned against by Machiavelli. Among these was the dependence on mercenaries, and foreign assistance, violation of people’s property and other rights.

Shortly after capturing state power in Kinshasa, Kabila’s new government chased away the allied forces. It began by chasing away the Ugandan forces. His rule was characterised by full-time alcoholism instead of attending to the immediate reconstruction needs of the country. Kabila’s tragic assassination by his bodyguards resulted in his son’s ascent to power. This was neither constitutionally sanctioned nor democratically executed via an election. He chased away the Rwandan forces and opted to pursue the war option.

Today, different movements in the region have bases in the DRC. These include the anti-Batutsi Bahutu ethnic movements from Burundi and Rwanda. The defunct Rwandan forces during the late Juvenal Habyarimana’s rule and the dispersed Interahamwe have reorganised under the Rwandan Hutu Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). Given their murderous history, their new name is a mockery of democracy.

Three major anti-NRM movements have been operating in the DRC and the Sudan. These include Uganda’s Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), the Popular Resistance Army (PRA), and the Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA). The LRA sprouted from the defeated Holy Spirit Movement of Alice Lakwena. Then, there was Sudan’s SPLM/A before the Comprehensive Peace Agreement with Khartoum plus the ongoing massacres in Darfur. In addition, there have been inter-state conflicts – either directly or by proxy. These include conflicts between Uganda and Congo right from the 1960s, between Uganda and Tanzania, between Uganda and the Sudan, between Uganda and Kenya, and between Uganda and Rwanda.

New forms of movements have been emerging. These are either majorly political though they may take on religious fervour. Most of these are
predominantly peasantry-based. These include The Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments of God in Kanungu, Western Uganda that killed over 1,050 people, mainly peasants hailing from the GLR. The others include Dini Ya Mukaaka, the Abarangi Movement, Mungiki Movement, the Sungu Sungu and National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP). Other well-known ones, mainly of a political nature, include the National Resistance Movement (NRM) and the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF).

It is noteworthy that the GLR is the origin of humanity. As such, it is also the origin of most human constructions - socio-political, economic, physical, philosophical, scientific, meteorological, astronomical, mathematical and epistemological, and so on. Different Africanist scholars have dealt with this subject using different methodologies. These include Amadiume (1997); Ben-Jochannan (1991); Bernal (1987); Connah (1975); Davidson (1959, 1966, 1992); Diop (1966, 1974 a,b, 1989, 1978, 1981); Freund (1984); Hrbek (1988); Jackson (1970); Ki-Zerbo (1988); Lane-Poole (1990); Mokhar (1981); Ogot (1992); Sertima (1985); Tabaro (2006) and Zeleza (1997).

GLR is still the home of the apes. Notable among these are mountain gorillas, chimpanzees, monkey, and so on. All these have features, characteristics, mannerisms and practices and Deoxyribonucleic Acid (DNA) nearest to those of human beings. These, and other facts, attest to the fact that this is the origin of human beings. Given this enviable history, the contemporary developments in the GLR demand great attention. What explains the origins and persistence of these crises and inhuman tragic occurrences? Given that the GLR is endowed with enormous resources, why should it be one of the poorest places in the world, with minimal signs of development (Bayart, 1993, 1999)?

Another paradox stems from the differences in levels of development between the GLR and other regions of the world. The countries in the GLR got their independence about ten years after the Chinese revolution and at the same time as Cuba. But while Cuba and China have advanced economically, scientifically, industrially, educationally, socially, politically and militarily, those in the GLR have not made any significant advancements.

This work is mindful of the ravages and negative effects of the many centuries’ old horrendous human resource depletion from the whole continent through violent raids and capturing of Africans, transporting them as human merchandise to other continents and selling them in the trans-Saharan slave trade (7th century), the Eastern African slave trade (12th century) and the Trans-Atlantic slave trade (15th century). The main beneficiaries from this inhuman but
lucrative trade were Europeans, Americans, Arabs and Asians. This inhuman trade deprived Africa of millions of robust, productive young people; without any replenishment. It resulted in the destruction of the human socio-political, economic and physical constructions, developments and civilisation. Therein lies the origins of Africa’s crises and miseries (Rodney, 1976; Freund, 1984; Suret-Canale, 1988; Thornton, 1992).

Any committed study must broaden its analytical frontiers to be able to grasp the territorialisation of European material and political interests in this region through colonisation and the institutionalisation of destructive strategy of ethnic divisions, which over time fruited into persistent conflicts. The most dominant ones are the Abahutu-Abatutsi ethnocentric politics in Rwanda and Burundi since independence. Rwanda’s case provides a sufficient example. The ethnic conflict in Rwanda first exploded in 1959-60, then in 1963 and finally from 1990 to 1994. These climaxed into a three-month state-inspired and supervised genocide that decimated about one million people – mainly the Rwandans of Abatutsi ethnic grouping and the ‘moderate’ Abahutu. It was perpetrated by the Abahutu Rwandans, who were being driven by an anti-Abahutu ideology. This ideology was massively propagated in all mass media including radios and religious pulpits. It demonstrated how far the press machinery and propaganda could go in mobilising and inciting people for destructive purposes. This demonstrated the destructive capacities and efficacy of irresponsible and compromised journalism.

Historically, the long-term Rwanda crisis always overflowed the borders through the reproduction of refugees, internal displacements and finally through thousands of cadavers floating from Rwanda to Uganda through River Kagera to Lake Victoria. The conflicts in the DRC have roots in the 1960 coup in Kinshasa. Uganda has been experiencing wars since 1964. The same applies to the Sudan (Murindwa-Rutanga, 1996; Mamdani, 2001; Mushemeza, 2007; Prunier, 1995).

Congo, the largest country in the GLR has a unique history. Belgium established power over Congo and declared it Independent Congo State in 1885. Then, King Léopold II privatised it in 1908. He used cruel, brutal and atrocious rule to exploit the Congolese people and their wealth. Belgian colonial imperialism transformed Congo into a slave state. Its crude oppression and exploitation resulted in millions of deaths of the Congolese peoples of all ages, gender and groups. Its rule was characterised by forced labour, heavy taxes, naked racism, arbitrary brutal punishments and deaths. These gave rise to persistent revolts.
These resistances included the political activities of the Independent Church of Jesus Christ on Earth, which was founded in 1921 by Prophète Simon Kimbangu. Another one was the Pende Uprising in Kwilu Region in 1931 under the leadership of the Parti Solidaire Africain. This movement resulted in the death of 500 Congolese. This was followed by the strike of the Union Minière Workers in Lubumbashi in December 1941, and a mutiny by the Force Publique garisson in Kananga in February 1944. These were followed by another strike and demonstrations by dock workers at Matadi. Then, people in Kinshasa revolted on 4th January 1959. They resisted the inhuman conditions, curfews, political brutalities, and so on. All these movements were suppressed through the use of brutal force by the Belgian colonialists. However, those counter-insurgencies could not deter the movement of the Congolese people’s history. Instead, all these struggles plus other pressures compelled the Belgians to grant the Congolese people their independence.

Elections were held in May 1960 and were won by Lumumba’s party. He became Prime Minister. Kasa-vubu, Tshombe and Mobutu were mobilised by the foreigners to stage a coup on 5th September 1960. Patrice Lumumba, the first Prime Minister of Congo was arrested on 30th November 1960 and assassinated on 17th January 1961. These anti-nationalist activities gave rise to the first massive anti-imperialist movement in 1962. Its membership included workers, peasants, the unemployed, students, civil servants and nationalists. The leaders were Antoine Gizenga and Pierre Mulele. It was defeated by the neo-colonial forces led by US-Belgian forces on 24th November 1964. The capture of Mulele and his assassination on 3rd October 1968 marked its end. Notably, it was the first resistance against any African independent state.

Practically, the existing colonially imposed borders constitute a wall which blocks people fleeing persecution in any country. This many times results in suffering and/or untimely horrific death. These borders have also been blocking individualised solutions to famines and droughts, poverty, unemployment, lack of necessities, and so on. People have been harmed while trying to cross the borders in search of socio-economic or political solutions. Notable among these is the cross-border trade locally known as magendo (smuggling) and 'refugeeism'. Complications of passports and failure to speak languages of the colonial rulers – notably French and English – do constitute a major barrier to the vast majority of the peoples in this region.

The re-constitution of the East African Community, with Rwanda and Burundi joining as full members, and the ongoing engineering for political and economic
unity form a pointer to a larger and more meaningful solution to many of the
problems that have been afflicting the GLR. It should be noted that the Africans
in the GLR have been resisting these border impediments since their demarcation.
Some of the initial ones were recorded derogatorily by the colonialists in the

Given the expansiveness and diversity of the GLR, the scope of this book
was confined to the Kigezi region and its immediate surroundings. This area is
in South-Western Uganda, bordering Rwanda and the DRC. It was part of the
Kivu-Mulera-Ndorwa region, which was shared amongst the three European
imperialist powers through the 1911 Anglo-German-Belgian Agreement. In
terms of geographical location, it is at the centre of the GLR. It has a very rich
political history. It was bitterly struggled for by the three imperialist powers,
while the indigenous inhabitants resisted them. It was finally shared amongst
them through a long-term political, military and diplomatic process. Yet, Britain
had declared its sovereignty over Uganda in 1894. This region was also the centre
of various bitter anti-colonial movements. These movements spread across the
borders into the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda.

Kigezi which was the centre of these inter-imperialist and anti-imperialist
struggles is about 2,045 square miles, with a population of over one and half
million people. The 2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census showed that
Kigezi had a total population of 1,205,001. The British colonial authorities had
estimated the population of the same region at 100,000 in 1911. Much of this
population had been migrating for wage labour and resettlement in other parts of
Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania and Democratic Republic of Congo. It is presently
divided into four districts - Kabale, Kanungu, Rukungiri and Kisoro.

The various indigenous peoples inhabiting Kigezi region are the Abakiga,
the Abahororo, the Abafumbira, the Abanya-Butumbi, the Abahunde and the
Abatwa. These are invariably collectively classified as Abanya-Kigezi (People of
Kigezi). It should be noted that these ethnic groupings stretched across the borders
into Rwanda and the DRC and share different characteristics - socio-cultural,
linguistic, religious, economic, philosophical, demographic and morbidity.

Intermarriages, visits, entrusting one’s livestock and/or fowls to the care of
another person (okuhereka), and other socio-economic and cultural activities
and arrangements like seeking social brew or free booze (okvuumba); plus
cooperatives locally known as ebibiina, still disregard the logic, dictates and
imperatives of international borders. Seen in broader terms, these peoples
have retained their larger communities despite the separatist measures by the
colonial and post-colonial states. Seen from the peasants’ perspectives, the post-colonial states can be said to be returning to these people’s position through the resurrection of the East African Community.

In terms of physical features, the region is mainly mountainous, with variations in form of plains in the North and in the South-West. A stretch of its western part along its border with the DRC is in the Rift Valley. A lot of geological explorations for minerals are being undertaken in this region. At the time of European colonial invasion, it was largely characterised by a variety of thick, trackless, impenetrable forests, swamps and bushes. The CBR noted that most of the hill tops were over 7,000 feet in altitude, the highest being 8,500; and yet these are not bold, well defined summits, but rather giant undulations, with lakes, swamps and rivers in the valleys (Lardner, 1912; Roscoe, 1922; Phillipps, 1923).

All these balanced the ecosystem, influenced climate and rainfall, health, production and life. They were sources of water, fuel and raw materials for construction, household production, medicines, salt, pasture for livestock, hunting ground, gathering and fishing. They also provided shelter and concealment for defence purposes in times of attacks and wars. Wild animals in these habitats were hunted for meat, hides and skins for clothing. The forests and swamps were critical in influencing the climate and seasonality for agricultural purposes. They were sources of fish and raw materials.

Clearly, the persistent ravages and plunders by the inhuman slave trade that raged all over the continent for centuries did not leave this region free. It had negative consequences which detained this region at a low level of production.

The inception of the colonial state in Kigezi occurred with the active assistance of some locals - soldiers and chiefs. These included two authors on Kigezi: Sebalijja (1911) and Ngorogoza (1969). Forced demands were introduced; people’s lands expropriated and their independence usurped (Mamdani, 1996; Murindwa-Rutanga, 1991 and 1996). All these were bitterly opposed by the indigenous peoples through armed struggles. The most persistent one was under the Nyabingi Movement. The colonial state, which started its mission with brutal and uncompromising force to suppress the resisting inhabitants, soon learnt through heavy material, human and time costs the futility of relying on naked coercion in exclusion of the involvement of the local peoples. It had to shift from that exclusionist politics to an inclusionist one.

4 See Captain Reid’s Route Report from Kigezi to Mbarara, dated 13 February 1912; Purseglove, 1951; Roger, 1963.
Determined not to totally abandon the use of force, the colonial state began to combine political, administrative, ideological, religious, economic and educational efforts to fight these movements. The objective was to defeat them and institute their colonial rule. The agents were the missionaries, administrators, educators in schools, converts to the Western religions and the family.

The colonialists adopted the household as the smallest socio-political unit for colonial control. Political and economic headship of households was bestowed on the husband, with distributive and disciplinary powers. The man was to ensure the discipline at the household level, or experience the bitter wrath of the colonial government.

The colonialists were in *foucauldian* terms reconstituting a patriarchal form of governmentality (Burchell, 1991). At the top were the colonial chiefs who, over time, became corrupt and despotic. It was worse in Belgian territory where taxation and forced unpaid labour was demanded of both genders.

Mamdani, in his work, sidelines the class question as he shifts his analytical lenses to generalities. Jewsiewicki (1980) posits that modern European colonisation of Africa probably constituted the most extensive western attempt to build an authoritarian and technocratic state on the myth of the Welfare state. In the same line, Fether (1970) noted that the Belgians tried to *Belgicise* the colony, which was shaped in the Leopoldian traditions (Macambo, 2005).

Chatterjee brings out similar issues in the *Nation and its Fragments* (1993), and discusses how the colonial state, instead of creating a people in empty homogenous times à la Anderson, imposed capitalism with its multiplicity of demands to the political society which it had created (Chatterjee, 1993, 2004 and 2005).

The question to ask is: why did colonial invasion ignite the Nyabingi Movement. Why did it take place in the GLR? Were they able to link Nyakairima’s prophesies of the invasion of people with wings to this invasion (Ngorogoza 1969, Aseka 2005)?

The Nyabingi Movement was anchored in Nyabingi religion. This was an insurgent religion which was against any established order and power. Nyabingi was assumed to be a female spirit, and a god and religion for sections of peoples in the GLR. This spirit was assumed to be living under the earth and supposedly had transformative characteristics and possibilities of personifications, malignance and virulence.

Nyabingi is said to have originated from Karagwe and spread to other parts of present-day Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, DRC and Uganda. The colonialists
confronted it in all these territories and it tended to paralyse their activities, administrators, armed forces and missionaries. Its activities, ideology and promises influenced and inspired the thinking and rebellious potentials of other peoples within and even beyond its geographical scope. Examples included the Dini Ya Misambwa in Kenya and Uganda and the Mau Mau movement in Kenya and even Rasta and Resistance in the Caribbean (Murindwa-Rutanga, 1991; Campbell, 1987).

Colonial Facets of Domination

The invasion and defeat of a people that were at varying levels of development, largely stateless or under nascent states and the imposition of an alien belligerent state apparatus with its alien laws, demands, and so on, shaped the pace and trend of the consequent developments, notably the numerous peasant struggles. To understand these movements holistically, materially and dialectically, one needs to begin with a broader review of works on movements that have unfolded in different places and at different times.

Various people, scholars, politicians, policy makers and moralists around the world have reflected on the question of social movements and come up with different findings, positions, conclusions, proposals and/or solutions. To understand popular resistance to the capitalist seeds of conflicts in this region, its dynamics, the various responses to it, its achievements and shortcomings, it is imperative to analyse various contributions and determine which of them can provide a suitable and sufficient framework for this study.

The basic argument of this study is that the area was invaded and conquered militarily, and that the inhabitants resisted the occupation and the attendant in various ways impositions. In the process, the varied forms of resistance compelled the colonial states to shift from their high-handed militaristic approaches. Instead, they created reliable, broader social and political bases (Murindwa-Rutanga, 1991; Fanon, 1966; Rodney, 1976; and Museveni, 1975).

This study opines that it is erroneous and fallacious to confine a complete analysis within the strictures of the colonial discourse which qualifies any action by Africans as savagery, primitiveness, barbarism, conservatism, cannibalism, backwardness and aversion to change. These views came out clearly in the communiqué by the British Consulate in Congo in November 1909, part of which is reproduced below:
The native troops are nothing more or less than savages; and looking, as they do, upon the British as the only hope of salvation from the state of oppression in which they have lived for so many years, should hostilities commence the European population would be in imminent danger of being massacred. British subjects... would probably not be molested as they are regarded by the natives as their protectors but it is very difficult to foresee what might happen should these savages commence hostilities. The Congo Government would be utterly powerless to resist such a rising.

These negative notions and fixtures by the victors filled the colonial social sciences and its successor, the modernisation discourse. This book brings out these negativities and how they failed to help the colonialists understand the actual situation for long.5 It is this position which buttressed and informed the Apartheid South Africa. An article which was attributed to former South African President Botha (Sunday Times of 18 August 1985; Daily Monitor of 28 November 2006) articulated this position very succinctly. It is beneficial to examine that article for purposes of explication to our readership. The argument was that:

The fact that blacks look like human beings and act like human beings does not necessarily make them sensible human beings. Hedgehogs are not porcupines and lizards are not crocodiles simply because they look alike. If God wanted us to be equal, he would have created us of a uniform colour and intellect. But he created us differently. Intellectually, we are superior.

The article reasoned that the white people were created to rule black people and that blacks were the raw materials for the white people. This simply meant that the Africans occupied the lower order while the Europeans occupied the higher order, and that the occupants of the lower order were meant to serve the occupants of the higher order. Europeans in South Africa were urged to unite and ‘fight against this black devil’. They were asked to devise creative ways of fighting that war, and that their God would never forsake them. This religious invocation alluded to the biblical one and the ones by the leaders of the African resistances like Kinjikitile of the Maji Maji Rebellion, oath administrators for bonding in the Mau Mau, and even the Nyabingi Movement, in the Holy Spirit Lakwena Movement, and so on. The article emphasised that Blacks could never

rule themselves because of their inherent self-destructive nature, promiscuity, polygamy, merrymaking and epicureanism:

Give them guns and they will kill each other. They are good in nothing else but making noise, dancing, marrying many wives and indulging in sex. The black man is a symbol of poverty, mental inferiority, laziness and emotional incompetence (emphasis mine).

It reasoned that whereas whites from all over the world were doing the same to the blacks, only the Afrikaners had the courage to say what they were practising. The methods which the Apartheid regime employed to exterminate the ‘black bug’ included poisonous fertility destroyers which were aimed at stopping the increase of the black population. This was being done in hospitals, food, alcohol, and so on.

The Apartheid regime had imported into the country sex mercenary squads of white women and men from Europe and America to administer the chemical weapons while camouflaging as anti-apartheid activists. Black newborn babies were killed in maternity wards and plans were made to build more hospitals and clinics for this purpose. It ensured that blacks would never access this technology on the grounds that their retaliation could decimate the whites since many blacks were working for them.

It emphasised that the war against blacks was not of atomic bombs but of intelligence. It disclosed that the Apartheid regime had set aside a special fund for hiring experts to set black people against one another. It argued that this was possible because of the black people’s greed for money, their inferior sense of morals and lack of foresight. It stated that the regime had set up a committee for inciting Africans to murder fellow Africans and that government would grant leniency to the culprits so as to encourage it into a cyclic and widespread criminality. It revealed that the state had secret plans to dividing the Africans so as to rule them. It disclosed that the Apartheid regime had long term secret plans to combat the Africans.

The article gave rise to a number of pertinent questions. Who had created the conditions of deprivation, poverty and squalor that afflicted the Africans in South Africa? Are Africans as useless, promiscuous and dangerous as the article suggests? How does that view, in 1985, differ from that held by the colonialists prior to independence? What could be expected from people whom Apartheid had caged for so long and turned into the appalling and inhuman Bantustans?
Is there not a likelihood of more fundamental social-economic and philosophical issues which explain their actions? Who has the right to define the Africans’ priorities and development? Given the crusade for developmental projects right from the 1950s, can rights be foregone for modernisation and should popular struggles be branded ‘primitive,’ ‘barbaric,’ ‘tribalistic,’ ‘ethnic,’ ‘sectarian,’ and so on? And, is every ‘tribal’ and ‘ethnic’ struggle necessarily ‘anti-progress’ and ‘anti-people’?

The ruling discourse was doctrinal and programmatic, universalising and totalising. It was an integral part of the colonial political technology. It excluded the colonised people from the newly constructed power structures and arrangements, whereby it created two diametrically opposed though united worlds – one of the oppressors and the other of the oppressed, one of the exploiters and the other of the exploited (Fanon, 1966). Over time, it brought into formation a certain form of modernity, which Macambo et al (2005) explore at length conceptually and empirically.

Creating a new class brings into formation new outlooks, practices and struggles. New classes are racially and anthropologically mapped, politically engineered, promoted and protected. Colour becomes an ideological rationale for one group of people to dominate and rule the others. The exclusionist project was aimed at making the colonised feel desperately in need of saviours, and to hate themselves and everything that defines them - their colour, names, identities, cultures, religions, practical lives, environment, constructions, achievements, histories, rights, property, modes of production and existence, thinking, learning, practices, and so on. (Fanon, 1966; Macambo, 2005).

Illiteracy, lack of art, poetry, witchcraft and black magic became definers of the colonised peoples. On their part, the Africans rejected these labels and representations. They wanted to be left alone in their ancestral lands, without external interference. They had strong love for their land and freedom. They, therefore, resolved to struggle against everything related to the invaders, their expropriation and order. They wanted to be free from all state obligations and impositions – whether legal, political, religious, economic, and so on. They came to learn practically the brutalities, excesses, exploitation, killings and discrimination of the colonial order.

Given the variations in the levels of development and modes of politics of these peoples, they opted for different forms of resistance. Whereas colonialism at times engaged duplicity to colonise the highly developed states like Buganda, Rwanda, Nkore, and so on militarism remained its main mode of penetration.
Examples of areas where duplicity became the main mode of penetration include the kingdoms of Bunyoro, Mpororo and Buhweju.

Colonialism found a problem in areas where states were still either in their embryonic formations or non-existent. These peoples lacked organised state power to protect and defend them militarily – which is the primary function of the state. They, therefore, had no other option than to defend themselves. In these circumstances, the most readily available and interested leadership came from the existing religions.

**The Changing Roles of Religion**

Various studies have addressed these struggles in different areas and classes at different times. For purposes of our study, we shall begin with a review of works on religion and militancy, then works on people’s struggles against different crises and, finally, review works on colonial invasion and anti-colonial movements.

Religion needs to be studied concretely and contextually in each social setting. There can never be universal generalisations on religion; contrary to the tenets and claims by dominant hegemonic religions. Functions of religions are diverse in various social settings and times, depending on the concrete, historical, socio-political and economic realities. Any serious scholarship has, therefore, to analyse historically the factors that gave rise to a particular religion in a particular setting, its dynamics, and changes that it was undergoing; how it was addressing social demands; which social forces it was serving, its strengths and weaknesses, handicaps and hindrances to society, and so on.

In other words, a movement does not exist for its own sake but is a product of the prevailing conditions in a particular setting to address the concerns of a particular section of people. Neither can movements be generalised as ‘purposive collective actions whose outcome, in victory as in defeat, transforms values and institutions of society’, as Castells argues. Responding collectively to social problems or threats does not necessarily imply transformative intentions or potentials. That would be encumbering them to be programmatic (Castells, 1997).

Many works deal with religion and its relation to people’s socio-political and economic lives, the material conditions that gave rise to it and its historical roles. In his anthropological studies on the Ik people in Uganda and Abatwa in the DRC and Uganda, Turnbull (1961, 1972) reveals how the nomadic patterns of hunters and gatherers afford them a much greater sense of security than others like peasants.
Turnbull discusses that while peasants may lose a year’s inputs overnight without any replacement, the hunter and gatherer is capable of replacing what is destroyed the following day. This partly explains the rise and dominance of religion among peasant societies, unlike among the hunters: ‘there tends to be little fear of supernatural malevolence among hunters; they live an open life, untroubled by the various neuroses that accompany progress.’ Their mode of existence is contrary to that of the peasants.

Marx had similarly explained that peasants had a tendency of being fixed in the soil on their separate plots of land like their crops. It should be noted that the two groups of people under his study were still dependent on nature. As such, they could not produce surplus labour for appropriation and accumulation. They could not save in order to experience social mobility and any resultant class formation. So, they were still at the band level. This does not, however, absolve Turnbull of the derogatory and demeaning manner in which he projected his subjects of study, especially the Ik.

In concentrating on religion in developed capitalist societies, some of these works emphasise its ideological nature in class societies. These are best exemplified by Marx, Engels and Lenin (1972). The positive roles in the socio-political, economic and cultural aspects of the people is either left out or given secondary importance. These are issues that revolutionaries in former colonies like Cabral (1969); Fanon (1966); Chchachchi (1989) have tried to address. They bring out the central role played by religion in various societies, but also demonstrate that religious movements are not necessarily conservative. Chchachchi shows the material basis of religious fundamentalism and its ideological functions, its relationship with state ideology, and women subordination in a historical context and its implications. Raising the issue of exploitation and discrimination based on gender division, she shows how women are segregated and undermined although they are the major practitioners of religion, and hence the producers of culture and tradition.

In addition to religious fundamentalism, much literature delves into the question of messianism and millenarianism; the material conditions that give rise to them, their roles and limitations. Karen discovered that millennia movements provide a new revolutionary consciousness through a vision of the overthrow of civic authority, renewed self-respect and Pan-African content; offer new organisation not based on kinship, ethnic loyalties or customary political leadership; and promote mass expectation of independence (Hill, 1981, 1986; Young, 1986; Lionel, 1987).
These studies show that one of the limitations of messianism and millenarianism was the emphasis on external saviours and the expectation of miracles. They ignored any action to liberate themselves. For instance, the leadership of the Watch Tower Movement preached that external saviours would come from America. Contrary to this inaction, the leadership of the Nyabingi Movement mobilised people and armed them politically, ideologically and militarily to resist colonialism.

Chatterjee (2004), on popular politics, explicates the political nature of such collective action. Colonialism and the collective action against it would gradually constitute the colonised peoples into political societies. Adas (1979) brings out the bases of militancy of millenarian protests against colonialism in five different regions; the social origins of the prophets, their capacity in mass mobilisation and struggles, and the reasons underlying their defeats. The main limitation of Adas’ study is that it is silent on the role of women and other minorities in these struggles. Yet, as these minorities were part and parcel of these social movements, they cannot be ignored.

**Comparative Perspectives and Locale of the Social Movement**

Lan (1985) underscores the role of women in these anti-colonial struggles; the role of a female spirit medium, Charwe who led the 1896 rebellion against colonialism. Like the Nyabingi *abagirwa*, she was one of the last to be captured after the rebellion had failed. She maintained her defiance to the invaders even as she was being hanged.

Like Muhumuza and other *abagirwa* after their deportation till their death, Charwe left behind a promise that her bones would rise to win back freedom from the Europeans. Philosophically, the bones could have meant the young revolutionaries who would come after her to continue the struggle for independence. This thinking has roots in the African philosophy of reincarnation.

These studies show the charismatic nature of these leaders, which was characteristic of Nyabingi *abagirwa*. This, however, does not limit the study to the narrow confines of the Weberian type of charismatic movements.⁶

The Weberian approach has the possibility of causing an impasse in our search for charismatic leadership within the Nyabingi Movement. Worse still, it would leave us at a loss in the event of death, imprisonment or any other form

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of unplanned, unexpected exit of the ‘individuals’ to whom such charismatic attributes would have relegated. That would block us from understanding the contribution of the membership, the leadership and the environment in the rise and development of the movement.

Various works have come up with important findings on different social movements all over the world and the role of particular social groups, gender, age, and so on. Take Mau Mau\(^7\) as a case in point. Many works deal with its historical origins and development, its content, the various social groups that participated in it at various levels in membership and leadership, their motives and the role of the colonial state to suppress it (Karogo, 1987; Gakaara-wa-Wanjau, 1988; Throup, 1988). They inquire into the role of cultural bondings in the Mau Mau and their contributions to unity, solidarity, devotion, courage and determination among the masses. They contextualise and explain oath taking and other rituals of bonding and secrecy in a dictatorial situation, discussing how they are characteristic of rural protests in general, and how such practices have a longer history than these protests. Furedi (1989) explains the impossibility of compartmentalising and isolating social movements from previous trends. All these expose Carother’s (1954) intellectual falsity of psychologising the causes of social movements.

Throup’s main limitation arises from his focusing on the policy implementers only so as to understand the economic and social origins of the Mau Mau. In doing so, he attributes its causes mainly to one individual, the then Governor Mitchell for ‘his liberal bias’ which had led the frustrated educated young politicians to begin the war against the dictatorial colonial system in Kenya.

In no way can the Nyabingi Movement be conceptualised holistically within the realm of the classical collective behaviour paradigm. Neither had the peoples in and around Kigezi broken down, nor were they under any form of psychological stress (Smelser, 1962; Carothers, 1954). The causes of a social movement cannot be understood simply through a behavioural approach. Social movements cannot be explained by attributing their causes to continued anxiety among Africans, which led to ‘the highest degree of unconstraint and violence, a common experience in psychiatric practice in Africa’, social movements’ membership being made up of ‘unstable, emotional, aggressive people who are a constant menace to society due to lack of medical facilities’. It is imperative to

\(^7\) Mau Mau movement was soon embraced by the subalterns in East Africa and it adopted a broader anti-European liberating meaning: ‘Mzungu Aende Ulaya, MAfrica Apace Uhuru’ – that Europeans should vacate Africa so that Africans get independence.
go beyond the narrow view of Carothers that social movements in Africa were caused by African modes of thinking and by egotists for their personal ends which were ‘political or often purely mercenary’.

Also, the resource mobilisation paradigm cannot singularly enable us to understand the movements. The determinant is not one variable of the availability or the absence of resources as cause of the rise of movements, and the participation in this movement, but the continuous arduous resistance by the peasants all over the region in the three neighbouring countries amidst the state’s persistent repression, in counter – insurgency, backed by executions, exactions, other forms of punishments, strategic hamlets, enactments and banishments hand-in-hand with ideological propaganda. The question is: to what extent can people’s response to a socio-political and/or economic threat be quantified in material incentives or profits. It would be highly inaccurate involvement or erroneous to try to attribute material interest as the motive of participation in the Nyabingi Movement. Social movements are not trading companies, corporate bodies or banks where profits can be accumulated on individuals’ accounts (Oberschall, 1973; Tilly, 1978; Elster, 1985; Piven et al, 1977).

In fact, instead of being self-interested the Nyabingi resisters developed into formidable guerrilla forces, with the collective motive and commitment to free the region from ‘Europeans’. However, some individuals saw opportunities for bettering their personal lot and gaining power positions through collaborating with the colonialist. This drive for personal gains and power guided such people to sell out to the colonialists. They became collaborators par excellence and helped the colonialists to fight and defeat the different anti-colonial movements.

To understand the material conditions that gave rise to the Nyabingi Movement requires we go beyond the orthodox Marxist approach of assuming the cause of social movements to be relative deprivation based on classes (Marx and Engels, 1962; Lenin, 1962, 1963, 1964). Confining this study to such a narrow framework has the possibilities of obscuring it from realising how this movement arose, developed and thrived in this area that had differing modes of production – some areas with developed class and state structures, others with classes still in their embryonic stages while others were undifferentiated.

Secondly, it would block the correct understanding of the different social movements as the Marxist approach bestows legitimacy and recognition to only one movement in any society at any single time - the workers’ movement. This would cause a dilemma to us since this region had not yet experienced an intensive commoditisation process. The issue is how we are to rank and analyse
these peasant movements in non-capitalist or quasi-capitalist societies. Who would take up this historical mission in the absence of the exploited, alienated and oppressed wage workers? How and to what extent can the proletarians liberate other classes?

In the same vein, this study cannot be conceptualised within Touraine’s post-industrial society (Touraine, 1981, 1988). To embrace Touraine’s theoretical postulations of programmed societies would create a problem of retrospectively burying the history, actions and achievements of non-capitalist societies in search of obscure futures. This process of trying to truncate the people’s history from the people has enormous possibilities of denying all non-capitalist societies any meaningful history, and consequently their social movements.

This negates Touraine’s premise that social life is a product of cultural achievements and social conflicts, that at the heart of society burns the fire of social movements, and that social movements lie permanently at the heart of social life. Such an approach, which is anchored in theorising on the post-industrial societies may lead to abstraction from the reality and become more ideological. The effect of this is that it ends up also being deterministic, and portrays human history as pre-planned, pre-fixed and unilinear since it claims one true movement at any given time and within the Western capitalist society model. This is a resurrection of the socialist theory of the workers’ revolutionary movement. The problem confronting the Nyabingi social actors was not merely to form new social collective identities but to defend and liberate themselves and their land from the invading, uncompromising colonialists (Habermas, 1987; Melucci, 1985, 1989, 1992).

In the same way, it is vital to avoid the glorification of new social movements as ‘truly social movements’ or ‘total social movements’. The issue of truth about movements is highly problematic and complex. What is the judgmental criterion for ascertaining truthfulness, half truths and falsity of a movement? Can any movement be objectively constructed and guided or are movements always subjectively constituted – given their causes, individual social class material bases and leadership? What measurements can be used to discern the levels or quanta of truthfulness or totality of different social movements to fit the Tourainean totalising and universalising methodology, conceptualisation and categorisation?

These questions underline the imperativeness of confining studies about societies within the exclusivity of Euro-centric lenses. Gramsci’s insight on the
importance of distinguishing organic movements from conjectural movements is very important for this study (Gramsci, 1988).

Using a historical materialist approach, Hobsbawn (1959, 1969 and 1973) probes into the question of social banditry in different continents, its historical origins, causes and courses as well as strengths and weaknesses. In studying the conditions that give rise to millenarianism and protest, and the conditions that will sustain them and make them grow, he is able to explain why it is not possible to have purely religious movements. Like Fanon (1966), he underscores the role of peasants in these wars; highlights the role of banditry in societal transformation; distinguishes between various forms of violence, its roles, the limitations of spontaneous peasant revolts and then exposes liberal culture which preaches submission and inaction to the oppressed and exploited masses.

There is the need to understand the various contending social forces, their objectives, achievements, and so on. It is impossible to isolate these forces or study them singularly as if they were fighting in isolation, with individual, isolated achievements. Rather, it would be beneficial to understand each of them and then analyse the total of their combined efforts and limitations. It is in this line that Hobsbawn brings out the relationship between millenarianism, social banditry and modern guerrillas. He shows possibilities of transformation of bandits into revolutionaries - those truly great apocalyptic moments - and the conditions that lead to it. He explains why and how banditry cannot constitute a social movement although it may be a surrogate for it or even its substitute.

However, one needs to go beyond this to show clearly the various social groups that were involved in these social contests. The focus has to go beyond the leadership. The membership cannot be relegated to secondary roles in the background. Hobsbawn’s work is limited in that it does not show if these social bandits were organised peasants into struggles, and how. Then if these bandits remained alienated from society as saviours or Robin Hoods - robbing the rich for the poor, for how long could such a practice be carried out?

A study that stops here has the potential of presenting peasants as objects of history. It presents them as desperate, and deprives them of initiative. It negates the dialectical development process of societies. History shows that bandits do not always steal for the poor.

Also, following this approach that singularises individuals – all of them tend to originate from rich classes but emerge as social aberrations or misfits who go to liberate the poor classes - creates conceptual, practical and analytical problems. Where do organic intellectuals stem from? Must poor people always
sit desperately until saviours come in from outside to liberate them? Can the poor people not have visions and conceptual clarity on their own and liberate themselves? In other words, are they objects of their own history? Are they permanent victims of their circumstances? Would this not be an adoption of an anti-dialectical methodology that negates cognitive action?

A committed study on social movements needs to go beyond idolising primitive accumulators like bank robbers and paralleling them with Robin Hood. Such romanticisation has the potential of obscuring or falsifying facts about social reality. It is vital to understand the roles played by various individuals, groups, and other sections of society in these social movements. Any serious study of social reality must come to grips with the concrete situation. This then demands contextualising the various social groups including women, youths and other minorities in the whole social movement. What we witness is marginalisation of the various contributions, support and direct participation of these social groups. This has the effect of isolating individuals from the whole movement and creating heroes of these individuals.

Attributing social struggles to individuals in the leadership leads to mythologisation. The study should be distanced from gender trappings. Each situation must be studied in its own context. Without such safeguards, one might end up like Hobsbawn, viewing men as the main supporters of peasant families. This approach divorces women, youth and children theoretically from production in peasant societies. Yet, this is contrary to the existing reality.

In a bid to halt or pre-empt these social movements, Huntington (1968) recognises the various social forces in African societies. So, he underscores the role of authority and control to avoid political decay which might lead to instability and violence. The modernisation package of increased foreign investments and creation of local allies *inter alia* was aimed at depoliticising and discouraging the whole populace. The solution goes beyond technical and reactionary solutions for modernisation. It is important to advance beyond this, not to control social reality, but to identify correctly the motive force in social movements. It is vital to understand which individuals, groups or sections of society had the capacity and willingness to lead such a movement; their motives, achievements and weaknesses. It is in this light that a committed study must understand the various social classes in these movements.

It would be misleading to consider these social classes as geographical, or to dismiss them as non-existent in pre-colonial Africa. Proponents of this view, like Nsibambi (1987), dismiss peasant struggles as merely ideological conflicts.
Nyerere, on the other hand, argues that social differentiation in Africa begins only with colonialism. Presenting past and present Africa as classless implies continental homogeneity.

This implies a uniform linear type of backwardness - a continent without dynamism. This view implicitly condones colonial invasion to unleash the forces of production and put the continent on the capitalist road. Another dimension has been to blame the current class struggles on colonialism. The tendency within this type of thinking is to advocate a return to the imagined glorious pre-colonial, pre-class society or to start on socialism (African or whatever label they may give it).

This approach raises a variety of conceptual and practical problems. Silence or trying to refute the existence of social classes in Africa and their relevance to the social movements cannot help us to come to grips with reality. It has the effect of obscuring facts on power relations in understanding social phenomena, the forms of exploitation and oppression, and social movements historically.

The blanket generalisation of continental classlessness masks people’s resistance to various forces from within and from outside. This view presents them as fragmented individuals, struggling for survival against nature, animals and fellow people. This renders these people in a Hobbesian state of war against all these forces. Thus, without external saviours, life to them remains ‘solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short’.

One of the proponents of this view, Roscoe (op. cit.), in the Western fashion of defining the other, commends the colonial state repression for ‘reducing these wild people (the inhabitants of Kigezi) to order ... any taxation is hotly resented.’ In such a painted situation of ‘the survival of the fittest’, people are assumed to be guided by instinct. They are devoid of consciousness. Whatever relationship that develops is founded on the instinct of survival.

The intellectual efforts to salvage Africa from such Western representations have been made in the nationalist project that takes the Pan Africanist stance. These make efforts to probe far back into the origins and development of humankind with the view to locate the historical origins of all people, human production and development, formulation of epistemologies and different types of disciplines, thinking and philosophy, architectures and constructions, religions and civilisation in Africa. Although this is outside the scope of this study, one should still be mindful of the conceptual, epistemological, historical, methodological and factual contributions by Africanist scholars already dealt with at the beginning of this chapter.
The subaltern studies also make a radical departure from this approach as they focus on struggles by the marginalised against colonialism in India. In showing the peasant consciousness, peasants are portrayed not as victims of history but as its principals, with a capacity to resist and change events, and so on (Guha, 1983).

However, this school fails to delineate the different categories and social groups, genders, caste and ages. Dividing societies into ‘elite’ as collaborators and ‘subaltern’ as resisters is not sufficient categorisation. This classification leads to assumptions of homogeneity of the peasantry in pre-colonial and colonial periods. This has the potential of obscuring the dynamics within societies, the impact of colonialism, and how it shaped the colonised people to serve British capitalist interests. It is important to understand the form of transformation that these societies have undergone to serve alien capitalist interests and the new social relations that emerged.

While it is important to note that different historical and social conditions led to different social responses, it is also crucial to understand the class character of each social movement. Whereas the pre-colonial peasants responded militarily to colonial invasion, it should be noted that those who led these resistances were not the most marginalised individuals.

In other words, it is not the level of deprivation that determines the type of revolution. Hence, it is not correct that ‘subaltern consciousness is inherently revolutionary’. Although there is no general rule or formula on factors leading to revolution or resistance, historical facts show that the most deprived, the most exploited and oppressed often fail to conceptualise correctly their situation and then translate it into struggle.

In no way is this an elitist view. However, it shows the objective limitations confronted in any social struggle and the need for broad alliances and unity between various social groups. Neither does this relegate peasants to secondary roles, nor does it render them inactive. Evidently, peasants do not have an independent perspective of development beyond what exists within their setting. Their outlook is broadly uninformed due to lack of contact with the world beyond their small societies due to lack of travel, massive illiteracy, and so on. It is in this regard that they tend to be rooted in the soil, on their separate plots, like their crops.

In studying peasants and their responses to social and historical conditions, it is vital to consider what type of class(es) exist in this setting. In a developed, capitalist society, the peasants operate as a class within the ideological framework
of its leadership - the bourgeoisie or the working class. It lacks an outlook that can help them draw up a programme for leading other classes. However, peasants in pre-capitalist societies did respond militarily to colonial invasion. They went beyond being sacks of potatoes, took initiative and resisted relentlessly. However, it is obvious that their narrow outlook limited their struggles (Marx, 1972; Mamdani, 1986; Adas, 1979; Hobsbawm 1979). It is in this context that the role of outsiders has been found vital. They became instrumental in the organisation - ideological, political and military - of these struggles.

In military contests against a better armed, well organised superior force, a peasant leadership must, out of necessity go beyond commitments and willingness. They must have the ability to lead, organise, and plan as well as have knowledge of the enemy and his weaknesses, and so on. They must have wider experience than that of fellow peasants to be able to lead them into advanced, sustained struggles for years. An absence of that would lead to spontaneous uprisings which would lead to massacres and repression. It is thus vital to understand concretely each of these social struggles, their character, the material conditions that facilitated the various leaderships to come up, the origin and type of leadership, its ideological content, and so on.

While accepting as correct and a guide to action, Marx’s dictum of violence being the midwife of any old society pregnant with a new one, is vital to study the type of violence in any social context, its character; and analyse if its objectives are popular, criminal or counter-revolutionary. One cannot understand social movements by merely looking at the forms of struggle. Violence is not synonymous with revolution.

Similarly, no individual or section of society has a monopoly of violence. Neither is violence endemic in any society. Historical evidence shows it as situational, in application to specific aims and conditions. It is vital to study the various methods of struggle. Not all situations demand the same tactics and strategies.

Despite its internal social reforms, the Nyabingi Movement aimed at defending the besieged, invaded peoples and territories. It would be far-fetched to claim that it envisaged the democratisation of this society as Cohen and Arato (1992) project part of the historical mission to be.

Giddens (1987); Rao (1984); James (1938); Scott (1990); Lindberg (1992); Slater (1994) and Wertheim (1992) provide a broader and more comprehensive framework in which to analyse and conceptualise social movements. This arises
mainly from their shifting focus from the structures to the social actors and to historical analyses of the obtaining reality.

It is vital to understand that colonial invasion, oppression and exploitation called for new forms of peasants’ consciousness and responses. New social and economic conditions always call for new consciousness and responses. This then calls for going beyond the subaltern school’s view of continuity of subaltern consciousness from pre-colonial to colonial era. There is the need to understand the obtaining reality and reflect on what is to be done, the role of the masses, and so on (Cabral, 1969; Campbell, 1987; Wamba-Dia-Wamba, 1986).

In his recent works, Chatterjee (2004, 2005) demonstrates the importance of shifting the analytical lenses to the politics of the governed - how the different communities articulate their issues differently, respond to state demands and negotiate with it. He demonstrates that this approach will enable studies on popular politics to grasp the nature, form and course of the politics of the governed, their achievements and shortcomings.

One has to avoid making generalisations and conclusions based on findings from singular studies. Such an approach might be too expensive if one is conducting regional studies. These issues notwithstanding, Chatterjee’s views of the politics of the governors and the governed tends to share commonalities with Mamdani’s politics of the citizens and the subjects. They differ at the unit of analysis.

Whereas Mamdani’s approach basically focuses on countries in the colonial setting, the way the subaltern paradigm focused on the colonisers and the subalterns, Chatterjee shifts his analytical lenses to popular politics in the communities, locations and settlements. Whereas the first two categories were dealing with a colonised situation which was totalising and universalising, Chatterjee is dealing with politics of subalterns in the post-Cold War era. This is politics characterised by democratic demands, threats, persuasions, coercion, bribes, deceit, resistance and authoritarianism. These have been made possible by the increasing state authoritarianism, non-compromise and lack of solutions for the increasing hardships. The nature of adulterated pillaging capitalism and neo-liberal policies are reproducing poverty massively and rapidly. The products join the existing socio-economic and political problems to the state. The state has, on the other hand, the propertied class, who happen to be the ruling class. It has to balance all these class interests. We find these approaches very important.

Through understanding the basis of colonialism, its motives and how these changed over time and space, its modes of penetration, the various resistances it
encountered and how these influenced the colonial policies and practice, and the consequent developments, one is able to grasp the colonial reality. This brings in the important question of the colonial representation of the colonised.

Said (1995) explores this to a great depth. He exposes the Western invention and deployment of Orientalism, as a discourse, episteme, an intellectual style grounded on ontological and epistemological differences between the Occident and the Orient, as a career, and as a Western method to dominate, restructure and control the east. An analysis of the anti-colonial movements would benefit from examining Western thought through which the Western cultures were able to produce and manage the colonies politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively. It would have to question the Western representations of Africa and the impact of Western epistemes on African indigenous systems of thought and knowledge.

Michel Foucault brings to light the often marginalised aspects of knowledge, power and struggle. He exposes the negativities of power through repression and how they end up giving rise to movements. His argument is that power is saturated in the whole society, as permanent, repetitive, static, self-reproducing and inflexible. He underlines the need to study the character of power relations. To him, acceptance of power depends upon; *inter alia*, its productive capacity, material content, social and intellectual dimensions and epistemology. Every power relationship implies struggle, in which the two forces are not superimposed and they retain their identity (Foucault, 1977, 1978, 1984).

This *foucauldian* approach exposes the danger of universalising power and subsuming it under the state apparatus. The state functions on the basis of other power relations, which it controls. It underpins the imperativeness of violence and agreement in power relations, though these are not its basic constituents. It avers that if insubordination and recalcitrance on the part of freedom are central to power relations, then any relationship of power is bound to have ways of escape. Its situating of power in terms of governmentality and panopticon without bringing in the issue of struggles has high possibilities of leading to a partial and at times detached understanding of power. Whereas conceptually, power can be seen to be practised over free subjects, still power is in practical terms intertwined with coercion, threats, violence, struggle, incentives, rewards, and so on. The question, therefore, would be to understand how power is constituted, distributed and repelled or resisted. Preconditioning power relations to freedom has a tendency of relapsing into idealism. Power cannot be assumed to be absent in conditions of servitude, domination, subjugation, suppression and oppression.
Such would obscure any meaningful understanding of power relations in the colonial phenomenon.

It is the *gramscian* notion of power and hegemony which would be more beneficial in shedding light on the other alternative technologies of power deployed. These include ideology, dialogue, diplomacy, politics, cultural constructs, religion, rewards, promises, aspirations, lies and rumours—all of which are aimed at capturing and controlling the minds of the subalterns. It is this approach, like the proverbial *omwiru* (slave) that is used to control the other *abairu* (slaves), which would also explicate the colonial politics of indirect rule. This is the politics of exploiters using some of their victims to control and harness the rest of the victims for the oppressors’ interests.

It is beneficial conceptually, methodologically, epistemologically and practically to understand the various forms of power, its loci, spheres of operation and its relationship with the other forms of power. Even the other relationships in which Foucault locates power such as economic processes, knowledge relationships and sexual relationships are produced and controlled by the privileged social forces. It is, however, impossible, whether theoretically, methodologically or practically, to reduce social movements to single variables. Various factors underlie different movements and these have to be grasped concretely. Above all, the *foucauldian* approach fails to transcend the limitations of Western knowledge systems.

**Anti-Colonial Movements in the GLR**

Another set of literature gives a historical account of colonial invasion and some description of people’s reactions. This literature gives insights into the extent to which these peasants were not merely objects of history, but show that they bitterly resisted colonialism. It also shows forms of these struggles, the colonial repression and terror that were intended to crush them and threaten others from resisting (Report on the Anglo-German-Belgian Boundary Commission, 1911; Sebalijja, 1911; Brazier, 1968; Ngorogoza, 1969; Mishambi, 1980).

However, this set of literature leaves out vital issues about the causes, objectives and leadership of these struggles. Its other limitation is the effort to project the inevitable good mission of colonialism and its bounden duty to crush resistances so as to accomplish its project. As such, the studies are confined to the official position of the colonial state, and they justify and glorify both its actions and the role of collaborators. This arises mainly from the positions that many of them occupied in the colonial set-up. Being actively in the colonial service, they
were not able to distance themselves from the whole events and processes to be able to see what was on the side of the people, the character of colonialism, its motives and dynamics, the forces it represented, how it operated, and the reasons underlying the resistances against it.

Most of these studies were carried out seeking ways to suppress and defeat resistances and to demoralise the peasants. Others bring out justifications for the continued resistances and the various transformations that they underwent. The first type presents the colonised people and their resistances to colonialism as the problem, and colonialism as the solution. Consequently, it fails to trace the origins of the crisis and to put the Nyabingi Movement in its proper context. Yet, it is vital to put these peasant struggles in their proper historical context.

Focusing on religions alone, Father de Lacger brings out vital information about religious movements in this region, in pre-colonial times and the position of the Nyabingi Movement, among them and in society. The limitation of this approach arises mainly from trying to fit all religions within the European religious framework. This assumes that all religions must develop within a pre-designed, fixed, linear pattern. There arose distortions in such attempts to reconstruct the historical origins of Nyabingi. This is a major limitation to works which are inspired by the Philipp’s Report (Rwampigi, 1980; Bamunoba, 1965).

This literature is silent about the motives of colonialism, its role, dynamics, operations and the factors underlying the struggles under Nyabingi. Forges (1986), in dealing with peasant resistance under Muhumuza, states that “though short-lived it exhibited much of the complexity of composition, aims and leadership found in more stable political formations; it drew support from every rank of society, pulling in some adherents as individuals, others as blocs of kinsmen.” He shows how they attacked both local and foreign oppressors and the negative consequences of Muhumuza’s failure to persuade and unite all the people against British troops. Muhumuza is exonerated of this charge by the report of one British Commissioner, E.M. Jack, which was underlining Muhumuza’s anti-colonial mobilisation. He reported that on 28 August 1911, he received a letter from Captain Reid, the Acting Political Officer at Kigezi detailing anti-colonial resistance being organised by Muhumuza. It read in part:

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8 The name Muhumuza was variably spelt by the colonialists as Mamusa, Mumusa, Muhumusa and Nyamuhumuza.
… a woman named Mumusa was preaching an anti-European Crusade and collecting a considerable following in Rukiga. Mumusa or Muhumusa is a well-known personage in Ruanda, and has formerly given a great deal of trouble to the Germans. She is one of these ‘witch-doctors’ who are found in this part of Africa, and who are regarded with superstitious reverence by the natives. Mumusa at one time had enormous power, and still has, I imagine, a great deal. She was doing a great deal of damage (Major Jack on 15 May 1912; and 1911 BCR).

Forges’ argument that Muhumuza’s forces defeated British troops twice because the latter withdrew voluntarily is value-loaded. There can never be voluntary withdrawal in military contestations. Retreating implies that the other side is having an upper hand. Inspired by Sebalijja’s work, Forges aims to deny these peasants their military victory. Neither is Forges’ assessment tenable that some people preferred to stay under British protection - a force which was just being imposed from outside for the first time - a view also propounded by Sebalijja et al.

Court evidence after the 1917 Nyakishenyi rebellion exposes the duplicity of this argumentation. Those peoples who refused to join the anti-colonial resistance and her leadership were not necessarily ready to embrace British, German or Belgian colonialism. While they were opposed to colonialism, their different enganda wanted to be led by their own leaders, abakuru b’emiryango, chiefs or kings but not by a woman. Many of these practised the Emandwa religion – a pro-establishment, pro-stability religion which, prior to colonial invasion, had been under threat by the insurgent Nyabingi Movement. Worse still, many of these people did not want to be led by a foreigner from Rwanda who did not have any roots in the area – whether through birth, marriage or blood relations.

The claim by Forges that Nyabingi resistance was short-lived is also a distortion of social and historical reality. The Nyabingi Movement had existed for years before Muhumuza, and it remained in existence during Muhumuza’s long term deportation to Kampala, till her demise in 1944.

Philipps, a serious colonial intellectual and administrator, carried out great organic and basic researches on the Nyabingi Movement. He came out with enormous findings, conclusions and solutions for defeating this movement. He supervised their implementation and that helped to weaken the movement a great deal. After failing to defeat it, Philipps was forced to confess in 1919 that Nyabingi had been defeating military campaigns launched by successive kings in Rwanda.
Tying the Nyabingi Movement to an individual leader has the effect of condensing the whole history of the Nyabingi Movement and attribute it to Muhumuza. Through this process, all people’s actions were attributed to her individual leadership qualities. This is more or less to equate the Nyabingi Movement with Muhumuza. That would historiographically confine the study to the 1911 Anglo-German-Belgian Commission Report and Sebalijja’s article of 1911.

Would it then be correct to argue that the movement collapsed with the capture and resultant deportation of Muhumuza to Kampala? These are issues that Campbell (1987) addresses. His work is a major step forward in studying the links between Rasta Resistance and Nyabingi Resistance. It brings out the material conditions that gave rise to the Rasta movement, its aims, objectives, achievements and limitations. It also tries to contextualise the Nyabingi Movement historically, territorially and socially.

However, it also falls into the same problem of generalising that the Nyabingi movement was a continuous movement under Muhumuza. Attributing all the peasant resistances in Kigezi to Muhumuza’s leadership obscures the various peasant struggles that ensued in the region at different times under different leaderships with varied aims, objectives, tactics and strategies. It is this problem that has to be addressed.

Aseka (2005) brings back to the centre of discussion the role of ideology, morality, religions and consciousness. He underlines their loci, centrality and importance in politics and power. He, like Chatterjee (2004) and Shiva (1989), exposes capital as an agency of neo-patriarchy in its various forms. While discussing the states in pre-colonial East Africa, Aseka leaves out the Mpororo Kingdom. Secondly, his work leaves little room for people’s resistance. While it brings out low scale movements like Dini ya Musambwa, it offers little space for the vibrant Nyabingi Movement, which operated in the four colonial territories for decades. Its operating in the colonial territories of the Belgians, the Germans and the British demonstrated its international character. This enabled both its leadership and membership to escape snares by the colonialists in the three colonies. Thirdly, the work is greatly constrained by a high inclination to Christianity.