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The historical role of scholars and public intellectuals in Uganda's post-independence politics: A critical study of the gang of four

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Abstract

This paper explores the contributions of four eminent political figures namely Edward Bitanywaine Rugumayo, Dani Wadada Nabudere, Omwony Ojok and Yashpal Tandon to the post-independence politics of Uganda. The quartet belonged to the anti-Amin groups in exile who participated in the Moshi conference in Tanzania with the support of President Julius Nyerere. They were dubbed the gang of four by President Godfrey Binaisa during his short-lived regime in 1979. The four had been members of the National Consultative Council (NCC) which served as the legislative arm of the UNLF government under Yusuf Lule and Godfrey Binaisa. Edward Bitanywaine Rugumayo chaired the NCC; in other words, he was the speaker of the then National Assembly. During his tenure as the chairman of the NCC, Lule was removed from office after only 68 days. After Lule's overthrow, Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa was sworn in as president but shortly, he was also overthrown by the military commission under the leadership of Paulo Muwanga and Yoweri Museveni. The gang of four later played a very critical role in academia and taught in many universities both within and outside Africa. The four never participated in the 2nd Obote regime; they were all in exile. However, they resurfaced after the fall of the Obote II and two of them; Edward Rugumayo and Omwony Ojok worked closely with President Museveni during his lengthy NRM regime and served in different capacities.

Key words: Consultative; Liberation; Politics; Regime

1. Introduction

The expression "Gang of Four" was first used in China to refer to a Chinese Communist Party faction led by Jiang Qing (Mao Zedong's third and last wife) although some pundits say she was Zedong's fourth wife (The Economist, 2016). This Maoist faction played an overtly significant role in Chinese politics during the Cultural Revolution under Mao Zedong's rule. Jiang Qing together with her other three associates namely Zang Chuanqiao (Vice Prime Minister of the State Council), Yao Wenyan (Secretary of CCP) and Wang Hongwen (Vice chairman of the CCP) controlled the power organs of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) throughout the later stages of the Communist Party (Haiping, 2010). The members of the Gang of Four (GoF) had similar traits which included but not limited to their ability to manipulate the mass media, their good standing with Mao, their dislike and subsequent desire to overthrow moderate government officials who clustered around Liu Shaoqi and Deng Xiaoping. The group came to prominence in 1965 when Wu Han's play *Hai Rui Dismissed from Office* was banned as a direct result of an investigation by Jiang into its political character, which resulted into a published denunciation of the play by Yao (MacFarquhar, 1997). This event marked the beginning of the Cultural Revolution in China. However, as the Cultural Revolution intensified, the members of the Gang of Four advanced to high positions in the government and the CCP. Through the manipulation of the youthful Red Guards, the Gang of Four controlled intellectual education, basic theories in the social sciences, teacher-student relations and party policies regarding intellectuals (Lu, Xing, 2004).

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In Uganda, President Godfrey Binaisa used the expression *Gang of Four* in 1979 to refer to four intellectually gifted young politicians and members of the National Consultative Council (NCC) namely Dani Wadada Nabudere, Omwony Ojok, Edward Bitanywaine Rugumayo and Yash Tandon. The Gang of Four was an exceptionally outstanding political quartet throughout the anti-Amin struggle and the years that followed the fall of Idi Amin regime (Golooba, 2008; Simon, 2012). They exhibited an immense sense of brilliance during the Moshi conference and at the formation of the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) government. They had that rare and voracious thirst to employ an inimitable quality of intellectual maneuvers to achieve their political goals during the tensely charged debates at the Moshi conference. In the end, they emerged as an indomitable and invincible clique that determined key decisions in the UNLF government with unwavering resilience. The National Consultative Council (NCC) was then an equivalent of today's National Assembly (Parliament) which took center stage in the events during and after the short-lived regimes of Presidents Godfrey Binaisa and Professor Yusuf Lule. It is not very clear why President Lukongwa Godfrey Binaisa intently referred to the quartet as *The Gang of Four* but it can be conjectured that he compared them to the Chinese Maoist political faction which was led by Jiang Qing.

The Gang of Four was credited for having plodded an incredibly illustrious career as distinguished public intellectuals, academics and astute politicians both at national and international levels. Unlike the Chinese Gang of Four whose leader was out rightly Jiang Qing, it is not easy to single out the leader of the *Gang of Four* in Uganda; but what is clear is that Edward Bitanywaine Rugumayo was the chairman of the NCC whose role then was very significant in the UNLF governments of Godfrey Binaisa and Professor Yusuf Lule. Specifically, they played an overarching role during the ouster of Professor Yusuf Lule from the presidency. It is reported that the four and other members of the NCC disagreed with President Lule on his stance to assume executive powers using the 1967 constitution when it came to the appointment of cabinet ministers (Tindigarukayo, 1988). They claimed that Lule had digressed from the position that had earlier been agreed on during the Moshi conference whereupon the president had to consult the NCC during the appointment of cabinet ministers. Consequently, President Lule went ahead and carried out a cabinet reshuffle without involving the NCC.

The Gang of Four also differed with President Yusuf Lule over the distribution of assets and business abandoned by Amin's soldiers and supporters who had fled the country. This was after it was alleged that a lion's share of the properties went to Lule's close associates and tribes men. They also disagreed over Lule's policy of proportional regional recruitment of the army; this policy gave Buganda leverage over other regions due to its bigger population (Tindigarukayo, 1988). On 20th July, 1979, the chairman of the NCC, Edward Rugumayo announced that Lule had been dismissed as president.

During President Binaisa's short-lived tenure as president, there were several issues that remained unresolved; Binaisa opted for an umbrella system (movement system) which was interpreted by political pundits as a move to a one party system (Avirgan & Martha, 1983). He rejected a pluralistic system on the grounds that it would create divisions and nepotism. To consolidate his position, Binaisa assumed the position of minister of defense replacing Yoweri Museveni in November, 1979. He also sacked Paulo Muwanga from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and sent him as ambassador to Geneva. Paulo Mwanga rejected the new appointment and was returned to cabinet as minister of labour.

In May 1980, Binaisa attempted to dismiss Brigadier Oyite Ojok as Chief of Staff; the army responded by putting Binaisa under house arrest (Mutibwa, 2008). The Gang of Four made a futile attempt to stop the coup d'état and when they failed, all of them went for exile. Covertly, Paulo Muwanga and Yoweri Museveni led a successful coup d'état which removed President Godfrey Binaisa from power. At the time of the coup, Yash Tandon had accompanied his daughter to London, Rugumayo and Otema Alimadi had gone to represent the Government of Uganda at the funeral of Josip Broz Tito, the then president of Yugoslavia, and Dani Nabudere together with Omwony Ojok had gone to Arusha to meet President Julius Nyerere of Tanzania (Sathyamurthy, 1986; Mutibwa, 2008; Yash Tandon, 2012). It can be averred that the Gang of Four's move to be out of the country during the coup d'état was deliberately done seemingly because they were sympathizers of President Binaisa.

This tense period of political activity was very significant in the later events that shaped Uganda's political landscape. However, not much has been written about the joint contribution of the Gang of Four (GoF) in Uganda's political transformation during the post-independence era although their participation in the political processes that unfolded right from their student days cannot be ignored. They shared a lot in common and yet they differed considerably. The four were glued together for a very long time by a common trajectory that radiated around politics and academia; and this study interrogates this long journey through an empirical lens by providing a panacea to justify their long struggle for freedom and wellbeing of the people of Uganda.

2. Methodology

The study employed secondary research (desk research) method to collect existing data from various scholarly sources including books, papers and articles (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1992; Denscombe, 2021). This method provided an opportunity for the researcher to use credible data that was collected by other scholars with specific focus on the accomplishments of the Gang of Four. A critical historical review of literature was done to examine the biographical insights of the quartet namely Edward Bitanywaine Rugumayo, Dani Wadada Nabudere, Yashpal Tandon and Omwony Ojok spanning a period of over 80 years (1934-2023). The purpose was to place the study in a historical context to show the relevance of the role of the Gang of Four in shaping the political land scape of contemporary Uganda.

2.1. Edward Bitanywaine Rugumayo

Edward Bitanywaine Rugumayo is a Ugandan politician, diplomat, scholar, public intellectual and environmentalist. He was born on 18th December, 1934 in the present day Kyenjojo district in Western Uganda. He attained his primary education at a local school called Mukole in Kenjojo (P.1 –P.4) and Gallihuma Primary School (P.5-P.6). He proceeded to Kabarole Junior Secondary School (S.1-S.3) and later joined Nyakasura School for his (S.4 –S.6). Rugumayo got enrolled at Makerere University in the mid-50s to study agriculture but he quit shortly because he had wanted to study medicine. After dropping out of Makerere, Rugumayo went back home and opted to work in the Rukurato (parliament) of Tooro kingdom (Semujju Nganda, 2009). It was during this time that he married his first wife, Nesta Rugumayo who at one time was married to the Kabaka of Buganda, Edward Mutesa II; she later died of breast cancer in 1972 (Beth, 2008). It is reported that while working with the Tooro kingdom, Rugumayo was offered a scholarship to study in the United States of America but the colonial government denied him a passport. The circumstances that led to this unfortunate event are not clear but later on in 1958, Rugumayo again received another scholarship to study in the United Kingdom where he enrolled for a diploma in education at Chester College then a constituent college of the University of Liverpool. On completing his diploma in education, Rugumayo joined the University of London where he pursued a degree of Bachelor of Science in Botany and Ecology. While in London, he was initiated into student politics by Boloki Chango Machyo W'Obanda, another Ugandan student from Busia district who was pursuing his studies on a Bukedi Local Government scholarship (Chango Machyo, 2005).

After his university studies in the UK, Rugumayo came back to Uganda and briefly taught at Kyambogo in 1966 before taking on an appointment as warden of Mitchel Hall at Makerere University. He was senior inspector of schools while teaching at Kyambogo from 1968 to 1969. He later worked as Senior Lecturer then Associate Professor, School of Education at the University of Zambia between 1973-1979. He was a visiting Professor of environment at the Oklahoma State University in the US and Moscow State University in Russia. He became a Senior Consultant on environmental Education, training and Project design for UNEP, UNDP, UNESCO and World Bank based in Nairobi, Kenya (Ssemujju Nganda, 2009). In 1989, he chaired a 12 man team of consultants hired to establish the School of Environmental Studies at Moi University in Kenya. At the same time, he became visiting UNDP/UNEP Professor of environment at Moi University. He was also Senior Programmes Coordinator of Environment Liaison Centre International, a global coalition of environment in Nairobi from June, 1992 to May, 1995. He also worked at Kibuli Secondary School where he taught Badru Katerega, the current Vice Chancellor of Kampala University. In 2005, Rugumayo with other associates namely Fr. Albert Byaruhanga, Prof. Oswald Ndolireire, Justice Seth Manyindo and Hon. Tom Butime among others mooted the idea of starting Mountains of the Moon University (Wambedde, 2022). This university began as a community institution with the aim of stimulating socio-economic development in Tooro and the neighboring communities. After turning it into a fully-fledged public university, President Yoweri Museveni appointed Edward Rugumayo as Chancellor of Mountains of the Moon University in 2022 (Wambedde, 2022).

Rugumayo was also infested by the political bug early in his life. In 1971, he was appointed Minister of Education during Amin Dana's regime. It is opined that this appointment was as a result of the connection he had with Wanume Kibedi an in-law of Idi Amin Dada (Semujju Nganda, 2009). In fact, Rugumayo had studied together with Wanume Kibedi in the UK and were great friends. Unfortunately, he unceremoniously resigned by telex when he was in Nairobi in 1973. It is averred that Rugumayo was the first minister of the Amin regime to resign; an act which was done in protest of Idi Amin's state orchestrated violation of human rights especially the murder of innocent Ugandans.

He first stayed in exile in Nairobi and later proceeded to Zambia where he stayed between 1973-1979. In Zambia, he joined a network of Ugandan exiles who were planning to oust Idi Amin Dada. In 1978, he attended the Moshi conference which laid a road map to remove Amin from power. He attended the Moshi conference as a representative of exiles based in Zambia along with Eriya Kategaya. At the Moshi conference, he was elected chairman of the National Consultative Council which was the central governing body of the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLRF). When Idi

Amin was overthrown, the NCC moved to Parliamentary House and Rugumayo in effect became the Speaker of Parliament although he was referred to as Chairman of the NCC not speaker (Kanyeiamba, 2010).

Together with Dan Wadada Nabudere, Omwony Ojok and Yash Tandon, they were dubbed the Gang of Four by President Godfrey Lukongwa Binasisa because of their critical role in the NCC. In effect, the four were the ones running the country at that time. It is said that Edward Rugumayo was instrumental in removing President Yusuf Lule from power when Lule disagreed with the NCC on procedural issues in making cabinet appointments (Sejjaaka, 2004; Otunu, 2017). According to the Moshi accord, all the appointments were to be ratified by the NCC; an idea which Lule refused. Lule opted to use the 1967 constitution a position which the NCC opposed. Consequently, Paulo Mwanga moved a vote of no confidence; the debate lasted from 3.00am to 3.00am and Lule was ousted after having ruled for only 68 days. President Lule was later replaced by Godfrey Lukongwa Binasisa, a highly revered legal brain who had earlier helped President Milton Obote to promulgate the pigeonhole constitution of 1967 (Mutibwa, 2008; Otunu, 2017).

Binasisa was deposed in another coup d'état after having stayed in power for only 11 months (Gertzel, 1980). At that time, all the members of the gang of four were not in the country; Rugumayo was in Tanzania with Omwony Ojok; Yash Tandon had taken his daughter to London; Dani Nabudere together with Otema Alimadi had gone to represent the Government of Uganda at the funeral of Josip Broz Tito the then president of Yugoslavia. The coup was engineered by Paulo Mwanga, Yoweri Museveni and Tito Okello Lutwa. It is worth noting that after the coup, Rugumayo did not come back to Uganda; instead he remained in Tanzania. His family remained trapped up in Nile Mansions only to be rescued by President Nimeri of Sudan whose presidential jet helped to relocate Rugumayo and his family to Nairobi where they stayed till 1992 (Ssemujju Nganda, 2009).

In 1995, Rugumayo was appointed by President Yoweri Museveni as his first High Commissioner to South Africa. He served in this position for four years after which he was recalled to take charge of the Internal Affairs Ministry (199-2000). During his stay in South Africa, Rugumayo reunited with his colleague Thabo Mbeki who had lived with him in Zambia. A year later, he was moved to the Ministry of Tourism, Trade and Industry till 2005 when he was appointed Uganda's ambassador to France. However, he turned down the appointment on account that he wanted to stay home after so many years abroad (Ssemujju Nganda, 2009). Throughout his life as a politician, Rugumayo never competed for any electoral office yet he found himself occupying positions that would have required him to be elected by the masses.

2.2. Dani Wadada Nabudere

Dani Wadada Nabudere was born on 15th December, 1932 in Budadiri in Eastern Uganda; he attended his elementary education in Bugishu before proceeding to Aggrey Memorial College, Bunamwaya near Kampala (Businge, 2011). After his high school, Nabudere joined the civil service as a postal clerk for some years. In the early 1960s, he travelled to the United Kingdom to study law where he attained a bachelor of laws degree in 1963 and was admitted as a barrister at Lincoln's Inn, London. As a student in London in 1961, he was a member of the executive committee of the UK students Association of Uganda together with Yash Tandon, Ateker Ejalu, Chango Machyo and Edward Rugumayo. The association had been formed to raise political consciousness of young students studying and working in the UK (Tandon, 2012).

When he returned from the UK in 1964, Nabudere participated actively in the UPC politics. But he quickly fell out of favour with the party leadership because he was among the members of the UPC youth wing who were staunch followers of the party Secretary General, John Kakonge. Subsequently, Nabudere was expelled from the party together with Bidandi Ssali, Kirunda Kivejinja and Kintu Musoke (Museveni, 1997; Tandon, 2012). Even after his expulsion from the UPC party, Nabudere remained a strong critic of Obote's government. Together with Raiti Omongin, Nabudere had joined the Maoist Party in Uganda and also participated in the unification talks between Tanganyika and Zanzibar (Simon, 2012). Earlier in 1963, Nabudere had also formed a Mbale-based activist group called the Uganda Vietnam Solidarity Committee to campaign against American imperialism in Vietnam.

In 1965, Nabudere was accused by a member of parliament of organizing a communist plot to overthrow Milton Obote's government. In December 1969, following an attempt on Obote's life, Nabudere was arrested together with other politicians like Cuthbert Joseph Obwangor from Teso, Benedicto Kiwanuka and Paul Kawanga Ssemwogerere from Buganda, Wakukulu from Bugishu and Mathias Ngobi from Busoga under the orders of Basil Bataringaya and Felix Kenyi Onama. They were placed in detention under the emergency laws till 1971 when they were released by President Idi Amin Dada.

When Idi Amin Dada overthrew Milton Obote's government in 1971, Nabudere was appointed chairman of the East African Railways and Harbours based in Nairobi, Kenya. However, in 1974 he resigned in protest of Amin's brutality

and was exiled in Tanzania where he joined the anti-Amin guerrilla movement. It was during this time that Nabudere together with Rugumayo and Paulo Muwanga organized a mass resignation of ministers from Amin's government. In Tanzania Nabudere and Omwony Ojok belonged to the Negotiating Committee for Democratic Unity which was opposed to the Changombe Group comprised of people like Augustine Ruzindana, Wafula Ogotu and Mahmood Mamdani who advocated for the military option to remove Idi Amin Dada from power. Nabudere also belonged to other anti-Amin groups like the Uganda Liberation Movement and the Nairobi Consultative Committee (Nyeko, 1997; Cooper, 2015).

When Amin Dada was overthrown in 1979, Nabudere joined the UNLF and was elected chairman of its political and diplomatic committee (Nyeko, 1997). In the same year, he was appointed minister of justice and later minister of culture, community development, and rehabilitation. After the overthrow of Binaisa by the military commission of the UNLF, Nabudere fled for exile as did the other three members of the gang of four (Tindigarukayo, 1988). Following his escape from Uganda after the overthrow of Binaisa, Nabudere moved to Helsingor in Denmark and started teaching at Folk High School. In fact his stay in Denmark marked one of his most illustrious and glorious period as a scholar. It was during this time that he wrote a 300 page book – *The Rise and Fall of Money Capital* which was published in 1990 by *Africa Transition*, an organization that had been founded by the two brothers – Yash Tandon and Vikash Tandon. In this book, he critically delved into the rise of money and predicted that money would one time overcome capital and then meet its own demise as an investment of credit which actually came to be known as the financialization of capital in the 21st century. A summary of this book was later published by Fahamu as *The Crash of African Finance Capital and its Implication* (Tandon, 2012).

Nabudere also founded The Marcus Garvey Pan African Institute based in Mbale. The objective of this institute was to create a repository of knowledge on African science, philosophy, medicine and other African knowledge which he called Afrikology. The institute later became the Afrika Study Centre which was to evolve into a university. Nabudere was pronounced dead on 9th November, 2011 after suffering from diabetes and high blood pressure (Tandon, 2012).

2.3. Yash Tandon

Yash Tandon was born on 21st June, 1939 to traders of Indian origin who had settled at a small township called Kaberamaido in Kumam land in Eastern Uganda. He holds a bachelor of economics from the London School of Economics in the United Kingdom. He attained his master's degree in economics in 1965. Tandon completed his PhD in international relations at the London School of Economics in 1969. While at LSE, YashPal, met and married his longtime companion, Mary Olivia with whom he had two children- Vivek and Nidhi (SIETINI, 2019). Between 1964 and 1972, Yash Tandon lectured at Makerere. He later spent three months as visiting lecturer at the University of Dar es salaam (Mwakikagile, 2006). He also spent another three months as a visiting lecturer at the National Institute of Public Administration in Lusaka, Zambia in 1972. Between 1972 and 1973, he lectured in international relations at the London School of Economics. Following the collapse of Idi Amin's government in 1979, he was professor of international relations at Makerere University. From 1982-1983, Tandon was visiting professor and consultant at Zimbabwe Institute of Development Studies in Harare, Zimbabwe (SIETINI, 2019).

Tandon specializes in political economy and has lectured extensively in this discipline. He has written over 100 scholarly articles and has authored and edited books on African politics, peace, security, trade and WTO, international economics, South to South Cooperation and human rights. He has served on several editorial boards of several academic journals including Mawozo at Makerere, Instant Search on Peace and Violence in Finland, the Sage International Year Book on Foreign Policy (Seracuce-USA), African Review, Utafiti, Economic Journal of Zimbabwe (Raftopoulo, 1992). He was also the editor of the University of Dar es Salaam's *Debate on Class, State and Imperialism* in 1962. Yash Tandon was also director at the famous Makerere Institute of Social Research (MISR) and a consultant at the International Peace Academy in New York and founder member of African Association of Political Science (AAPS). He was also the founder member of Uganda Asia Evacuees Association and was also Vice President of the International Studies Association.

In the political arena, Tandon participated in many engagements; after completing his studies in London, he returned to Uganda but left in 1970 when Idi Amin Dada overthrew Obote. He went into exile first in Kenya for three months, and then in the United Kingdom for nine months. In the 1970s, Tandon engaged in underground political work with the democratic forces of change that were fighting Idi Amin (Shillington, 2005). He was founding member of the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) and one of the principle organisers of the May 1979 conference for the launch of the UNLF government (Ingam, 1994). Following the collapse of the Amin regime in 1979, Tandon returned to Uganda. He was member of the National Consultative Council (NCC) with a short stint as minister of state (Jorgensen, 1981). At this time, Tandon was involved in negotiations with inter-governmental organisations and donors for the rehabilitation of the Uganda economy. He was chairman and member of the various parliamentary committees. In 1980, after the overthrow the Binaisa's government, Tandon went into exile in Kenya for close to two years (Kasozi, Nakanyike &

Mukooza, 1994). There, he was the founder and director of the Uganda Refugee Relief Services. At the same time, he was engaged in the political work for the democratic struggle in Uganda (Jorgensen, 1981).

2.4. John Omwony Ojok

Omwony Ojok was born on 1st June, 1947 in Abwor, Labwor county, Kotido district in Uganda. He studied at Lacor Seminary in Gulu for his Junior Leaving Certificate after which he joined St Mary's College, Kisubi in 1963 for his secondary education. He later joined Wau Watosi East High School in Winconsin, USA under an exchange programme. Later, Omwony Ojok attended Ntare School where he met Eria Kategaya and Yoweri Museveni. In 1972, he graduated with a bachelor of laws from Makerere University. While at Makerere Omwony Ojok was the guild president and it is during this time that he also met Dani Nabudere (Izama, 2007). During the dictatorial regime of Idi Amin Dada, he fled to Switzerland where he pursued a master's degree in international relations. He also did a master's in law specializing in third world investments. He is said to have fled to Switzerland after clashing with Idi Amin Dada over a press release he issued condemning the killing of two foreign journalists in Mbarara (Candia and Musamali, 2007).

Omwony Ojok was a linguist who could speak English, French, Latin, Lango and Ateso with as much fluency as his mother tongue, Acholi. He was both a lawyer and professor who lectured in more than ten universities across the world. Some of these world class universities included the distinguished University of Oxford in the UK, the University of Toronto in Canada, the University of Nairobi in Kenya and the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania (Candia, 2007). In 1978, Omwony Ojok abandoned his doctoral studies at the University of Geneva and relocated to Tanzania to join the anti- Amin forces. He joined the UNLF and later became member of the National Consultative Council (NCC). He is said to have resumed his doctoral studies at Dar es salaam where he also lectured while at the same time engaging in the anti-Amin struggle.

Omwony Ojok was also part of the group that organized the 1979 Moshi conference. Tindigarukayo (1988) reports that together with Edward Bitanywaine Rugumayo, Dani Nabudere and Yash Tandon, they became leading figures in the post-Amin governments of Yusuf Lule and Godfrey Binaisa. In the NCC, Rugumayo was the chairman, Omwony Ojok (Secretary), Nabudere (chairman of the political and diplomatic commission) and Tandon (secretary for information)

After the NRA bush war, Omwony Ojok joined the National Resistance Movement of Yoweri Kaguta Museveni and served in different capacities; first as Director of Uganda Aids Commission (1994-1999), Minister of Northern Rehabilitation (1999-2001) and at the time of his demise, he was Minister for Economic Monitoring (2001-2007). He participated in electoral politics and was elected Labwor County Member of Parliament. After his death, his wife Florence Adongo succeeded him as Member of Parliament, Labwor County (Candia and Musamali, 2007).

3. Discussion

In fact, Dani Wadada Nabudere, Omwony Ojok, Edward Kitanywaine Rugumayo and Yash Tandon had a lot in common; they had been members of the Moshi conference which convened to plan for the removal of Idi Amin Dada from power in Uganda. In the post Idi Amin governments of Yusuf Lule and Godfrey Lukongwa Binaisa, the four were very vocal members of the National Consultative Council and were very influential in the proceedings and the events which led to the overthrow of Yusuf Lule and Godfrey Binaisa's governments. Having been key figures in the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) government, their contribution to Uganda's political transformation in the post Idi Amin era cannot be overemphasized. Their political and intellectual perspicacity, astuteness and shrewdness were as pivotal during and after Amin's brutal rule just as the Gang of Four in China were dominant during Mao Zedong's times.

In fact, it is also not clear why two of the four namely Edward Bitanywaine Rugumayo and Omwony Ojok accepted to work with President Yoweri Museveni as cabinet ministers while the other two; Dani Wadada Nabudere and Yash Tandon completely declined to join Museveni in his political transformation agenda although at one time Wadada was a delegate in the Constituent Assembly which promulgated the 1995 constitution of the Republic of Uganda. It is possible that although the four had shared a long history of having a common political agenda; at one point it became necessary for each to take an independent view point and pursue a different political path.

The four were products of the Moshi spirit which metamorphosed into the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF) and were highly educated; they had attended elite universities in Europe, a virtue that gave them intellectual leverage over many of their counterparts in the Moshi conference and National Consultative Council. Their astuteness, intelligibility, audaciousness, quality of debate and political analysis were comparatively unequalled during their time in the National Consultative Council. This can be attributed to the vast experience they had accumulated over the time as student activists in Europe and East Africa.

It will be recalled that Edward Rugumayo, Dani Nabudere and Yash Tandon had been members of the famous UK Students' Association of Uganda; an association that helped to shape their conceptualization of revolutionary politics. Omwony Ojok and Yash Tandon had taught at Dar es Salaam and Makerere universities where they participated immensely in a number of Pan African conferences and were active members in the political debates that helped to shape a wide array of political events in Africa in the decades that followed. At that time, Tanzania was known to be a breeding place of revolutionary ideals and it is from here that many African revolutionary leaders attained their political mentorship.

After the National Resistance Army bush war, the Gang of Four had no problems whatsoever with coming back home from exile. But out of the four, it was only Professor Edward Kitanywaine Rugumayo and Omwony Ojok who accepted to join Museveni's NRM government. As already pointed out, Rugumayo and Ojok took on various offices including ministerial positions under Museveni's regime and contributed incalculably to Uganda's economic and political transformation in the decades that followed. At the time of his death in 2007, Omwony Ojok was Minister of State for Economic Monitoring; Professor Rugumayo was Minister of Tourism, Trade and Industry in the NRM government at the time of his sacking in 2007. However, Rugumayo seemed not to have been happy with the reshuffle that threw him out of cabinet in 2007. During an interview with Ibrahim Ssemujju Nganda in 2009, Rugumayo showed his disillusionment with the way President Museveni executed his powers by simply announcing the cabinet reshuffle on radio. To his surprise, Rugumayo was told about the reshuffle by his house maid; something that didn't go well with him. In his book *why fireflies glow*, Rugumayo chronicles his life story with overtones of criticism, lashing at Museveni for his overstay in power. This he does, of course, after having served in the same government for 10 years.

Although Dani Wadada Nabudere accepted to come back home in 1993 on the invitation of President Yoweri Museveni to join the Constituent Assembly that promulgated the 1995 constitution of Uganda, he was greatly opposed to government and on several occasions, he led the opposition members out of the Constituent Assembly in protest of what he perceived as a deviation from the constitutional path. Together with Aggrey Awori, another seasoned politician and a graduate of Harvard University; they formed the National Caucus for Democracy (NCD), a CA-based pressure group. After the Constituent Assembly, Nabudere chose to concentrate on his academic career although he remained an astute analyst of political events in Uganda. At the time of his death in 2012, he was a researcher at his Mbale-based Marcus Garvey Centre (Afrika Centre) and a Professor at the Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU).

On the other hand, Professor Yash Tandon continued with his scholarly work in universities abroad. He did not join the NRM government although he occasionally comes back to Uganda at his own leisure. He has been an independent political analyst and a consultant in various fields of scholarship such as international relations and political economy. Tandon has always disagreed with President Yoweri Museveni's deliberate move to entrench himself in power and at one time during the launch of his book "Common People's Uganda" in 2019 at Hotel Africana in Uganda, he advised the president to "hand over power to the young generation" for a smooth political transition. He advised opposition parties in Uganda to remain united and not to look at Museveni as the "Chief enemy of Uganda" underscoring that the enemy is neo-liberalism entrenched by International Monetary Fund, World Bank, World Trade Organisation to mention but a few. He argued that a united Uganda is what is needed to fight western imperialism.

Although the four are widely associated with their historical role in the post independent politics of Uganda, it is equally important to recognize their deep involvement and immersion into academia. Right from their student days in Europe, it was evident that their intellectual views as embedded in the debates that were organized by African students in the struggle for independence in Africa had significant implications. The four actually left remarkable footprints in many universities across the world as professors and public intellectuals; they taught in universities in Europe and Africa and this raises the question as to how they managed to lead a successful career as distinguished academics and politicians. Specifically, Dani Nabudere and Yash Tandon became distinguished academics with international repute. Dan Nabudere under his trade mark philosophy of Afrikology published widely on different aspects of African culture, politics and philosophy. His corpus was multidisciplinary in nature and radiated around critiquing imperialism, African political systems, processes of globalization and Africa's place in those systems and finally the ideological and existential imperatives on Afrocentric imperatives. It is opined that before his death in 2012, Dani Nabudere had written fifteen books let alone the numerous academic articles in international peer reviewed journals.

4. Conclusion

The story of the Gang of Four is a fascinating one. It is a story full of inspiration and encouragement. The quartet played a significant role in the political transformation of Uganda right from their student days throughout their adult life at home and abroad. On several occasions they were forced to abandoned their motherland and stayed in exile for a significant period. Together they were involved in the anti-Amin struggle which saw the ouster of the dictatorial regime

with the help of Mwalimu Julius Nyerere of Tanzania. After the overthrow of Idi Amin Dada, they were very instrumental in the political processes that followed. It can be said that their role in the political and economic transformation of Uganda is highly recognized. Because of their unequalled jocularity and ability in managing political manoeuvres, they were dubbed the *Gang of Four* by President Godfrey Binaisa. They were revered intellectuals whose contribution in the field of academia cannot be overemphasized. They lectured in several universities across the world and contributed enormously in knowledge production and dissemination through conferences, academic publications and as public intellectuals. At the time of writing two of them are still alive –Edward Bitanwyaine Rugumayo and Yash Tandon. Omwony Ojok passed on in 2007 and Dani Wadada Nabudere in 2011; for they did not die –their trajectory is a living testimony to those who still live.

Compliance with ethical standards

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