

commodity production with internal market, or into the sphere of the so-called "informal sector".

3. HISTORICAL SITUATION

3.1 Pre-colonial Economic and Socio-Political Organization.

3.1.1 Systems of Production.

The climate of Lango, Northern Uganda, is such that annual rainfall is lower than in the South of Uganda, and the dry season a little longer. As a result the vegetation is more characteristic of well-drained Savannah: shorter and more scattered trees, thinner soils and higher grass cover. The natural vegetation of the region is deciduous woodland (Langdale-Brown, *et al.*, 1964). Right from pre-colonial days the economy of Lango has been very much dependent on these geographical factors. Lango at the time conformed to the pattern of seed agriculture so prevalent in Northern Uganda as a whole. Prior to contact with British imperialism, Lango agriculture, based on communal tenure, was basically a subsistence economy, producing finger millet, sorghum, simsim, pigeon peas and sweet potatoes. There are effectively two seasons, and rainfall comes to a single peak, instead of two. The Langi recognized this by dividing the year into one dry season (oro) - December to March, and one rainy season (cwir) - April to November. The agricultural year begins at the end of the dry season, with the clearing and digging of the ground in preparation for sowing at the start of the rains. There might be a second sowing in June/July for the second crop season which is shorter. Harvesting could begin as early as June and continue to November. By the time the dry season begins in December no crops could be expected for six months. It is, therefore, essential to cultivate the largest possible area, and to store the surplus in granaries; millet is well suited for this, since after careful preparation it can be kept for up to three or more years (McMaster, D.N. 1962).

In pre-colonial times hunting could be organized at any time - for example to protect crops - but it was mainly concentrated in the dry season. Those Langi who lived on the shore of Lake Kyoga or along the principal rivers supplemented hunting with fishing. At the village level, the work-group (*Wang tic*) provided co-

operative labour for clearing fallow ground, ploughing and weeding on a reciprocal basis among its 20 to 40 members. The *Wang tic* elected a leader to oversee the work and subsequent millet brew (beer) provided at the end of work by the one whose plot is worked on, and to negotiate alliances with other *Wang tic* co-operative labour groups for larger projects. The person in charge of rotational communal cattle-herding was not elected but was the owner of the kraal (won awii dyang). Regulation of hunting was the task of hereditary guardians of hunting areas (won arum).

Besides cultivation and hunting, there was, in the early 19th century Lango, one other means of subsistence - animal husbandry (Tosh, J., 1978). Goats, sheep and poultry were kept. But more important were cattle (Baker, S.W., 1974. *Ismailia* Vol. II: 102-13). Until the rinderpest epidemic (Tosh, J. 1978: 98-109) of the 1890s, the short-horned Zebu was kept in large numbers nearly everywhere in Lango. Cattle were crucial in a wide range of economic and social contexts. They were the principal form of wealth and unit of accounts, and the preferred form of payment for both bride wealth and compensation for offenses (Driberg, J. H., 1923: 91-3). Thus, throughout the 19th century the pattern of Lango subsistence was made up of crops, livestock and game, and the balance between them did not shift until the great rinderpest epidemic of the 1890s.

The technology with which these resources were exploited was based on iron and this too hardly changed. Iron spearheads and iron knives were used for hunting game. Iron was also used for digging, though it was not until the beginning of the colonial period that they began to supersede the traditional wooden digging - (sticks in some parts of Lango).

Inter-tribal trade was also noticeable. Trade was minimal and affected only surplus. As in much of Sub-saharan Africa, the most important article of indigenous trade in pre-colonial Uganda were iron and mineral-salt, natural deposits which were relatively rare. And so during the 19th century there was a brisk trade in salt (Good, C.M., 1972) and iron throughout the interlacustrine region and beyond. The Langi imported metal works from their neighbours - the *Labwor* in the east and the *Banyoro* in the west. Bracelets and wire were imported for use as bodily ornaments, and also hoes, which were turned into spear-heads as well as put to agricultural use. The main commodities exchanged for salt and ironware were foodstuffs - primarily millet and simsim. Goats and

poultry were also bartered. Both the *Labwor* and *Banyoro* regarded Lango as an important source of food to supplement inadequate supplies at home; such shortages were very common in Bunyoro⁴, though more irregular in Labwor. By the beginning of the 20th century imported hoes had begun to replace wooden - digging sticks, especially in those parts within easy reach of the Nile and Lake Kyogo, and grain crops were still Lango's main exports. This suggests that the Langi produced considerable surpluses of food. This impression is strengthened by the reliance which the protectorate government was able to place on food exports from Lango during the years 1913-14, when there were severe shortages in Busoga and Northern Buganda (Driberg, J.H., 1923: 99-100; Scott, Report on Lango District for 1913-14, File UNA EPMP Z/228/13. Also Tosh, J.1978: 100).

Lango traditions are almost unanimous that the traders did not travel at random, but stayed at the homes of well-known leaders for protection. Such a home could be used either as a base for touring the immediate vicinity, or as a market place from which salt and ironware were redistributed in small quantities by individual Langi (Tosh, J.: 84). No doubt a clan leader's prestige was increased if he played host to foreign traders but there is no evidence that he controlled either the product of agricultural surpluses or the distribution of the trade goods. Trade with non-Langi involved the humblest cultivators and was in no sense source of political patronage. In short, neither local trade nor the importing of exotic goods affected the standing or powers of clan leadership. That is, there was no question of control over or appropriation of the trade assets e.g. in terms of tax, which could have constituted a political resource for the clan leaders. This was possible only because at the time Lango was basically a classless-based social formation.

3.1.2 Land Tenure⁵

In pre-colonial Lango, the lineage elders controlled the land inhabited by and cultivated by their ancestors. But their control was only in a formal way; in reality the local community and households owned and controlled land and the various aspects of its use. Membership of a lineage entitled a family, or more specifically the head of the household to usufructuary rights to lineage land. Land that was not being cultivated could be allocated by the lineage elder(s) cultivator to another family. Lineage land that was not needed by lineage members could be granted to non-lineage persons following their admittance by clan elders.

Land was obtained in two main ways. It was cleared from the bush or inherited. Clearing was naturally the main method in those many grain areas of Eastern and Northern Uganda where shifting or recurrent cultivation was practiced and population was low. Members of the community could usually clear land without restrictions. That is, access to land that was unsettled or uncultivated remained open to all the members of the community. However, strangers had to obtain permission from a local or village leader (*Adwong Wang-tic*) or clan leader (*Adwong Atekere*). In inheritance, the guiding principle was that land should remain within the lineage or within whatever decent group was operative in this respect. The man who cleared a new piece of land could himself decide how to transfer it. However, if he passed it as inheritance to his children which must have been the common procedure, it became lineage land and subject to restrictions in transfer. In pre-colonial Lango, it is thus misleading to speak of land ownership in the sense of exclusive rights, individual or corporate, which made land a commodity to be treated at the will of the owner. Rather, the community owned the land, and control and access to land was regulated by a complicated series of retreating and multiple revisionary rights from the final user through the descent group up to the leader of the community. Women, were never allocated land either as members of their original descent groups or of those of their husbands.

Today the family head may allocate part of the family land to individual members of the family. As a rule land is allocated only to men and divorcees may be given a portion of land (donated land) on which they can cultivate on their own. Married women usually cultivate their husband's land. Now, female usufructuary rights are not heritable, but are dissolved in the case of death or divorce.

Though lineage land and family land was, in the pre-colonial times, controlled by the lineage head and the family head respectively, the clan members as a whole, more particularly the clan elders, had the overall control over the land of any one of their members. The clan always had to be consulted before lineage or family land was allocated to non-clan members. However, a member of a family who wished to establish his new compound need not obtain permission from the clan elders. If any conflict about lineage or family land arose and could not be settled within the lineage or family, then the *Adwong Wang-tic* together with *Adwong-Atekere* would call the clan elders to make a final decision binding on both interested parties.

There were uncultivated and unoccupied or unsettled land - rivers, forests, roads, swamps, grazing areas (bar dok) etc. These were all regarded as communal (common) land. Community members had unrestricted access to the use of resources on such land. The *Adwong Wang-tic* could allocate pieces of those unoccupied lands to anyone - either a community member or a stranger - to sustain himself and his dependents. This was especially true of land which was unoccupied and never in use by members of the community. In case of forested land the allocation was done on its fringes, since wild animals made settlement in the interior of the forested land impossible. Land allocated in this way was never paid for. In pre-colonial Lango land was never sold. Not because it was abundant and had not acquired any commercial value as yet, but rather because land was held to belong to the ancestors and had, therefore, to be passed intact onto the next and next generations (N. Akena, 1959; Ogwal, R. (n.d.)).

In regard to land use, block-farming was common practice. This was especially feasible as fields were further from homesteads (usually concentrated human settlement) and so block farming provided the only way to deal with plant eating wild animals e.g. monkeys, that could destroy crops. Labour was organized along *Wang tic* communal co-operative.

One feature of the pre-colonial Lango land tenure system which ought to be mentioned so as complete the picture had to do with hunting-grounds. In pre-colonial times there existed in Lango hunting-bush or minors (*tim or arum*) the hunting rights over which were owned individually. The owner whose position was heritable, was known as "*won tim*" i.e. "owner of the bush" (*tim*) or "*won arum*". We were not able to ascertain, during our field research, the exact rules and pattern of inheritance governing *tim*, but clearly the office of the *won-tim* was independent of that of the *adwong atekere* or that of *adwong wang-tic*. However, no land was reserved entirely for hunting since no one could be prevented by the *won-tim* from either settling or cultivating a parcel of the *tim* as they wished or as the clan system allowed. The right to the use of the natural resources on such land was general and uncontrolled within the limits of the village and the neighbouring villages.

In sum, the picture of the pre-colonial Lango land tenure system indicate that control of land seem to have been a mixture of clan ownership with village (*wang-*

tic) and family controls; with each level of ownership providing absolute rights for the male individual's unrestricted access to the use of land and a well systematised and institutionalised methods of land allocation, access, use, inheritance, and land conflict resolution. Meanwhile, the only aspect of the tenure which could be said to be "individual" remained the idea of "tim."

3.1.3 Socio-Political Organization

In considering the social and political structure/organization of the nineteenth-century Lango it is recognized that the role of the clan (*atekere*) leadership was paramount. The Lango socio-political system during the pre-colonial era can best be described as egalitarian. There was no aristocratic-commoner distinction among clans in Lango. Combining hereditary and democratic succession, clan members elected their clan-head (*adwang atekere*) from the sons of the deceased leader. In the absence of a centralized political institution the village and clan were the two most important groups for the individual. The village of up to a hundred households being primarily an economic and defense unit; and the clan, while considerably larger than the village, still relatively a small group.

In qualitative terms, clan leadership was given little or no symbolic expression and it carried with it no control over economic resources, whether produced by the clan itself or brought-in from outside through trade and warfare. Control over land and responsibility for communal rituals which in other African societies have often been the foundation of chiefly power, were in Lango both exercised by broadly-recruited land elders, rather than individuals. The clan leaders' role was limited to command in battle and the settlement of disputes. Gertzel points out that the Lango pre-colonial socio-political system was characterised by two features: "its small scale and the importance of individual leadership" (Gertzel, C., 1974). Land was communally owned by the clan, which also regulated inheritance of cattle and personal property. Clans or clan groupings were dispersed and its is even doubtful whether clan institution was politically important in the pre-colonial period. More significant were the ritual groupings (*etogo*) which linked different clans together for ritual and social purpose, and which appear to have been territorial.

However, by the beginning of the twentieth century, it is clear that there was a process towards social differentiation and class formation. For example Tosh

records that in 1902, Odongo Aja, the clan leader (rwot) in Kamdini attacked the clans in Ibuje, and those in Iceme, subduing the clan leaders there, plundering the village and looting a sizable proportion of cattle booty and human captives. At his own village in Kamdini, Odongo maintained about six warriors called *Ogwo* (*rwots guards*'), which was indeed a process towards the establishment of a standing army, and therefore, state formation. The guards guarded Odongo's compound and accompanied him on campaigns (Gertzel, C. 1974: 40-43; Southall, A.W., 1968). It would seem, therefore, that the clans headed by Odongo Aja was in transition towards a state formation that is, in transition toward a class-based social formation just as British colonialism was stepping in.

The reason for the delay in state formation in Lango society prior to the twentieth century in spite of the rampant inter-tribal and clan wars in Lango draws explanation from the facts that previously leadership was based on the clan institution or kinship which was not territorial. Such leadership was only symbolic, justified by nominal control over land, and success in war. Neither did the clan leaders have a standing army - an armed power standing above and separate from a disarmed people. The whole clan constituted the army only assemble at times of raid expeditions. This loose arrangement, therefore, denied the clan leaders any means of accumulation of wealth and made it difficult for them to subordinate the clan, kinship relations and ideology. All these made the realization of a centralized political system, characterised by the division of society held in check by a state power, before the beginning of the twentieth century difficult.

Forms of Pre-Colonial Peasant Co-operation and Communal

Co-operatives

Thus, from birth through marriage until death, lineage and clan loomed large in the daily life of the individual Lango, but they did not serve all his requirements. As a sedentary farmer he was a member of other groups, which were defined territorially rather than on kinship principles. The composition of these groups depended in the first instance on the requirements of co-operative labour. A millet-based agriculture requires much more labour. Millet in particular requires heavy labour every year for clearing the ground, weeding, and harvesting. In Lango, therefore, both men and women were regularly employed in the fields.

The system of subsistence agriculture practiced in Lango - then as now - could only work satisfactorily if labour resources were pooled. Seed agriculture based on finger millet involves seasonal peak demands on labour for sowing, weeding, and harvesting. Moreover, the annual cycle of only two seasons means that there is great pressure to cultivate the largest possible area in order to supply food all the year round. As McMaster put it: "Northern Uganda faces the problem of concentrating agricultural activity to meet the requirements of the convergence of the rainfall regime towards a single peak." (McMaster, D.N.A. 1962: 57-8)

The response of the Langi to these objective conditions was to arrange for the heavier tasks to be performed by work-group or communal co-operative labour teams which attended each member's plot in turn, thus ensuring that at crucial points in the year, labour resources were used to the best advantage. This co-operative principle did not extend to land tenure or consumption, but in the labour context it was, and still is, integral to Lango agricultural production system (Jorgensen, J.J., 1981; Crom Helm: 99-101 and Tarantino, A., 1949).

At the most rudimentary level, co-operative labour teams comprising a handful of households carried out the less exacting parts of the farming routine such as weeding. These groups, were then called *alea* (turns). These were very informal and membership included both men and women of two to four households. The core of the system, however was the *Wang tic*⁶. This comprised of a much larger number of households with a fixed membership and a territorial identity. The *Wang tic* was concerned with the heaviest agricultural tasks, above all with clearing the ground before sowing. The basis of the group was reciprocity of labour, but the man whose land was being worked was also expected to provide beer for his fellows at the end of the day. All married men and fully grown male youths took part as a matter of course, failure to do so being tantamount to opting out of the community. The *Wang tic* organised not only labour but also land-use since land was of little value without access to labour which was conferred by membership of the *Wang tic* communal co-operative labour. The elders of the *Wang tic* were the people who approved the marking-out of new fields and allocated abandoned land. *Wang tic* had a leader called *Adwong Wang Tic*.

The size of the *Wang tic* communal co-operative labour is not easy to determine. Nowadays it varies from location to location from 60 to 120 households, 80 being regarded as the ideal number of active members.⁷ But these figures cannot be

assumed to be valid for the 19th Century since patterns of land use and population settlement have changed so much in the last 70 years. For the same reason; elders have difficulty in giving detailed description of the physical lay-out of settlements before colonial era. The figures we obtained during field work suggest that the *Wang tic* is larger today than it used to be. Driberg writing of the period 1912-1918 regarded 20 as the maximum number of participants, (Driberg, J.H., 1923: 102) Jorgensen puts it between 20-40 participants (Jorgensen, J.J. 1981: 100).

Estimating the size of the *Wang tic* membership would have been easier if it had been consistently reflected in residential patterns. But during pre-colonial Lango this was by no means the case. The *Wang tic* was not the same as the Village (paco). Sometimes the two did coincide exactly, but in fact the size and situation of the village were determined by factors other than labour. The village was by definition a concentration of households. Villages were sometimes built according to a linear or circular design, but it is unlikely that they had ever followed a set pattern. There is no doubt, though, that the Langi found it necessary to live in compact residential groups (Driberg, J.H., 1923: 103). This pattern of settlement had little to do with the communal co-operative labour system.

During the last 70 years the compact village has vanished from the landscape. Its components being dispersed as scattered households, and yet the communal co-operative labour system is as strong as ever. Provided the exact composition or membership of the co-operative labour team is recognized, there is after all no reason why its members should all live in one place rather than on their respective holdings. The reason for the village then was not economic so much as especially at night, and greater protection for cattle which were kept in a single village kraal.

Oral accounts are explicit that some villages contained more than one *Wang tic*, while others had to combine in order to muster enough men for a *Wang tic*. All individuals were members of both a *Wang tic* and village at the same time, and in some instances these two were identical; but in origin and function they were different, the first being an economic and the second a strategic arrangement. Once law and order had been established in Lango by the protectorate government, the village ceased to have any purpose, and the dispersed *Wang tic* became the basic unit of territorial organization.

Communal Co-operatives

In the grain areas communal work was resorted to mainly in such labour intensive stages of cultivation as clearing, weeding, harvesting and threshing as well as in some other non-agricultural activities. Much of the work was undertaken on the basis of reciprocity. Members of households worked successively on each others' fields, receiving local beer (millet brew) for compensation. This means that labouring was in gangs, each in his turn providing the rest with beer. Members would not work unless beer was to be provided at the end of work. This seems to have been practically universal. In any case all households then could afford to provide the beer. It would seem that prior to late pre-colonial days recruitment for communal labour was based on kinship or neighbourhood or in combination with each other. Work was done together by all members of the co-operative, meaning all men and women of working age.

The reciprocity involved in *Wang tic* co-operative labour was in fact more complex than we have presented here. This is because, although at first glance it does appear that labour services were being exchanged for beer, what in fact was being exchanged here was labour for labour. This was in two senses: first living (manual) labour in one man's garden for the same in another man's garden; secondly living labour in agricultural production for labour embodied in beer. In the latter sense, the role of women became crucial. Brewing of beer is hard work, undertaken by women. They had to prepare great amounts of millet flour, fetch water to mix the flour with, prepare the mixture for fermentation, prepare the yeast, fry the mould and brew it in vessels. The obvious implication from this is that the greatest amounts of labour were (as today) allocated to those households which frequently brewed and offered the greatest amounts of beer. What this meant in practical terms is that the bigger the household labour was (in terms of wife's or wives' and daughters' labour for beer brewing) the more surplus that household was likely realise, all factors, especially weather, remaining constant. The head of such a household thus commanded a relatively bigger surplus which he might have used to enhance both his social status among the wider community as well as his economic power. We shall examine this process a little bit more closely later, as it appears to have been at the centre in the process of social differentiation (due to accumulation) and thus leading to the rise of the divide between poor and 'better-of' households.

3.2 Colonial Era: Capital Penetration and Colonial Agricultural Production:

Colonial conquest was a necessary outcome of capitalism. Capitalism is inherently expansionary and the contradictions of capitalist accumulation will always tend to transport capitalism to economically backward nations (Lenin, I., 1967). British industrial capitalism was already in crisis in the 1870s. Prices, profits and trade fell drastically due to depression. Unemployment increased and Britain faced intense competition and protectionism from the newly emerging European capitalist states such as France and Germany. To resolve these contradictions and ensure its further expanded reproduction British industrial capitalism begun a new and aggressive search for untapped markets and sources of industrial raw materials. Fredrick Lugard in his address to an audience of the Royal Colonial Institute in 1895 underscored the mandate of European countries to find new markets in order for their survival:

Settlers driven to seek their fortunes in new colonies, by motives such as these do not embark for Africa with the primary objective of benefiting the natives, but themselves. In our case (Britain) the hostile tariff imposed by other nations upon our industries, the competition of foreign made goods, and the depression of trade, have driven us to seek new markets and new fields for our surplus energy (F.D. Lugard, quoted in Galbraith, John S., 1972).

Prior to the Great Depression, Britain and other European commercial interests had carved out their spheres of geographical influence through treaties of protection. The renewed competition between European capitalist powers necessitated the establishment of formal colonial control over peasant production in order to protect the market, extend cheap bulk transport and consolidate profitable trading networks. In particular, the periodic irregularities in the supply of raw cotton from the United States of America plunged the British cotton textile industry into successive economic crisis. The prospect of turning Uganda into an alternative source of raw cotton made Lugards' demand for the establishment of British rule in Uganda even more urgent.

The first contact which Uganda had with the British colonial power was through the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) which in 1887 were granted a royal charter by the British Government to administer or open East Africa to legitimate commerce to replace the allegedly widespread slave trade (Galbraith

J.S. 1972: 12-20; Woolf, Leonard, 1920). The IBEA's attempt at private colonialism ended in bankruptcy. In 1894 its charter was revoked and British protectorate declared over Uganda (Donald Anthony Low, 1954). Once introduced, colonial rule marked both the unification and incorporation of Uganda into the World capitalist system.

The development of the colonial economy in Uganda had many dimensions. At one level it was a struggle over ownership and control of the means of production. At another level it signified a transformation in the economic, social and political structures, a shift in the orientation of the economy, and of changes in what was produced, how and for whom. It also marked changes in the forms of appropriation and in the social relations of production. However, the capitalist development that took place in Uganda was partial and uneven. In so far as generalized commodity production and/or generalized wage labour were incompletely established, the coercive force of markets remained weak. Consequently pre-capitalist forms of production could not be fully destroyed. It must be emphasized that two processes of integration evolved during the colonial period and, in both cases, the agency of change was the colonial state; and both express the reality of imperialist domination over agriculture.

First and foremost is the divorce of domestic agriculture from domestic industry through the creation of an export-dependent agriculture and an import-dependent industry in the colonial period; and contraposed to this export-oriented production in agriculture at the local level, there also evolved an industrial sector which, though producing for the local market, did so through an exclusive dependence on imported technology, raw materials, component parts, technical skills and finance (Mamdani, M., 1976; Croom Helm; Nabudere, D.W., 1980; Campbell, H., 1974). The pivot of this imperialist-dominated economy, because it was the real connecting link through which relations between industry and agriculture were mediated, was import-export trade. While its overall direction is export-oriented, domestic agriculture reflects a variety of processes at the local level (Mamdani, 1976: 138-146). Three different such processes, each representing a different form of regional integration into the colonial economy can be discerned.

In the regions of the south, for example, the form of integration into the colonial economy took the form of cheap raw material production. In these regions, peasant households produced industrial raw materials like cotton or coffee or

staples like banana or millet as exchange values alongside food as use values. Since food for the household is domestically produced, the impetus behind commodity production was the need for cash to pay tax, to purchase a few manufactured necessities such as salt, soap, paraffin, medicine, sugar, cloth, etc. and, over the long run, to replenish a minimum stock of labour implements. The division of labour internal to the family was also adjusted to realise this two-fold production plan: for commodity production alongside food production.

Outside the regions of the South, two forms of integration can be identified: cheap labour production and cheap cattle production. In the case of the former, instead of producing raw materials, the family produces labour-power as a commodity. Here, commodity production was discouraged, and male members of the household were sent to work in the pockets of capitalist large farm production (plantations, processing industries, etc.) in the cash crop areas of the South; while the rest of the family remained on the land to carry out subsistence production. Migrant labour is the response to the need for cash, generated by the same circumstances as those behind commodity production. Here, too, a two-fold production plan developed, requiring a division of family labour between commodity and food production. The difference is that in this case the two production processes are separated in space: the worker migrates to a distant location while the rest of the family continues to reside in the village and produce food for domestic consumption (Mamdani, 1984a).

Those regions integrated into the colonial economy as cheap cattle production were originally areas where shifting pastoral practices took place. These areas were subjected to a double pressure: on the one hand, forcible land alienation; on the other, forcible commoditisation of cattle. Here, a single production plan continued, for cattle functioned both as commodities and as sources of family consumption (Mamdani, 1984a).

What is clear then is that just as petty commodity production supplied cheap raw material to the capitalist mode internationally, the communal form/mode provided cheap labour to the capitalism at the national level. In all cases the form of integration were dependent on the peasant family meeting its own food requirements, and therefore, the bulk of its own cost of reproduction of cheap labour, whether appropriated directly (as wage labour) or indirectly (as the products of labour) (Mamdani, 1984a).

The point that peasant labour is cheap labour was undoubtedly understood by some of the colonising bourgeoisies in Africa. For instance, the preference for peasant commodity production was categorically stated by Governor Clifford in his response to Lord Leverlume's request for land to establish oil palm plantations in Southern Nigeria:

As further agricultural industries in tropical countries which are mainly, or exclusively in the hands of the native industry (a) Have a firmer root than similar enterprises when owned and managed by Europeans, because they are natural growth, not artificial creations, and are self-supporting, as regards labour, while European plantations can only be maintained by some form of compulsory labour; (b) Are incomparably the cheapest instruments for the production of agricultural produce on a large scale that have yet been devised; and (c) Are capable of rapidity of expansion and a progressive increase of output that beggar every record of the past For these reasons I am very strongly opposed to any encouragement being given ... to projects for creation of European owned and managed plantations to replace or even supplement, agricultural industries which are already in existence, or which are capable of being developed by peasants (Governor Clifford, cited in Forest, Tom, 1981; Heyer, J., Roberts, P. and G. Williams, 1981 (eds.)).

It can be emphasized that, in fact, part of the reason peasant producers are "the cheapest instruments" yet devised for the large-scale production of agricultural produce is precisely because they are "self-supporting as regards labour." (Mamdani M., 1985).

However, given the policy position of the colonial state, it is undoubtedly clear that colonial state policy on agriculture was directed at facilitating the growth of export production based on peasant agriculture. This was followed by the development of infrastructural facilities such as roads and railway system which connected major areas of export crop peasant commodity production as the basis of accumulation by foreign capital was established and generalised in all British colonial Africa.

For that matter, therefore, the historical and social context of Lango wherein lies the villages of Alenga and Otwon which we studied ought to be understood first as the history of a labour reserve. For Lango was incorporated into the colonial political economy as a labour reserve, and only slowly turned into a commodity producing area after 1920s. Otherwise between the years 1894, when the British

declared a protectorate over Uganda, to 1920, Lango functioned as a labour reserve.⁸

In addition to the broad processes of the integration of Uganda's economy into World capitalist system, and the creation of structures for the imperialist domination of domestic agriculture at the local level that we have seen above, the colonial state also created entire classes. It undermined the political autonomy and material base of the pre-colonial leaders in the society; just as it undermined the indigenous traders whose activities were located in internal trade. This was achieved by the subordination of the African to the Indian trader which was an objective subordination of internal to external or export trade.

With intensification of commodity production came the gradual disintegration of the pre-capitalist mode of production which was characterised by subsistence agriculture, communal ownership of land and utilization of communal labour in production. And because it gave emphasis to cash crop production colonial capitalism transformed the conditions of the forms of peasant production that it found pertaining in Lango. For to achieve the reality of imperialist domination over agriculture, the colonial state systematically put in place measures calculated to reorient the economy toward cash crop production for external markets. The first was colonial taxation (Owalo) policy. Taxation was systematized, fixed and monetized. Lord Hindlip upon visiting British East Africa in 1905 reported on tax payment saying:

The payments are made by means of sheep, goats, ivory, grain, labour and cash. I am strongly inclined to say that the payment in kind (such as grain, sheep, goats, tobacco, cotton, etc.) should be discouraged forthwith for the following reasons: One of the most important questions to be considered is that of labour, without a sufficiency of which no development can take place. And if much encouragement is given to the natives to pay their taxes in grain, etc., the supply of labour will visibly decrease. I am convinced that as far as possible taxes should be paid entirely in labour or in cash. A demand for cash should be created among the natives, who would then have to obtain coin (cash) in order to pay their taxes. Thus, the agricultural natives would be induced to work, and the pastoral natives both to work and trade; the former, it is only too true by this means would be encouraged to grow produce for sale (Lord Hindlip, 1905; T. Fisher Unwin: 66-67).

In practical terms the monetization of taxes meant wage labour and great cash crop production at the expense of food crops. Indeed the monetization of taxes did end the grain levies which used to be paid by peasants in the past. This grain was normally stored in granaries for distribution during famine periods (Nyangabyaki-Bazara, 1984). The (millet) famine reserve granaries (Ogini) for Lango were located at Chawente, in present day Kwania county (Tarantino, A., 1949).

The Colonial state also regulated the process of cash-crop production through bye-laws, extension schemes, agricultural input programmes and quality control legislation which tied rural producers to specific forms of agricultural production. However, the peasants themselves were sometimes not passive to the activities of the colonial state. In many areas of Lango cotton cultivation was resisted by peasants as it interfered with their labour time for food crop production (Okai M., 1966). This made the colonial state utilize traditional rulers, intensive propaganda and extra-economic coercion to ensure their compliance.

The Colonial Government and merchant firms also intervened in agricultural production through the free distribution of new and improved crop seedlings, the introduction of extension work, labour policy, the establishment of experimental stations and farm schools and the promotion of mixed farming schemes.

In line with the policy of encouraging mixed farming (so-called modern agriculture) the Colonial Government introduced ox-ploughs. The peasants, especially in Teso and Lango were encouraged to purchase ploughs imported from Britain to be pulled by the bullocks to expand the farmers' capacity for ploughing and planting larger areas of land. The programme never attained its objective of integrating animal and crop husbandry, although it led to the expansion of cultivated land and cotton production output levels in Teso.⁹

Initially the cultivation of cotton in Lango spread slowly. By 1913-14 the output had only reached 1,420 tons of seed-cotton (Wrigley, 1959: 19-20). We shall return to the colonial impress on agricultural production in Lango later. Let us now turn to the question of peasant co-operatives under colonial administration.

3.2.1 The Process of Capitalist Penetration and Peasant Co-operative Organizations

The methods through which capitalist penetration was effected are well known: forced labour, taxation, introduction of cash crops as well as of manufactured goods - in other words, the creation of a cash economy (Cohen, R., 1976; Gutkind, P.C.W. and I. Wallerstein (eds.), 1976); Bernstein, H., 1979). The nature of participation determined whether the Africans were being proletarianised or were being transformed into a peasantry. The question of the proletarianisation or the peasantisation of the peasantry vis-a-vis capitalism has been widely debated by Marxist Scholars and substantial literature generated on it. Among the classical Marxists,¹⁰ it was expected that within a relatively short span of time the peasantry would be eradicated by expanding capitalism, and a process of social differentiation would split the peasantry into a class of capitalist farmers and a rural proletariat.

However, historical evidence has proved that such a unidirectional process has not occurred. Particularly, it is generally recognized that in Africa, capitalism has not been able to fully transform African societies into capitalist societies similar to those in Western capitalist countries. Consequently, classical Marxist theories have been subjected to criticism, mainly based on the concept that although the peasantry was an integral part of capitalism, it has nevertheless been able to resist direct capitalist penetration due to certain characteristics like the self-exploitation of the peasantry.¹¹

In this context, similar and substantial literature on the African peasantry has accumulated over the last three decades. Most of the writings in this case is located in the MOP analysis and is demonstrative of those tendencies in the debate on the location of the peasantries within the underdeveloped societies, their role in development and/or underdevelopment and their internal dynamics, which attempts to explain the failure of the peasantry to disintegrate in the face of capital penetration, as was postulated by the earlier Marxists.

The MOP theories attempt to go beyond the empirical, historical study of the various processes through which peasants have been incorporated into the world economy, producing commodities, including the commodity 'Labour power,' for the market. It discusses the general characteristics behind the variety of the

relations of production and surplus appropriation from peasants, focusing on the relations between capital and peasant production. The main line of argument here is that in those colonised areas where capitalism dominated, it neither simply nor primarily destroyed the pre-capitalist modes by appropriating the producers and making labourers of them but rather restructured and conserved them in a dependent relation. While the pre-capitalist modes lost their independence, they were conserved in their forms. While pre-capitalist relations (forms) were conserved their content, the productive forces, now functioned strictly in the interest of capitalist accumulation, (Mamdani, M., 1976:138-314) thus contributing to the rate of surplus value produced within the capitalist mode.

From the foregoing discussion it means, therefore, that an analysis of the development of capitalism in the African context must necessarily involve the analysis of the (partial) preservation of the pre-capitalist forms of production (in their articulated forms) as functional to the capitalist mode of production: for it ensures a continuous supply of cheap labour and commodities to the capitalist system. Our main concern in this section therefore is to identify the nature and specific manner in which the indigenous non-state regulated (pre-capitalist) forms of peasant co-operative organization was penetrated by capital, which should concretise the fact that the interaction between capital and the pre-capitalist forms of production did not lead to the development of a fully fledged capitalist mode. Instead it led to the process of articulating the pre-capitalist forms of production with the capitalist forms. And that just as it did at the national level, at the local level this process was achieved through the colonial state.

In the surplus labour producing area of Lango located in the so-called subsistence areas of the colonial economy, two processes of articulation occurred the proletarianisation of the peasantry and communal production for use. Here, initially commodity production was actively discouraged and male members of the household were sent to work in the pockets of capitalist production (plantations, processing industries) while the rest of the family (the wife and children) remained on the land to carry out "subsistence" production. The male member was a migrant worker seasonally employed when the plantation or the processing industry needed him. He could remain at work for up to six months. For the remainder of the year he returned to his family, whose production met his cost of subsistence: his wage, the price of his labour power, being sufficient to maintain him alone for the six months, not the family for a year.

But because communal production co-existed with capitalist mode of production, labour power was paid drastically below its value; the communal form (the family) though producing for use, was subordinated to and subsidized the cost of production of the capitalist mode. Basically, therefore, the communal forms in Lango provided cheap labour to the capitalist mode at the national level, while petty commodity production supplied cheap raw materials to the capitalist mode internationally. This means that a scrutiny of its relation with the capitalist mode renders the "subsistence" character of the communal mode null and void (Mamdani, M., 1976: 142). But this particular aspect of articulation increasingly brought pre-capitalist forms under threat of erosion. The process of migrant labour, due to its male and youth character, did starve the pre-capitalist mode of able-bodied male-labour and their participation in co-operative labour in the village.

Secondly, Lango generally witnessed a progressive neglect of food production in favour of cotton production, due to the colonial state's promotion of cotton production as opposed to food crop production. The food crop production sector itself became starved of labour as a result of the domestic or family division of labour whereby cash-crop became regarded as "male-crop" while food crop was seen as "female-crop." This perhaps also explains the development around about the years, of co-operative labour which are women-based to enable them cope with the labour demand for food crop production.

In sum, the colonial state created the structures of the underdeveloped economy at both the levels of production and exchange. The very purpose of peasant's production was altered - he now produced commodities for the metropolitan market - and the system of cash taxation, backed by the coercive apparatus of the colonial state, was instrumental in generalizing this change. With colonialism, the relationship between trade and production was reversed; the very purpose of production became trade, and the demands of the metropolitan market determined what would be produced. Moreover, it also undermined the indigenous traders whose activities were located in internal trade, and thereby destroying that class which produced manufactured goods for internal exchange, the artisans. So that the most important technology of production in the agricultural economy, the hoe, previously manufactured internally was now imported from the metropole.

3.2.2 Colonialism and Peasant Co-operative Organizations

Colonialism, in Cabral's words, is "the negation of the historical process of the dominated people by means of violent usurpation of the freedom of development of the national productive forces." (Cabral, A., 1969:81) In essence, it is a "politico-economic system which stifles the productive forces in the colonised society.

The incorporation of Lango under British administration took a long time because the weak economic condition of the colonial regime then made it discourage rapid territorial expansion. The explanation for the delay was economic. The Secretary of State for the colonies repeatedly warned against imperial adventures based on non-business propositions. Commissioner Sadler was, for example, specifically instructed to avoid pushing "too quickly among tribes in the outlying districts who have little to offer at the present in the way of commerce, and who have not yet become accustomed to the white man in their midst." (Barber, J.P., 1965)

Thus, Lango was maintained as a labour reserve while its economic potential remained undetermined by the colonialist. Indeed, Major Archibald Church writing in 1911 observed that:

At the present time more and more natives are being brought from the West Nile, the Teso and Lango areas to work on the cotton, rubber, and coffee plantations in the Eastern province and Buganda within a belt extending fifty miles from the lake shore of Victoria Nyanza, as the cost of transport of crops for more than fifty miles from a port makes their production unprofitable. (DSO M.C., 1928)

Aside from this mercantile reasons, the northern people were also viewed by the colonialists "neither as potential threats to established interests nor as potential allies to share the burden of administrative expansion (Barber, op. cit.: 32). British administration was, therefore, only reluctantly established in Lango in 1907.

Thus, a new epoch was beginning. It was to be distinguished from the previous epoch by the accelerated expansion of capitalist relation of exchange and the

concomitant transformation of indigenous relations of production. As we have discussed earlier, the fundamental shifts that took place in Lango at this moment in time brought about the articulation of pre-capitalist forms of production with the capitalist forms. Increasingly the peasants came to be governed by the demands of the colonial state, itself bound up with the world capitalist economy. Taxation (owalo or followed the establishment of British control over Lango, and so did the development of an export sector to provide taxable income, and to contribute to the colonial state's, export-import trade. Cotton, introduced in 1907, was grafted onto the Lango agricultural system.

It is clear, though that the period 1920s marks the start of rapid expansion in cotton acreage. This was an outcome of increased demands for taxes, education and consumer goods. After slowly increasing to 4,872 acres in 1914, Lango cotton production rose to 16,050 acres in 1919 and 71,000 acres in 1928 (Jorgensen, op. cit.: 101). The organization of household commodity production was such that cotton production became mandatory, and specific by-laws were enacted to ensure that every peasant (taxpayer) produced at least an acre of cotton. By late 1950s cotton production in the Lango cotton zone had reached an average output of 5,500 metric tons of cotton lint, 13% higher than in 1937-8 (Uganda Protectorate, 1939). And with the systematic construction of a cob-web like network of roads throughout Lango, through the Public Works Programme, the colonial state created the basic infrastructure it needed to enhance cotton production and marketing.

However, through the Produce Marketing and Cotton Zoning Ordinances and similar legislations the colonial state guaranteed the Indian merchants a free hand in cotton trade. For instance, under the Cotton Rules of 1910 (Uganda Gazette, 1910:182 and the Cotton Act of 1908, No. 5) issued under the Cotton Act of 1908 itinerant cotton buyers were forbidden from buying cotton from growers unless they were licensed. Cotton buying was limited to Government approved Markets. Under the 1918 Cotton Rules (Uganda Gazette, 1918, No. 594: 72) the purchasing of raw cotton and the keeping of any factory for purposes of processing cotton were forbidden, unless by a license issued by the District Commissioner who could, at his own discretion, refuse to issue such a license, or revoke any such license already issued. In 1932 the colonial state issued the Native Produce Marketing Ordinance (1932) under which only a limited number of buyers were to be licensed to purchase crops in the country. The cotton Zone Ordinance of 1933

abolished competitive buying in the cotton industry. It divided the country into 14 different Cotton Buying Zones (Kuiper, FES.: 80, quoted in Okereke, 1968). Both the Cotton Zoning Ordinance and the Produce Marketing Ordinance did consolidate a rigid framework into which it was virtually impossible for small scale African entrepreneurs to penetrate (Ehrlich, C., 1957; Ehrlich, C. 1963). In the cotton industry, processing was controlled by European and Asian businessmen who formed seed Cotton. Buying Associations in order to protect their trade (Ehrlich, C., 1958). The Africans were, however, becoming restive and opposed to these restrictive tendencies. The second world war prevented the immediate implementation of the recommendations by Mr. Steil.

3.2.3 The Emergence and Development of State-Regulated Co-operatives

Meanwhile as far back as 1934, the idea of co-operative development had engaged the development of the Uganda Administration. A draft Bill on Co-operative Societies had been drawn up in 1935 and revised in 1937 but was strongly opposed by the cotton merchants on the grounds that co-operative legislation was yet inopportune in the country and was therefore dropped pending an investigation of the whole situation. The immigrant community (Indian Cotton Merchants) argued that the formation of a co-operative movement would be as "grave risk"; that the proposed societies would involve the Government in indirect participation in commerce; that the societies might grow in size and become politically powerful and hence a source of embarrassment to the Administration; that the societies might indulge in unfair competition with established business (Engholm, G.F., 1967). Further grounds for dropping the Bill were that the Africans lacked entrepreneurial ability and that co-operative activities would bring too much money into African hands and that would cause inflation in the country.

In the years that followed, a more favourable attitude towards co-operatives developed as a result of official report and recommendations by Mr. J.W. Steil who, in 1938 carried out an investigation on the introduction and regulation of the co-operative movement in the country (Okereke O., op. cit.: 70). His report showed that there had been a number of societies of semi-co-operative nature in existence but that their operations left much to be desired (Okereke O., op. cit.: 71). The report stressed that co-operative development must precede by co-operative education.

After 1946 though, when the colonial state passed the Co-operative Societies Ordinance arising out of the discontent with the Asian-controlled monopoly buying system, which both exploited the peasant producer by legal means and cheated him through corrupt or illegal methods, the co-operative movement began to swell in membership and number of marketing societies (see table 1).

Table 1: Uganda: The Growth of the Co-operative Movement 1951-78

| Year | Primary societies | Total No Members | Union | Total tonnage handled |
|-------|-------------------|------------------|-------|-----------------------|
| 1951 | 401 | 36,620 | 5 | 14,300 |
| 1952 | 574 | 54,968 | 10 | 23,675 |
| 1953 | 799 | 71,458 | 12 | 24,268 |
| 1954 | 1,025 | 94,315 | 11 | 31,948 |
| 1955 | 1,099 | 114,047 | 11 | 37,623 |
| 1956 | 1,256 | 126,962 | 12 | 36,176 |
| 1957 | 1,408 | 135,014 | 15 | 47,453 |
| 1958 | 1,534 | 147,421 | 15 | 58,012 |
| 1959 | 1,583 | 187,860 | 15 | 80,630 |
| 1960 | 1,622 | 211,214 | 16 | 89,308 |
| 1961 | 1,622 | 252,378 | 21 | N/A |
| | ... | ... | .. | .. |
| 1965 | 1,825 | 450,590 | 34 | N/A |
| | ... | .. | .. | .. |
| 1970 | 2,239 | 646,625 | 36 | N/A |
| 1971 | 2,500 | 750,000 | 36 | N/A |
| ... | ... | ... | .. | .. |
| 1978 | 3,054 | 1,100,00 | 41 | N/A |

Source: UP, Commission of Inquiry into Cotton - Ginning Industry 1962, Appendix 8, p.80; Annual Coop. Departmental Reports for various years.

Now the historical development of the state-regulated co-operatives can, however, be structured into four phases: (1) the Early Co-operative phase, 1913-1946; (2) Dynamic Growth 1946-1970; (3) a Period of Decline 1970-1979 and, (4) the Recovery phase, beginning 1980.

The first sign of any co-operative activity, approximating the Rochadelian co-operative principles, in Uganda dates from 1913. The first co-operative society

formed was by farmers in Kiboga, gomobolola Sabawali, Singo County in Mubende district and was known as The Kinakulya Growers Co-operative Society. However, despite the early existence of the society, it operated unofficially until 1941 when the Colonial State finally allowed its registration under the Business Names Ordinance of 1923 (Kyamulesire, A.R., 1988).

But the rise of the Co-operative Movement in Uganda between the years 1913-1946 can best be understood within the background of the struggle by Africans against Indian merchant capitalists' monopoly of cotton marketing. The struggle was led by the militant nationalists who drew their strength from the peasants and workers who were organized into co-operatives and trade Unions. Besides claiming the right to organise, they also demanded higher prices for cotton and coffee, co-operatives to market these crops and higher wages for workers. Essentially they made anti-monopoly demands. Their methods of struggle involved organizing mass demonstrations, strikes and boycotts.

As a response to the growing political power of the peasant cultivators led by the militant nationalist,¹² the colonial state in 1946, passed the Co-operative Societies Act (1946) which allowed for the registration of co-operative societies, and the entry of the Africans into cotton ginning.¹³ However, it must be noted that in passing the ordinance, the colonial state merely used the law to divide and tame the co-operative movement.

The Co-operative Ordinance of 1946 introduced a series of regulations and controls and British 'advisors' were installed in each co-operative. Apart from managing co-operative accounts, they were to groom a new leadership which the colonial state considered 'responsible'. The so-called responsible leadership came to manage the co-operatives as if they were profit-making businesses and not mass organization of peasants. The period 1946 thus marks the beginning of the hijacking of the autonomous peasant organization by the Colonial State and the establishment of state control over it. From then on, a Co-operative Union bureaucracy began to develop in Uganda. Consequently, the co-operative movement gradually underwent a change in its content. In name co-operatives were presented as peasants' organizations, but in reality, their control was in the hands of a middle-class bureaucracy. Thus, just as it did with the Trade Unions, by depoliticizing the mass organization of the peasants (the co-operatives), the

colonial state cut the link between militant nationalism and the working people (Mamdani, M., 1983).

The point here is that while prior to the second phase in the development of the co-operative movement in Uganda, the chiefs and Kings were sufficient to ensure colonial law and order, the situation after 1946 was quite different. The mass of the working people had awoken and a militant tendency was beginning to surface in the petty-bourgeoisie ranks. On its part, the colonial state in an abid to save its skin began in harness to look for new allies which it found in the petty-bourgeoisie (Mamdani, M., 1983).

This shift when it was translated into reality resulted into a comprehensive economic and political reform of the colonial economy. Economic reforms were designed to expand the ranks of the upper petty bourgeoisie, and consolidate their tendency to compromise. Cotton ginnereis (and coffee factories) were bought by Government from Asian and British comprador companies and transferred to the newly depoliticised co-operatives. Political reforms were designed to incorporate the upper petty bourgeoisie into the colonial political system, hence the Local Government reform of 1949 and 1955 which allowed elected members to the district councils. This new stratum was to replace the chiefs as the main pillar of the colonial system.

Although they had been subject to strict managerial and financial supervision under the Co-operative Societies Act of 1946, the organizational base of the petty-bourgeoisie, the co-operatives, were still relatively independent of state control. This act was repealed upon independence and replaced by the Co-operative Societies Act (1963), which gave them complete financial and managerial autonomy. In 1970, having consolidated its alliance with the Asian commercial bourgeoisie and expanded state control over the economy, the bureaucratic state prepared to undermine the substantial organizational independence of the co-operatives. The 1963 act was replaced by the Co-operative Societies Act of 1970, whose purpose was "to give government greater powers for the guidance, direction and control of the Co-operative Societies and Unions generally, and on matters of finance and management of their affairs particularly, in order to make the movement a worthy vehicle of the new political culture of Uganda (Hansard: 198-201, quoted in Mamdani, M., 1976, op. cit.: 277-278).

In this context, the state appropriated to itself control over all expenditures, borrowing, or investment, while giving itself the power to propose and enforce measures on the co-operatives. Such was the final nail that sealed state control and regulation of co-operatives.

The years 1971-79 marked a bleak phase in the history of the development of the Co-operative Movement. With a declining cotton production the Cotton Unions incurred losses. The Amin regime intervened not by revising cotton prices, but it promulgated a decree breaking the co-operative monopoly and throwing open cotton buying and ginning to private traders. The profit margin of 50 cents allowed on each kilogram attracted no entrants and the co-operatives continued to monopolize the ginning process (Kyamulesire, A.R. 1988: 31).

To try and improve the situation, the regime launched a double Crop Production campaign in the 1970s with a view to increase cotton production each year. In spite of the intensive campaigns, no satisfactory results were achieved. Instead production continued to decline. The low official prices paid to farmers and malignant inflation made the decline irreversible. Cotton production fell from 466,775 bales in 1970 its peak year to 32,160 bales in 1980. Production has continued to fall and rise since then. Member participation in the movement was lowest (Kyamulesire, A.R.1988: 31).

In the current phase of recovery, the movement through UCA has obtained support from the Swedish Co-operative centre. With this support UCA has embarked on the rehabilitation of Co-operative Societies and Unions, and ginneries. It has also mounted a management improvement programme which is aimed at improving the efficiency of the business administration of agricultural marketing Co-operative Societies and Unions (UCA Ltd., Co-operative Development Programmes (Revised, May 1990).

In sum, the rise of the Co-operative Movement in Uganda in general must be understood in political as well as economic terms. In the years immediately following the war, economic and political grievances were not clearly distinguishable. The co-operative movement found that most economic issues which the movement agitated had political overtones. The economic dominance of the Asians and their exploitation provided the starting point. So that the co-

operative movement became a forum for airing political grievances as well. For a sure way of contact with the countryside was through the co-operative.

In Lango which by 1952 had become a major cotton growing district in Uganda the grievances which characterised the cotton production industry did find a lively ground for its further propagation. And this coincided with the founding of the UNC Lango branch in 1952.¹⁴ The support of UNC in the district very much depended on the grievances of the peasant producers, particularly against malpractices by the Indian cotton buyers. So that the leading personalities in the Co-operative Movement were also the leading personalities in the leadership of UNC in the district.¹⁵

In conclusion the above discussion shows clearly that the establishment of colonial rule and the introduction of cotton (commodity) production in Lango at the start of the twentieth century intensified capitalist commodity production in rural areas lead to the contradiction between peasant producers and merchant capital. This development particularly had a wider import and implication for the organization of agricultural production based on co-operative labour. To this we now turn.

3.2.4 Colonialism and Re-organization of Communal Co-operatives

We have stated already that pre-colonial Lango society was basically egalitarian and stateless. A broad assessment of the social formation indicates that the society was only in transition to state formation at the time of colonisation. Here we argue that the net effect of colonial rule were to further stamp the society with a class character. Nothing that happened in this period served to homogenise Lango productive units. Rather, the process of social differential were enhanced as result of capital penetration of the society. The first thing to note, therefore, is the way the political domination of colonial rule restructured the loose political institution it found on the ground, to suit its demands, while at the same time undermining the pre-capitalist forms of production.

To grasp what took place at the local level in Lango under colonial rule, our starting point necessarily has to begin with the examination of the nature and character of the colonial state and, more particularly, the class interests served by it. Alavi and Saul have argued that by and large the colonial state sought to