TRADE UNION ORGANISATION IN UGANDA

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A STUDY OF THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION
OF TRADE UNIONS //

BY



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This Research Project is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

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This Research Project has been submitted for Examination with my approval as a University Supervisor.

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ABSTRACT

No matter what the economic system in a country or the ideological nature of the government in power, wherever there are men and women working for others, or wherever there are men and women employed by others, there is need for the organisation of Trade Unions. The organisation of Trade Unions is a natural and necessary activity for all persons who work for another whether the employer be a man, woman, company or government. It is my unshakable conviction that trade unions are an indispensable element of any democratic society. Further, the trade union as a combination of workers engaged in the same enterprise, craft or industry is a positive expression of the real fact that no man can stand alone. From the very moment of birth every man is dependent in one way or another on other human beings for food, guidance, and amenities of life. For sure to come up with this paper I have on many occasions sought advice from my supervisor, (Mr. Chege Mbugua). Indeed one can say no man ever really stands alone - no man can live in a social vacuum. This is particularly true of the workers when employed by a man or company with large financial and social resources, or by a government. Certainly it is obvious that if one worker protests against his wages or working conditions and tries to deal with the employer as an individual, his choice is either to accept the conditions as laid down by the employer - or leave the workshop and seek work elsewhere.

CHAPTER I

The labour movement has lacked attention from the country's scholars (academicians). The labour (working class), plays an important role in the political, social and economic development of any country in the world. Trade unions are continuing and permanent democratic institutional organisations voluntarily created or, by, and for the workers to protect them at their work, to improve the conditions of their work through collective bargaining procedures, to seek to better the conditions of their lives, to secure their natural rights, and to provide an effective means of expression for the workers views on the problems of the society and politics.

A: STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

The first study on the trade union movement in Uganda was done by Roger Scott³. The study gives an insight into the historical development of the trade unions during the pre-independence days. Scott stresses leadership as one of the major problems. However, Scott did not look into this problem at greater length. He actually looked at it from a historical point of view. For example he did not interview the union leaders at that time to find out the actual root cause of this problem; and possibly recommend a remedy to this problem.

Scott, very briefly mentions the trade union organisation in Uganda. Again he looks at it from a historical point of view. He further argues that one cannot develop an organisational structure of the trade union movement in Uganda, because of the varying objectives of the individual trade unions. While this may have been the case by the time Scott was doing his study, because at the time different unions had other interests mainly political besides those of serving the needs of their members, but the social, economic and political life has changed very much since independence, there is need for a fresh look into the trade union activities. Since all the various trade unions in Uganda operate under the same environment, they must have some common characteristics, hence a common organisational structure or structures. It is my objective to develop organisational charts to show these structures.

More so as Scott has concentrated on the historical development, as he even looks at the historical development of individual trade unions, he did not actually look at the exact situation or study the exact problems facing the trade union movement. His is a general study, a study that concentrated more on the external influences than the internal influences. He argues that the Luo imigrant workers from Kenya contributed a lot to the formation of a

National Trade Union - he does not tell us why the Ugandans could not do it themselves. However, time has passed, both the economic and social structure apart from the political structure has changed since Scott did his study. The study covers the period up to 1962.

Another study that has been done on the trade union movement, this time not on Uganda alone but the whole of East Africa, is the study by Peter C.L. Ouma Nangemi¹⁹. Nangemi looks at the trade union movement in E.Africa after independence. Though again the study is a historical approach but he takes one aspect of it and that is the legal aspect. Nangemi looks at trade union legislation in the three E.African countries from the period 1962 to 1972. Nangemi does not mention how the legislations have affected the trade union organisational structure. Nothing is mentioned on the problems legislations have created. Possibly the problem here is that the study was too wide.

A third study is the government commission lest up to look into the disputes affecting the Uganda Labour Congress in 1968. Through its findings the commission concluded that bad leadership and financial mismanagement were the major problems facing the Uganda Labour Congress. This was just a commission set up to look into the affairs of one union. The government should not only have stopped there it should have also looked into other trade unions as a whole,

although one can argue that this would have been interfering in the affairs of independent organisations with no reason.

There are other studies that have been done on the trade unions in independent Africa especially Kenya and Tanzania, but all these studies are of historical nature than being investigative hence of more importance. The latest study on the trade union movement in Africa is by Anaaba in 1979²⁰. However, Anaaba himself admits that little if anything is known about the National Organisation of Trade Unions (Uganda) and its affiliates from the period 1974 up to the present day, possibly he assumes that the movement has been inactive.

This study is mainly intended to look into the problems facing trade union organisation in Uganda.

Uganda is trying to reconstruct and rehabilitate its industrial and economic sectors. In order to succeed, the labour force (workers) must play an important role. To play this role they need to be organised, and to be organised the current problems facing the labour force must be identified. For this reason the National Organisation of Trade Unions has been chosen for study. The problems facing the trade unions in this study have been covered under the following sub-headings:-

(a) Leadership and organisational structure

- (b) Union membership
- (c) Financial administration

A study of NOTU is the same as studying the trade union movement in general, since NOTU is the central organisation that is responsible for the trade union movement in Uganda and is also an arm of the government through the Registrar of Trade Unions as far as controlling trade union activities in the country is concerned.

B. IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is presumed to be of importance to the Ministry of Labour (Uganda) which showed a lot of interest in it. Also the study is of importance to the subject (i.e. NOTU) being the spokesman of Trade Unions in Uganda.

C. HOW THIS RESEARCH WAS CONDUCTED

This research was conducted by the use of questionaires. It was very difficult to have a standard questionaire, because the various objectives of the various trade unions, and also the different duties of the various officers.

As far as NOTU is concerned the following officials were interviewed:

- (a) The Chairman
- (b) The Secretary General
- (c) The Organising Secretary

Similar officials were interviewed of the following three leading national trade unions:-

- (a) The Uganda Employers' Union
- (b) The National Union of Commercial, Clerical and Technical Employees.
- (c) The Uganda Building Construction Civil
 Engineering and Allied Workers' Union.

The Registrar of Trade Unions was also interviewed.

Informal interviews were held where it was deemed

difficult to arrange for formal interviews.

D. LIMITATIONS ON THE STUDY

The following were the major limitations on the study. Their effects are mentioned elsewhere in the paper:-

- There was a limitation of time. A study of this nature would have necessitated the use of comprehensive documents, and even interviewing a cross section of trade union leaders; but all this could not be done within the time limit set by the University authorities.
- The funds available could not keep me long enough to get all that I wanted.
- 3. Since only three studies have been done on the trade union movement in Uganda, there was a limitation of lack of documented data.

HISTORICAL DEVELOMENT OF TRADE UNIONS IN UGANDA

It is actually very difficult to establish the actual conditions that sparked off the union movement. For example in the 1930's the labour force employed in industries was negligible. However the trade union movement in Uganda followed two stages³. First and foremost the labour movement served as a vehicle for political expression in the absence of any alternative. Industrial relations were neglected because of ignorance and partly because of imigrant workers. Secondly the political functions of labour unions were taken over by strong political organisations. In the early 1930 there was an economic depression that actually provided a stimulus in the unions normal field of industrial relations and external influence began to have effect.

In 1938 two strong trade unionists Kivu and

I. Musazi registered the first trade union, the Uganda

Motor Drivers' Association. This drew members from the

youth and those politically-minded taxi drivers in

Kampala. The union included both employees and

employers. The employees demanded high wages while the

employers demanded higher subsidies from the government.

The union was politically minded and it lasted for six

years. Its members were involved in the early stirings

and feelings of nationalism. "The main activities of the

association continued to be directed towards internal

political affairs especially those concerned with the

kingdom of Buganda".

In January 1944, there were strikes and violence, a widely unrealistic wage claim was used to encourage support for a general strike. However, a commission of inquiry found that the motives were political rather than economical. "Buganda was badly infested with a political virus", a phrase which gives an insight into the official attitudes towards political parties.

Members of the Motor Drivers' Association were deeply involved, Kivu and Musazi were arrested and deported to remote areas of the country and the union wound up.

Musazi was released in 1946 and he returned to union organising. In April 1946 the Transport and General Workers Union was registered. The intention was to form a comprehensive union for the workers of Uganda. Once again the taxi drivers were powerful, although the recruitment was also successful among the transport workers in Busoga. Musazi also found the Uganda Farmers' African Union as focus for opposition to the protectorate's marketing control of cotton and coffee. Both unions were purely political in aim and involved themselves in more political disturbances in 1949, again the unions were banned and the leaders rusticated. Musazi raised funds and left for Britain to put up the matter with the colonial government, but was forbidden to return.

In the meantime there was less desire to form trade unions, most families produced enough for family

subsistence and a surplus for sale. From 1938 onwards - was a war period with shortages; the two cash crops begun to fetch higher prices and following the end of the war, there was a boom. There was no incentive to have the subsistence economy while these conditions continued. As a result urban and plantation labour was in short supply. Even the large number of imigrants from Rwanda and Burundi did not ease the situation. The employers were therefore forced to compete for the scarce labour, offering reasonable pay and good working conditions. Only the sugar plantations using direct recruitment from the western and norther borders could dictate harsh terms. Subsequently these were the areas where serious strikes occured as workers sought to improve their conditions. Consequently the majority of the workers displayed little interest in officially attempting to sponsor union organisations. An official report put it as "under the local conditions in which ties of family and locality are still dominant and still where a few African population are still to seek paid employment in order to live, it is not expected that much interest will be shown in trade unionism ... economic prosperity, plus an unspecified demand for labour, which means that a man has full choice of employment continue to serve as an insurance against unrest"b.

Up to this time the railway workers were the only union organised into a genuine trade union. With the extension of the railway a large number of workers were transferred from Kenya to Uganda. As late as up to 1956, the Railway African Staff Union was considered to be the most effective union in Uganda. The transition to the second stage of development seems to have occured during the period between 1951 and 1955. It was assisted by the liberal governor Sir Andrew Cohen. He sponsored the 1952 Trade Unions Ordinance. The aim of this ordinance was to prevent trade unions from being used politically. Efforts were made to ensure that the unions were backed by a specific body of industrial workers. All members except the secretary were to be workers of the industry concerned for at least three years; and membership of more than one organisation was illegal. There were to be annual finance returns and inspection.

There was a lot of protest over the new legislation. However, the first union to register was the Kampala Staff Union. The union consisted of mainly Europeans and Asians. It was regarded as colonial by African civil servants.

After 8 months of protest the Busoga African Motor Drivers Association was registerd. By the end of the year the Railway Asian Union and the Uganda Posts and Telegraph African Welfare were registered. Finally in

1955 the Uganda Congress was formed. There was a rash of strikes at the beginning of the year. In 1955 the rash turned into an epidermic because of the implementation of the Salaries Report. This increased wages for established officers in the civil service and also backdated the increases to January 1954. This aroused jelousies of the unestablished workers, strikes followed among dustmen, hedge cutters, sweepers, hospital attendants, laboratory technicians and council employees. Initially the workers were resisted and requested to submit their grievances through the workers committees, two thousand and three hundred public employees of the public works department went on strike against the advice of their workers committees. A special strikes committee was elected to negotiate with the director of public works. However, all were fruitless, the government maintained its stand. This dispute showed the uncertainities current in the conduct of industrial relations in 1955. There was no written procedure on how the disputes should be settled. The government interfered only when it was sure the outcome would benefit it, this is when it would appoint a third party. On the workers' side there was suspicion of the African politicians and the unions with which they were still associated.

The boom for coffee and cotton continued until the Korean War in 1953. The government stabilisation policies prevented the immediate collapse since the

farmers continued to receive stable prices. The Labour Report of 1955 records "a decline in the demand for labour but still no unemployment". The 1956 report pointed out that industrial expansion had absorbed what otherwise would have been a labour surplus and that a 14% drop in the members employed in the constructive and building industry indicated a general slackening in the economy as a result of falling world prices for agricultural products. 7 By 1957 unemployment could be traced in urban areas. For the first time Ugandans could not depend on agriculture as a sure source of income. Wage earning became vital and with labour surplus it was important to hold any available job. Trade union organisation were looked at by the workers as the only means of self protection. This in turn lead to a greater stabilisation of the labour force which made task of union organisation much easier than previously.

Economic decline in agriculture was not the only stimuli to the growth of trade unions in Uganda, the international labour organisation official cited the following as some of the factors:

- (a) constant inflow of outside international influences;
- (b) new policies concerning freedom of association as a result of political or constitutional changes;
- (c) pressure of trade union rivalries often based on political or ideological differences.

From the above, freedom of association had been granted by Cohen following the 1952 Trade Unions
Ordinance. The policy of helping trade unions was vigorously pressured in Uganda. In short all the legal and administrative hinderances had been removed.

International influences were the deportation of the Kabaka in 1953, involved more labour (British) politicians in the ensuing negotiations. This period saw also the beginning of the British Trade Unions Congres's continued interest in the Uganda Labour movement. In addition the international labour movement was becoming more active in Africa, and Uganda received many missions from many organisations. Aid and advisers followed and the process culminated in the establishment in 1958 of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), Kampala Training College for union officials from all over English speaking Africa.

The influence of the Kenya imigrants also speeded up union development. The Kenyanshad been long urbanised, and they stayed in regular employment for long periods, and using cheap transport facilities could visit their homes in short periods of annual leave.

In 1955 the late Tom Mboya visited Uganda and assisted at the birth of the Uganda Trade Unions

Congress (UTUC), a weak organisation of four trade unions. He is said to have been told "the Baganda were quite satisfied and do look at themselves as workers and there would be no possibility of organising any trade union in Uganda⁸". To some extent the statement was true for many Ugandans the trade union leadership had to come from Kenyan workers resident in Uganda. This was true especially for the industrial unions located at Jinja where a significant portion of the labour force was of Kenyan origin.

The Uganda Trade Union Congress was formed late 1956 after the visit by the Late Tom Mboya. There was a problem of who is to be the leader. The Railway African Union which had the biggest membership wanted to be the leader. The dispute was settled by an election which gave Luande the presidency of the congress. The labour department helped in organising and drafting the constitution, which emphasised the democratic rights of the unions and a wide range of objectives particularly the protection of unemployed and unorganised workers.

The interference by the labour department helped to extend its effectiveness to the workers of Jinja who had been looking at the Uganda Trade Unions Congress as a "Kampala Trade Unions Centre".

Though the Jinja Unions continued to complain of the dictatorial tendencies of the Kampala group, only a

small discontent was needed to cause trouble, this occured when Reich accepted to attend an invitation of All African Trade Unions Congress. While in Accra, the Uganda Trade Unions Congress convened a meeting at which it disassociated itself from the two delegates who went to Accra.

Upon his return, John Reich, upon passed accusations from Kampala, and at the beginning of March 1961 a splinter group was formed with Reich as the president. The group was called the Uganda Federation of Labour. Reich actually signed an end of the union when he disassociated himslef from ICFTU which questioned his sincerity. Thus the movement died a natural death, actually Reich himself accepted a job with a sugar firm as an industrial relations officer.

The Uganda Federation of Labour was heard of again in 1963 when Reich started issuing statements on its behalf, before he actually left to join the All African Trade Union in Accra, Ghana. The successor of Reich compaigned bitterly against Uganda Trade Unions Congress and the International Federation of Free Trade Unions - the compaign was more of ideological nature that a labour one - because he had just returned from a tour of Western Europe - but he received some support. The Uganda Trade Unions Congress was at this time affiliated to International Federation of Free Trade Unions which is a pro-western counterpart of

Eastern orientated World Federation of Trade
Unions. While Uganda Federation of Labour may have
felt a crippling blow by the active compaign of ICFTU,
its spirit lingered on until 1964 when it reappeared
as the Federation of Uganda Trade Unions.

Table one shows trade union growth in the number of workers.

TABLE 19

TRADE UNION GROWTH IN NUMBERS

1952 - 60

YEAR	WORKERS	TRADE UNIONISTS	UNIONS
1952	200,000	259	3
1955	224,782	783	8
1958	257,400	4,784	16
1960	257,200	26,300	47

Source: Uganda Ministry of Labour Files.

Table II shows the rapid expansion of Trade Unions and of trade union activity between 1952 and 1962, both in the number of union members and industries organised.

TABLE II

TRADE UNION GROWTH 1952 - 1961

UNION	NUMBER OF UNION MEMBERS									
ONION	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Railway Asian	97	91	97	98	60	60	60	114	114	103
Post African .	127	135	138	160	164	130	365	285	285	742
Kampala Local Govt.	35	68	78	40	60	50	, 50	150	150	102
Busoga Drivers		370	370	350	135	410	*	*	*	*
Clerical				150	43	82	49	110	110	162
Medical Assistants				157	68	290	291	201	201	148
Shoe Makers				36	52	52	50	50	50	50
Railway African				951	1500	3000	3000	4000	5000	5000
Makerere Employees					440	470	470	380	380	600
Journalists					7	7	7	7	7	+
Printing						180	250	+	+	+
Tobacco						42	470	460	460	1090
Transport and General						226	271	1200	3200	2600
Teachers Asian	9566	1481	98.57	9981	9861	ESST	227	227	+	+
Lango Teachers							400	500	500	2300
Co-operatives		MOTEO.	o otasou				1000	1100	3400	1020

Source: Uganda Ministry of Labour Files.

		NUMBER OF UNION MEMBERS								
UNION	1952	1953	1954	1955	1956	1957	1958	1959	1960	1961
Bugishu Local Govt.	1 1	3 3	0 0	3 13		1000	1 2 1	38	250	78
Lango Transport	1 2	5 4	CO SAN	8 1				180	180	180
Bukedi Local Govt.		3 8		8 3 1		10 19	1.5 8	320	320	228
Lango Local Govt.		100		. 2				220	220	tr.
Bank Employees			- 1	- 23		100	1	220	220	318
Building		9 8				E E	2 2	1100	1100	800
Cement		B 6					1 2 2		100	38:
Electricity		24				1 1 1 1 1 1 1	2 0		500	500
Hotel and Domestic		1 8				95	12 15	82.54	80	380
Plantations						2016	0 9		330	981
Breweries	2 3	9 9				J 8 1	1 1	1.3. 3.	600	1020
Busoga Local Govt.		3 5	9			9, 1	100	5 5	2206	7000
Petroleum		07 16	5. 5		5 4		2 4	18.00		620
Road Construction	2 6								2 3 3	2141
Ginery and Mills	0 8	8 8				# 8	18 8	5-5	8 2	350
Busoga Co-operatives										198
TOTAL	259	664	683	1642	2529	4784	7370	10862	20965	39862

^{*} Amalgamation into another union

who had defeated him in the 1962 election was elected president of the congress. However, Luande refused to work with Kibuka, so Luande continued alone. He did an excellent job, although he resigned in 1964 to join the Uganda Federation of Trade Unions, of which he eventually became a secretary general. Before he resigned as already said the Uganda Trade Unions Congress was already dead but its ghost started haunting the unions in form of splinter groups.

While in Accra, Reich has emerged as a FUTU president, which became affiliated to AAFTU. The All African Federation of Trade Unions gave out money to the Federation of Uganda Trade Union leaders in an effort to get it off from the ground. The Uganda Trade Unions Congress continued to prosper. It commanded more unions in the country than its rival. In 1964, twenty six unions were affiliated to the congress while six were affiliated to the federation, upto the time of the merger of the trade unions congress and the Federation of Uganda Trade Unions, after the government had appealed for unity and threatened to act on its own if the two trade unions could not come together voluntarily. The desired unity came about in November 1966 when the Uganda Trade Unions decided to transfer their affiliation for FUTU and the Uganda Trade Unions Congress respectively to a new centre under a new name the Uganda Labour Congress. The

Uganda Labour Congress took over under a new name and a new constitution.

However, the squable among the Uganda Labour Congress officials continued, and the government set up a commission 11 to look into some of the allegations which included among others:-

- (a) the breach of the constitution by the executive board; (i) in failing to convene an annual general meeting and in failing to have its books of accounts audited as required by the constitution of the congress.
- (b) the bad management of the congress by the executive board and its relationship with the trade unions indulging international organisations.
- (c) the receipt by the Executive Board and some officials of the congress of some financial aid from certain international organisations, in violation of the constitution of the congress and in breach of the resolution of the congress.
- (d) relationship between the congress and the government and
- (e) the alleged membership of the officials to the international organisations in contravention of the provisions of the congress' constitution.

The commission made its finding to the government among the things it recommended were; it called on the government to come to the rescue of the Uganda

Labour Congress by administering its official respiration - way suggested included government or presidential appointment of trade union leaders, in order to ensure that the leadership of the labour movement was acceptable to the government, and an amendment to the law to give power to the government to act as a watchdog over the international activities of any union or even of the Uganda Labour Congress, to keep in line with the overall foreign policy of the government. The government reacted by suspending the activities of the Uganda Labour Congress temporarily in 1969.

In 1970 the Uganda Parliament passed a Trade
Unions Act 12, which replaced the act of 1965. The
new law dissolved trade unions registered under the
1965 act, and created a National Trade Union on a
NUTA pattern called the Uganda Labour Congress. All
existing trade unions registered under the 1965 act
were deemed to belong to the Uganda Labour Congress
automatically. The new congress was to have fourteen
branches covering all categories of work in Uganda.
Branch and sub-branch elections were to be held in
January 1971. Unfortunately the conference was not
held because of the military coup that toupled Obote
and brought Amin to power 13. In the meantime a trade
unions steering committee was established to look into
the affairs of the trade union movement in Uganda 14.

It was not until 1974, April by decree the government decided that the workers of Uganda should establish a central trade unions body to be called the National Organisation of Trade Unions (Uganda) 15.

TABLE III

TRADE UNION GROWTH IN NUMBERS AND MEMBERSHIP

A PERIOD 1952 TO 1968 IN UGANDA 16

YEAR	NUMBER OF UNIONS REGISTERED	MEMBERSHIP		
1952	3	259		
1954	Workers 4 ton	683		
1955	8	1642		
1956	10	2529		
1957	13	4784		
1958	15	7330		
1959	21	10862		
1960	26	20965		
1961	32	39862		
1962	40	90000		
1966	27	65000		
1968	26	64920		

Source: Ministry of Labour (Uganda)

Registrar of Trade Unions Files 1952 - 1969

TABLE IV

UGANDA LABOUR CONGRESS - AFFILIATIONS 31ST MARCH, 1968

	XXX		
* A. HESTORICAL DEVELOPERS	RECEIVED	OUTSTANDING	TOTAL
Uganda Textile Workers Union	5433.40	pawer Luspende	5433.40
Breweries and Brewhouse	1728.00	nce the milities	1728.00
Uganda Meat Employers Union	313.00	_ ' '	313.00
U.E.B. Workers Union	3400.00	220.00	3620.00
Railway African Union	2900.00	1500.00	4400.00
Uganda Printing Trades Union	1850.00	1.10.00	1960.00
Uganda Petro. Oils and Chemical Workers Union	460.00	600.00	1060.00
Busoga Govt. Employees Union	1950.00	ocver-ment)a	1950.00
National Union of Co-operatives	600.00	250.00	850.00
Mines and Smelters Workers Union	4000.00	600.00	4600.00
National Union of Plantation and Agricultural Workers	10400.00	Trade Unions	10400.00
National Union of Commercial, Clerical and Technical Employees	8279.00	se of -oreign	8279.00
Uganda Building Contractors, Civil Engineers and Allied Workers Union	6000.00	nt slag Wented	6000.00
Uganda Steel Corp. Employees Union	390.00	te goliegy of	390.00
Amalgamated Transport and General Workers Union	631.00	786.60	1418.40
Cement and Allied Workers Union	1942.80	oss a -ing of	1942.80
Uganda Public Employers Union	1353.50	100.00	1453.50
Uganda Tobacco Workers Union	890.00	1800.00	2690.00
Makerere University College Employees Union	900.00	525.00	1425.00
Uganda Ginners and Mill Workers Union	360.00	ctories and	360.00
Uganda Hotel and Allied Workers Union	900.00	50.00	950.00
Kampala City Council Staff Association	20.00	ectually	20.00
Uganda Night Security Organisation			
Employees Union	20.00	District Capital	20.00
Shoe and Leather Workers Union	52.00	to yet ausper	52.00
Uganda Posts and Telegraph Workers Union	2400.00	300.00	2700.00
TOTAL	65673.70	6841.60	72515.30

Source: Ministry of Labour Files

Registrar of Trade Unions Dept. April 19

CHAPTER III

A. HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT OF NOTU

The Amin government that came to power suspended parliament and the constitution 23. Since the military government wanted support from the masses and trade union leaders, it made it clear that it would not interfere with the trade union activities, except for a few sections of the 1970 Trade Unions Act which were to be adjusted to fit in with the government's policy 24.

It should be noted that the 1970 Trade Unions Act gave more powers to the government to control trade union activities and also the flow of foreign aid to the trade unions. The government also wanted to use the trade unions to implement its policy of move to the left 25. Actually the Obote government wanted to make the Uganda Labour Congress a wing of the ruling Uganda Peoples Congress. The government wanted the workers of Uganda to control the means of production through the Uganda Labour Congress by establishing workers' committees in factories and industries instead of unions. This was actually a resemblance to NUTA in Tanzania. This actually brought resentment among the wealthy and the elite in Uganda. They viewed the move as one towards capitalism, and actually Amin capitalised on this to get support after his coup. For this reason he suspended the 1970 Trade Unions Act until it was revised.

It was also the feeling of the new government that the trade union to be formed, should be more alligned to the Organisation of African Trade Union 20.

In April 1974 the government passed an amendment (by decree) number 23 of the 1970 Trade Unions Act.

The purpose of this decree was to establish a central trade unions body to be called the National Organisation of Trade Unions (NOTU). During the same year a delegate conference was convened and Luande H. was elected chairman and Kalangari as secretary.

B. OBJECTIVES OF THE NATIONAL ORGANISATION OF TRADE UNION

from the interview held with the Secretary

General the following NOTU objectives were cited:

- (a) to promote the economic and social interests of the affiliated members and to advance the welfare of the workers in Uganda and to render them assistance whether or not the workers are employed.
- (b) to assist in complete organisation of all worker's into trade unions.
- (c) to mobilise all the workers of Uganda into a self supporting national union in terms of finance, manpower and to assist as provided in the rules in setling of disputes between members of the trade unions and their employers, or between trade unions and their members, or between employees of

- one union and employers of another union or more trade unions.
- (d) to assist all affiliated unions in establishing and maintaining sound industrial relations between them and employers.
- (e) to encourage active participation of all workers in all national projects and programmes set up for the purpose of improving the economic, cultural and social conditions of all the people of Uganda.
 - (f) to promote aid and encourage the establishment of co-operatives and other economic institutions owned wholly or partly by the workers unions of NOTU on their behalf.
 - (g) to assist to improve workers knowledge and skills by establishing or causing to be established such training centres and or schemes as the NOTU shall deem necessary.
 - (h) to secure adequate representation on government and industrial boards, committees or any other such bodies dealing with labour legislation or any other matters affecting labour.
 - (i) to establish friendly international relationships especially with Organisation of African Trade Unions Unity (OATUU) of which NOTU is an affiliate.

C. AFFILIATES TO NOTU AND PRESENT MEMBERSHIP 1980

General Notice Number 86 of 1974 empowered the Minister of Labour to dissolve trade unions and form new ones according to the industrial occupations.

Trade unions were formed under the following industrial occupations 14:-

(a) The National Union of Clerical, Commercial and
Technical Employees:-

banks (except Bank of Uganda) and financial institutions,

Insurance companies,

printing presses (except government printing department),

paper works,

wholesale and retail shops, footwear manufacturing, private security services,

motor dealers and garages,

soap manufacturing,

radio, television repairs and manufacturing, the marketing boards

(b) The National Union of Plantation and Agricultural Workers:

sugar,

tea,

coffee and sisal plantations and factories, cocoa and tobacco growing,

poultry and livestock farms (excluding government farms)

- (g) The Uganda Textiles and Garment Workers Union:textiles and hessian mills, fish-net manufacturing, garment manufacturing and dry cleaning
- (h) Uganda electricity and Allied Workers Union:electricity, gas and water works and supply, Uganda electricity board
- (i) The National Union of Co-operative Movement

 Workers:
 workers in co-operative societies and union and
 employees in ginneries and other work places run
 by the co-operatives.
- (j) Ex-Community Institutions:
 Railways, Posts and Telecommunications and general fund services.
- (k) The Uganda Public Employees Union: All unionisable employees in government
 ministries and departments, district administration
 and urban authorities.
- (1) The Educational Institutions Union:Non-teaching staff in the university, colleges,
 schools and other educational institutions.
- (m) The Uganda Employers Union:-- all employers in the private sector.

MEMBERSHIP AND INTERNATIONAL AFFILIATION

The following trade unions were given by the secretary general as the most up to date affiliations to NOTU, and also their international affiliations.

- (a) Uganda Mine, Metal and Allied Workers Union has its headquarters in Kilembe It had by the end of 1980 membership of 3000 members. It is affiliated to NOTU and the International Metal Workers Union (IMWU).
- (b) Uganda Building Construction Civil Engineering and Allied Workers Union - Headquarters are in Kampala. Membership not available. International affiliation IFBWW and nationally to NOTU.
- (c) National Union of Plantation and Agricultural Workers. Headquarters are in Kampala. This union was banned in 1976, but has not been revised. Membership is not available. Affiliation to NOTU and IFPAAW.
- (d) Educational Institutions Union:-
 - (i) Uganda Teachers Union. Headquarters - Kampala Affiliation NOTU and IFFTU Membership not available
 - (ii) Uganda Teachers Association Headquarters - Kampala

Affiliation - NOTU, WCOTP, IFFTU Membership 4000

- (d) Uganda Petroleum and Chemical Workers Union
 Headquarters Kampala
 Affiliation NOTU and IFPCW
 Membership 310
- (e) Uganda Posts and Telecommunications Employers
 Union

Headquarters - Kampala

Affiliation NOTU and PTTI

Membership - Not available

Figures and facts about other trade unions were not available due either to the fact that they have not been sent to NOTU or to the Registrar of Trade Unions for the last three years.

Although all trade unions are required to have registered themselves according to industrial occupations very few have done so and those who have done so only 13 are affiliated to the National Organisation of Trade Unions.

For registration with the National Organisation

of Trade Unions, they are required to pay an annual
fee of ten percent of their income. After their
affiliation with NOTU, the respective trade unions
participate in the Tri-annual Delegates Conference,
where the office bearers of NOTU are elected.

Representation on the Tri-annual Delegates Conference
depends on the number of members. Below is the

agreed number of delegated to be sent to the Tri-annual Delegates Conference depending on the number of membership of each trade union.

officials of the

	Members	Delegates
Up to	500	2
501	1000	3
1001	1500	4
1501	2000	5
2001	2500	6
2501	3000	7
3001	4000	8

Source: National Organisation of Trade
Union Files of 1975.

Every extra 2500 above the 4000 members one extra delegate.

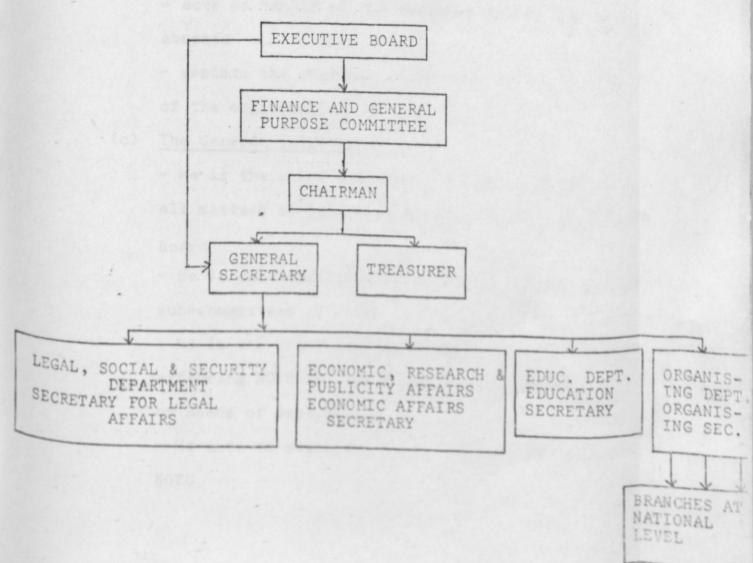
CHAPTER IV

A. LEADERSHIP AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

By interviewing the officials of NOTU about their duties and lines of authority, I have managed to develop an organisational chart for NOTU. However, this organisationa chart from the various officials of the other three National affiliated trade unions, I interviewed agreed with me that this structure and chart is similar to theirs.

CHART NO.I

Organisational Chart of The National Organisation of Trade Unions, Uganda



From the interviews held with the various officers of NOTU, the following are the offices and their respective duties:-

(a) The Chairman:

- Presides over all meetings of NOTU
- Has no executive power to commit NOTU unless he is authorised by the Finance and General Purposes Committee
- Has the right to vote at any of the meetings
- Holds office for three years and is elected by the Tri-annual Delegates Conference

(b) The Vice Chairman:

- acts on behalf of the chairman during his absence
- assists the chairman in his day to day duties of the organisation

(c) The General Secretary:

- He is the chief executive officer of NOTU on all matters of policy as directed by the Executive Board
- He is an ex-officio member of the committees or sub-committees of NOTU
- He is the chief adviser of NOTU on all matters affecting NOTU in consultation with the officers or heads of Departments
- He acts as secretary on all bodies set up by NOTU

- He is in charge of all the employees of NOTU and takes action from time to time as he may be directed by the Executive Board
- He co-ordinates all the activities of all the departments of NOTU
- He convenes meetings of the Executive Board and prepares the agenda
- He administers and co-ordinates all the activities of NOTU as directed by the Executive Board.

(d) Assistant General Secretary:

- He assists the General Secretary in the discharge of the day to day duties of NOTU.
- He acts on behalf of the General Secretary and bears all responsibilities assigned to him by the General Secretary.

(e) Treasurer:

Qualifications:-

Certified Public Accountant

Duties: -

- Chief officer responsible for the supervision of the finance department under the guidance of the Finance and General Purpose Committee of the Executive Board.
- Prepares an annual budget of NOTU and submits it to the Executive Board for approval.

- Prepares quarterly and annual financial returns, and presents the same to the Executive Committee, Annual Delegates Conference or the Tri-annual Delegates Conference as the case may be.
- He has to keep books of accounts and also ensure that all transactions are properly recorded.
- He in conjuction with the General Secretary signs cheques of NOTU.
- He may seek assistance from a qualified accountant who is usually employed under him and he is called the chief accontant; and he is the chief adviser to the Treasurer on matters of finance.

(f) Assistant Treasurer:

- Assists the Treasurer in the discharge of the day to day duties of NOTU.
- Acts on behalf of the Treasurer and bears responsibilities assigned to him by the Treasurer.

(g) Functions of the Heads of Departments: The functions of the heads of departments

The functions of the heads of departments are as follows:-

Organising Secretary:-

- He is responsible for the mobilisation of the workers into unions
- He takes instructions from the Executive Board and the General Secretary.
- He is the chief adviser to the General Secretary on matters partaining to organisation and is

NOTU's spokesman in this respect.

- He supervises all provincial and district activities of the congress.
- He programmes organisational activities in consultation with the General Secretary.
- He keeps up-to-date records of affiliated unions and obtains membership returns from them.

(h) Assistant Organising Secretary:

- He assists the organising secretary in his duties and acts for him during his absence.

(i) Education Secretary:

- Responsible for all educational mannuals and handouts.
- Responsible for the carrying out of intensive educational programmes on behalf of NOTU on national, provincial and district levels.
- Responsible for the organisation of seminars, the supervision of scholarship in conjuction with the Executive Board.
- He revives and prepares schedules of applications and arranges interviews for the candidates, and also acts as secretary of the Education Sub-committee of the Executive Board.
- He advises the General Secretary on matters and programmes of education.
- He is charges with the responsibility of organising youth activities and has under him a person responsible for women workers sections of NOTU.

- He co-ordinates all the activities of both sections (youth and women) and advises the general secretary and NOTU in this particular field.
- He is responsible for the organisation of social and entertainment activities for the purposes of which the Executive Board prescribes from time to time.

(j) Assistant Education Secretary:

- Assists the educational secretary in his duties and acts for him during his absence.
- (k) Secretary for Economic Affairs, Research and Publicity:

Qualifications:-

- person with reasonable knowledge of the trade union movement in Uganda, and the whole world.
- at least three years experience in the trade union field:
- reasonable knowledge of the economic functions.
- is appointed by the Executive Board, and holds office as long as the conduct of his affairs is considered to be in conformity with rules and regulations as the Executive Board may determine.

 Duties:-
 - He is in charge of the department and he sets up its working machinery.
- he collects, reads and makes extracts of all the documents that contain valuable information to NOTU.

- He is the chief adviser to the General Secretary and NOTU as a whole on economic, research and publicity affairs both at home and abroad.
- He collect, prepares and publishes papers on economic, cultural, social and political affairs.
- He is responsible for obtaining information partaining to industrial and national prosperity.
- He assists affiliated organisations in preparing necessary documentary information for presentation to negotiating bodies, conciliation and the Industrial Court.
- He interpretes the national economic programmes and may represent the General Secretary on behalf of NOTU on committees set up by the government to plan or review national economic programmes.
- (1) Secretary for Legal and Social Security:Qualifications:-
 - A person with reasonable knowledge of labour legislation, which are from time to time enacted or decreed by the government, or any other local authority, International Labour Conventions (ILO) and Social Security Schemes in Uganda and other parts of the world.
 - He is appointed by the Executive Board and holds office as long as his conduct of affairs is in conformity with the policy of NOTU.

Duties:-

- He is in charge of the department and he sets up its working machinery.
- He collects, reads and makes extracts of all documents that contain valuable information to NOTU.
- He is the chief adviser to the General Secretary and NOTU as a whole on legal and social security affairs.
- He assists affiliated organisations in the preparation of necessary documentary information for presentation to the industrial court or other legal and social security scheme bodies.

(m) The Executive Board:

Composition: -

The Chairman, the Vice Chairman, the General Secretary, the Assistant General Secretary, the Treasurer, the Organising Secretary, the Assistant Organising Secretary, the Assistant Education Secretary and the General Secretary of each of the affiliated organisations or his representative.

Duties of the Executive Board:-

1. It has power to transact business on behalf of NOTU during the intervening period of the Tri-annual Delegates Conference. It meets four times a year (that is once every four months), but also attends to any urgent business on

- behalf of NOTU. Two thirds of the members of the Executive Board form a quorum.
- 2. Meetings of the Executive Board are called by the General Secretary or any other officer delegated by him.
- 3. The Executive Board appoints all heads of departments except those who fall within the Executive Board who are elected on the Triannual Delegates Conference. The Board also determines their renumeration and terms of service subject to confirmation by the Annual Delegates Conference.
- 4. The Board receives reports from all departments on the activities undertaken by those departments in futherence of NOTU's objectives.
- 5. The Board has power to establish or appoint sub-committees for the purpose of the smooth running of NOTU. Such sub-committees deal with specific matters as they are assigned to them by the Board. The Board also determines the number of committee members and their jurisdiction.
- 6. The Executive Board is responsible for the preparation of the agenda of the Tri-annual Delegates' Conference.
- 7. The Board has the power to dismiss or suspend any of its officials or members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

(n) Finance and General Purposes Committee: Composition:-

The Chairman, General Secretary and Treasurer shall act as its chairman, secretary and treasurer of the Finance and General Purposes Committee respectively. Their respective assistants shall deputise in their absence. Other members are all the officers of the Congress and not less than five members appointed by the Executive Board.

Duties: -

- Responsible for the day to day administration of NOTU.
 - Members of the Finance and General Purposes Committee receive their instructions from the Executive Board.

(iii) ORGANISATIONAL AND LEADERSHIP PROBLEMS

Most of the leaders of the National Organisation of Trade Unions and of the other strong affiliated unions have been leaders in the movement since Independence. I tried to find out why they have tried to retain this leadership or even why they have stayed in the trade union movement for such a long time. The answers I got from the various leaders I interviewed have their reasons falling into the following categories:-

First and foremost are the economic reasons as may be the case elsewhere in the developing countries. Besides the regular monthly income or allowance, trade union leaders have a chance of obtaining scholarships to go and do more studies. Also connected with that is the fact that in some organisations, if there happens to be a vacancy especially in the personnel department, trade union leaders have a better chance of getting this job. This is the case especially in industries and factories where trade union leadership is strong. Management tries to weaken the movement by putting trade union leader(s) in a decision making position, where he is part and parcel of management, in actual fact the organisation tries to use him to supress unnecessary demands from the trade union. Also trade unions are represented on the major government boards especially the parastatals. Representation on these boards is not an economic benefit to the representative in terms of the allowance he gets but in case there happens to be vacancies in these various boards, the representative has the chance either to fill it himself or to inform a relative or a friend to take up the job. The trade union movement is also represented on the Public Service Commission -(the body responsible for recruiting for the government). This actually

makes the whole exercise of pushing a friend or relative through for a job very easy.

Secondly the other common reason I found out for trade union leadership aspiration is political ambition. Trade union leaders learn crucial skills through trade union organisation and administration. This is a great asset to a politically minded fellow. This not only helps him to polish his speech making but makes him achieve publicity and also makes it easy for him to win supporters. This leads him to gain promotion with an organisation. This is definitely a very big asset. Also trade union leaders attend international conferences, this gives them a chance to meet leaders from different parts of the group. This is an advantage to the particular person in case he/she wants to aspire for international leadership positions.

The third reason is the psychological reward.

Trade union leadership is an advancement of personal ambitions to some of the trade unionists. Being elected as Chairman of NOTU is equivalent to holding a national seat in the government. A trade union leader also gains more skills to manipulate the norms, legal stipulations and union rules. Another psychological reward is the prestige of holding a white collar job.

- There has been failure to organise workers into (a) trade unions especially those in rural areas. The main cause of this is the fact that very few opportunities exist in rural areas of full time monthly employment. Those who have a chance of getting such employment fear that if they join trade unions, they risk being sacked. This is even made worse by the fact that there is massive underemployment in the rural areas. Uganda has got very few large farms. Most farming is of subsistance nature. Even those who are able to employ farm labourers prefer to employ the emigrant workers especially the Rwandese, because these have got very few chances of agitating against the low wages paid to them. Coupled with the above is illiteracy. The majority of the masses in the rural areas are uneducated. Preaching to them about trade unionism is tantamount to telling them that they should rebel either against the government or their respective employers.
- (b) There has been also failure on part of the Organising Secretary to collect membership returns. This has been hampered by lack of transport and proper communication. It is not suprising to find a letter written from Gulu

taking a whole month to arrive in Kampala.

This is not the only cause but also is negligence on the part of the officers concerned to prepare and send the returns to the Central Organisation.

- (c) The third and probably one of the major problems, is the fact that a good number of unions affiliated to NOTU are more powerful than NOTU; they even employ a larger staff than NOTU and they are organised and run more efficiently, they even own more assets than NOTU. Actually some departments of NOTU are not functioning due to negligence on part of the officers concerned.

 NOTU is a federation with a weak centre and very strong component parts.
- (d) The means of communication used by NOTU is not very effective. The national radio is used for making an announcements. Before making an announcement on Radio Uganda a person concerned has to have it cleared by both the Ministries of Information and Internal Affairs. This has been the case way back since 1976. One can therefore, imagine the delays encountered. The use of pamphlets and letters has got its own problems as already mentioned. National policies are made but they hardly, if ever, reach the branches. There is of course lack of supervision on the affiliated unions by full-time paid central branch officials.

These officers live in urban centres such as Kampala and Jinja. Even if they did supervise the activities of the trade unions, in country that is already infested with a 100% corruption it is not difficult for a clerk to bribe an officer with only a hundred Uganda shillings to conceal a fraud that is even involving a thousand shillings.

(c) Most of the union activities are part-time, being after office hours, especially on the small firms with general unions. Generally speaking the shop steward system has encourage tribalism.

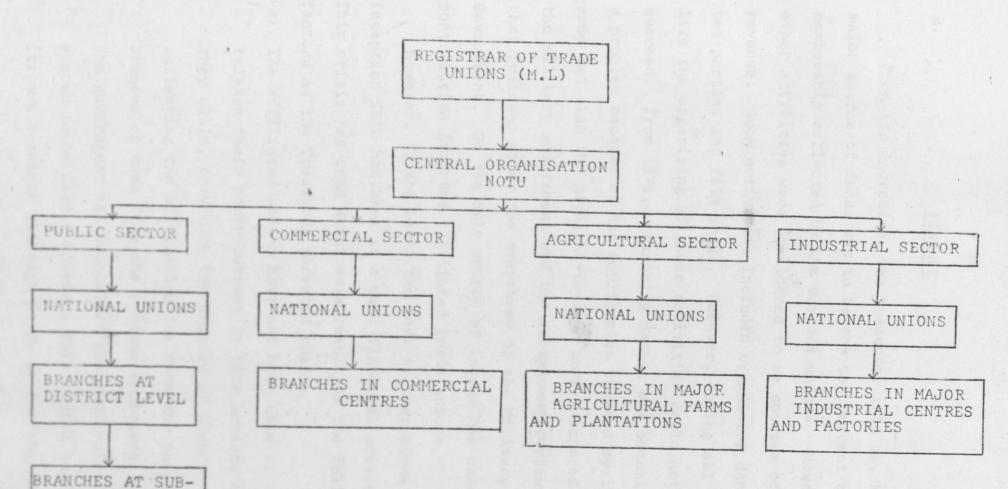
At the time of doing this project, there is a tribal mania going on if not a war between Bantu and the Nilotics. This actually has very much affected union leadership. There is lack of a forceful and a united leadership. This problem has been accelerated by the current political changes sweeping the country.

However, while looking at leadership and organisational structure, I did not concentrate only on NOTU
but I also tried to develop a national structure of the
trade union movement in Uganda, and hence I developed
an organisational chart. However, in developing this
chart I did not consider the industrial occupational
activities as is currently the case - whereby all

trade unions are grouped according to industrial occupations. I only considered the major national economic sectors. See overleaf. Obviously there is an interrelationship between the trade unions within the various sectors, as there are interrelationships within the sectors themselves.

DISTRICT LEVEL

- 55 -



SOURCE: Ministry of Labour

Registrar of Trade Unions Department Files Dec. 1979.

B. FINANCE

From its inception, the Treasurer told me, NOTU's major source of funds was to be the ten percent of the membership collected by the various unions. However, other activities were considered to be sources of revenue. Such activities included organising dances, tea parties and film shows. However, during all its life the organising of these activities could not succeed. From 1976, organising dances was becoming a problem because of the hooliganism created by the army and also the midnight-to-dawn curfew imposed by the military government and the subsequent curfews that followed after the overthrow of the Military Government. So the only source of income has been the contribution from the affiliated trade unions.

However, to the least the fact is that since its inception NOTU has been in a real financial crisis.

This crisis has come about as a result of the following factors as the Treasurer narrated them:-

(a) The affiliated unions have not been able to release their contributions in time because as they claim, they have the problem of also collecting the affiliation fee from the various brances or even from the various employers.

The government has authorised the check-off system to be used. However, this system has got its own drawback although it is so far the most

efficient system of collecting union dues from members. There has been a problem of employers failing to remit contributions to the unions in time. The employers claim this is an additional administrative cost especially in Uganda where most of the clerical work has to be done manually because of lack of efficient machines and those that are available are out of order most of the time. Another problem connected with the check-off system is the fact that it is a voluntray wish by the member to have his contribution deducted from the pay. Usually he does this by filling a form authorising his employer to do so. As already said trade union recruitment has been negative instead of being positive, very few workers have opted to join the trade unions and those who have done so very few still are willing to have their pay deducted. Most workers prefer to pay their contributions by themselves, so that if in a financial stress, there is a delay to contributing to the trade union or he may decide to do without it altogether.

However, on the other hand trade union leaders complained that the check-off system puts them at the mercy of the various employers curtailing them of their freedom to strike - because the employer if threatened by a workers' strike he can also retaliate

by threatening to withdraw the check-off system. This in actual fact has made collective bargaining very difficult. Coupled with this is the fact that the Uganda Shilling has become more or less valueless during the last ten years, and yet the contributions by the various trade union members has remained stagnant at an average of two shillings and fifty cents a month. This has also been due to the stagnation in the wages paid to the employers. During the last ten years the minimum wage paid to the employees in urban centres has been 250/= a month while those working on plantations and rural areas have been getting an average of 60/= a month. It is not suprising at present to notice that there is nobody willing to be employed by the Kampala City Council even when the minimum wage has been increased to 400/= a month. The fact is that the inflation rate is so high that it is useless to work for a wage that will not even sustain you for a week.

One of the most financial blows that the

National Organisation or Trade Unions was the

banning of all foreign assistance in terms of money.

This was done by the same decree that caused it to be established: "no outside (i.e. foreign) funds or assistance is permitted without the approval of the Ministry of Labour" stated the decree. However, this decree did not only affect NOTU but also other

affiliated unions. Besides their being affiliated to NOTU, some of the bigger unions were affiliated to international organisations in the related field. These international organisations used to give money to these unions. Actually this was one of the reasons why the National Union of Plantation and Agriculatural Workers was banned in 1976. This was actually the second most powerful union financially in the Republic. It could afford to sustain its members during a strike action.

The decree that established the National Organisation of Trade Unions made it mandatory to be affiliated to The Organisation of African Trade Unions which itself was formed more or less at the same time. This overall African trade union is still young and actually very little is known about it. It cannot therefore afford to support affiliated trade unions financially. Though this union has helped to reduce the struggle between the West and the East to control the trade union movement in Uganda, but in actual fact it reduced the chances for NOTU to shop around for financial assistance. On the other hand other trade unions getting funds through the Ministry of Labour look as if they are receiving government grants. This actually makes them be at the mercy of the ministry. However, I do not see the present government (Obote's) reversing the order, since the

same government by the Trade Unions Act of 1970 had introduced some measures to control the flow of foreign aid to the trade union movement.

In conclusion one can sum up the factors contributing to the financial weakness of the trade unions in Uganda as being:-

- (a) the lack of strike funds hence the inability to carry out strikes to agitate for more wages hence increased union confidence giving way to increased contributions.
- (b) the absence of state unemployment benefits to support dismissed workers, or other forms of state transfers to relieve poverty.
- (c) the reluctance of workers to forego wages in the short-run in order to negotiate high wage rates to be paid later, this being due to low incomes, which prevent their making any savings to cover such imergencies and to high rates of time preference.
- (d) the reluctance of workers to pay their union dues, due to partly short sightedness and apathy and partly due to the fact that in many cases a large portion may be temporary migrant workers who do not expect to be in employment long enough to benefit from union action which they find costly in the short-run.
- (e) the failure on part of the trade unions to employ

efficient book-keepers who would keep proper books of accounts and hence make returns in time to be sent to the union headquarters and subsequently to the Registrar of Trade Unions.

The state of the economy as a whole; trade (f) union activities will be high if the economy is booming, but Uganda's case leaves a lot to be desired - a state of corruption, tribalism and nepotism coupled with "magendo" cannot encourage the efficient management of trade union funds put aside their custody. Actually from the information I gatherd very few if any of the trade unions have made their annual returns to the Registrar of Trade Unions. Even for those who have done so it is difficult if not impossible to locate the files. This makes accountability for union funds impossible, hence it is encouraging fraud in many cases. An efficient machinery has yet to be developed for proper management and custody of union funds.

CHAPTER V

LEGISLATION AND MEMBERSHIP

A union is a membership organisation. This means that a union is based upon and cannot function without its members all of whom have equal rights within the union. The essential points about membership is that the union should work to recruit every person eligible for membership and that every member should be brought to understand that he is part of the union and that the union is his organisation.

The constitution of the National Organisation states that membership is open to all registered trade unions or associates which must be affiliated in a manner prescribed by the rules. Any union or association which desires to affiliate to NOTU is required to make an application in writing to the Secretary General and must furnish the organisation with three copies of its constitution and any such information as may be required by the Executive Board. The Executive Board has the power to accept or reject such an application to affiliate and such a decision whether positive or negative is communicated to the trade union or association making the application by the Secretary General within one month from the time of taking such a decision. If the application is rejected, the communication specifies the grounds on which the application

is rejected. Any trade union or association whose application is rejected has got the right to appeal to the Annual Delegates Conference against the decision of the Executive Board. The decision of the Annual Delegates Conference is final.

Any union or association affiliated to the National Organisation of Trade Unions may be expelled from the organisation if it conducts itself in a manner contrary to the laid down rules or prejudicial to the interests of the organisation. The decision to expel such an organisation becomes final if it is approved by two thirds of the Annual Delegates Conference.

From the above the conclusion is that it is not mandatory for all registered trade unions to affiliate to the National Organisation of Trade Unions. This definitely as already said under finance, contributes to the financial weakness of NOTU.

The affiliated unions or associations are required to furnish NOTU through the Secretary General with the following information quarterly in a manner that is determined by the Executive Board of NOTU:-

- all names of their National and Branch officers and any changes thereof.
- official reports, collective bargaining agreements and any other document issued or concluded by such bodies.

3. membership returns.

At this point during my interview with the NOTU officials I asked them whether it has been possible for the trade unions to furnish them with this information during all these years of turmoil. However, they agreed that it has been possible for only those unions that have their headquarters in Kampala and Jinja, but the information given has always been partial because some of the up country branches have hardly if ever given correct returns to the national unions. Also as already said this has been hampered by lack of transport and proper communication facilities.

Having discussed with them NOTU membership my next area of interest was to ask them about membership of the affiliated unions. They told me here that the affiliated unions have had the problem of recruiting new members and retaining old members. With the economy declining most workers found it useless to join trade unions, and even those who were already in the trade union movement found it difficult to remain there, because during the rule of Amin strikes were banned throughout the country, and any body or union found trying to engage in such activity would be dealt with severely. This actually resulted in the banning of the National Agricultural and Plantation Workers Union in 1976, because they wanted to strike against the low wages in the sugar and tea factories and also the deteriorating conditions. The government reacted

by banning this trade union because at this time both the sugar and tea factories were in the hands of the government following the expulsion of Madhvani, Mehta and Mitchel Cotts.

Again the method that is used to recruit members is not the best, because trade unions just walk in the working place asking the workers if they would like to join the trade unions, and if so they should fill the forms, so that their employers can deduct their contributions to the trade union. They hardly take any trouble of trying to explain to the workers what benefits would accrue to them if they joined the union. To add salt to injury the decree that established NOTU empowered employers not to recognise trade unions whose membership were less than 51% of the workers. This has actually had serious repurcussion on the trade union movement since 1974. Also the same decree stated that a trade union must have 1000 members before it is recognised. However, the small unions were forced to amalgamate into small unions and actually this was the reason why decree number 86 was issued which made it mandatory for trade unions to be organised according to the industrial occupations.

To win more members a more effective media should be used. I suggested that the National Organisation of Trade Unions start a programme on Radio Uganda, which should educate the workers about the trade unionism and its related benefits. The co-operative movement has done a lot through the use of this media. This is actually the most effective media because at present statistics put that at 8 of every 10 households have got radios. This suggestion was also agreed on by the union leaders.

. A second factor that has affected trade union membership is tribalism. Trade unionism first started in Buganda, and it is not suprising, as I found out, that most of the national unions which have their headquarters in Kampala including the National Organisation of Trade Unions have their leaders drawn from the Baganda tribe. It is not suprising because culturally the Baganda are known to have nothing that will always satisfy their needs. They are always very critical of events although they are very slow as far as taking action is concerned. The other tribes look at the trade union movement as a Baganda movement, hence the majority of the workers, working in factories and industries in and around Kampala are unwilling to -join trade unions. As I said elsewhere this situation has been agravated by the current political wind prevailing throughout the country.

A third factor I was told that has contributed to the slow growth of trade union membership as I said elsewhere is the migrant workers. Historically shambas and plantations in Uganda were manned by

migrants from Rwanda, Zaire and Southern Sudan. These migrants some of whom are still there up to the present day are unwilling to join the trade union movement because they only come for a specified period, acquire some money, buy the type of things they want and then go back to their countries of origin to visit their relatives and they may stay for fairly a long period of time before they come back. connected with this is the fact that the majority of the employers want to employ these migrant workers because they are not aware of the minimum wage they are supposed to earn. They will expect anything below the minimum wage. This actually has affected the recruitment drive as far as workers on shambas and plantations are concerned. In industrial towns the situation is no different, Uganda like any other developing country faces the problem of urban unemployment due to the school leavers who prefer to come to town to look for employment. These school leavers usually stay with relatives who are earning fairly enough to survive. These young men will accept - anything offered without even inquiring what they are supposed to get. They are even reluctant to join trade unions because to the majority of the workers in Uganda joining a trade union means trying to find a way of rebelling against the employer. There is therefore fear of loosing jobs.

To conclude membership recruitment drive has been hampered by:-

- (a) lack of proper communication channels
- (b) migrant workers who do not stay in one employment for a long time.
- (c) tribalism among trade union leadership and among the workers.
- (d) the influx of school leavers from rural areas to urban areas.

Legislation

The most important laws under this heading deal with

- protection of the rights of association
- wage regulation and methods of payment
- relations between employers and workers
- the prevention and settlement of disputes between 'employers and workers
- hours of work
- basic labour standards
- other conditions of work (such as compensation, insurance, health, safety, holidays with pay) and strikes.

However, in Uganda all the above are covered under the Industrial Relations Charter of 1965.

However, besides this Industrial Relations Charter, there is also the Trade Unions Act of 1970, the most recent act. However, this act has been amended several times by decrees passed by the military government. Union representatives participated in the passing of these decrees. The Trade Unions Act of 1970 gives powers to the Registrar of Trade Unions who in the course of this research I had chance to talk to. He outlined to me his duties and powers.

The Trade Unions Act of 1970, states that no person shall be a voting member of a registered trade union unless he is a member and his monthly subscription is not 13 weeks in arrears. It goes further to state that not only must individual unions be registered, a branch union must be registered within 28 days of its formation. The application for registration must show the name of the parent union, the name of the branch, its postal address, the place of meeting for carrying on the business of the branch and the titles, names, ages, addresses, and occupations of officers of the branch.

As far as finances are concerned, the provisions in the act cover things such as accounting, auditing, rendition of annual financial returns etc. The

Registrar of Trade Unions has the power to call for the accounts at any time, to institute legal proceedings on behalf of a registered union and in certain circumstances to institute proceedings against responsible officers for failing to submit their financial returns.

From the above one can conclude that not only does legislation control trade unions at national level but it also does at branch level.

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CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In carrying out the study, the following issues were considered:-

- (a) Organisational structure and leadership
- (b) Finance
- (c) Membership
- (d) Legislation

Trade unions as is the case in most countries are involved in many activities, hence their organisational structures and leadership activities differ from union to union. However, in the study I have developed an organisatinal chart I based on the various responsibilities of the various officers of NOTU. Even though NOTU is a national organisation, it does not follow that its structure is the same as that of the various affiliated unions. Trade union structures both on national and sub-branch level differ according to the objectives of the various unions, and the duties of their officers. At subbranch level some unions have one or two officers responsible for all the activities of the union and to make matters worse some officers are only employed on part-time basis - they have full-time jobs elsewhere.

In the second organisational structure developed my main concern was to try to group the trade unions

according to sectors of the economy - a structure that may be very close because in the current Uganda Trade Union activities are grouped according to the various industrial occupations as I have already indicated elsewhere in the study. With this same organisational chart I have tried to show how communications flows from the Minister of labour right down to the grass-root level or sub-branch level.

To arrive at both organisational charts the information was obtained from the leaders of NOTU and the various leaders of the three trade unions I mentioned elsewhere in the study. The tool used was personal interviews. It was difficult to use a standard questionaire as some questions had to be adjusted to fit the various officers being interviewed. Still considering organisation and leadership the various problems I found are summarised in detail below. These problems have contributed to the organisational and leadership weaknesses.

1. There has been a scarcity of able trade union personnel, largely due to the fact that a large bulk of the Ugandan urban labour is unskilled with a minority who have only a minimum education.

The most able leaders have been drained away into management or other salaried jobs. This situation was aggravated by Amin's declaration of the economical war in 1972, when Asians were exiled, in most cases trade union leaders were either

- allocated businesses or given the management jobs of Asians.
- 2. The Amin Government decree to ban strikes deprived trade unions of the strongest economic weapon to use to ask for more pay.
- 3. There is a high degree of illiteracy among the rank and file, this means that there is less check on the activities of the leaders, this increased the danger of missappropriation of funds especially in the recent years.

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- 4. Illiteracy has also been responsible for the common failure of workers and trade union officials to understand the functions of trade unions. This has lead to apathy and lack of support of unions officials.
- 5. During the last years of Amin's rule, workers could not trust union leaders and union leaders could not trust the workers. This was because of the complicated network of intelligence Amin had set up. Confidence in trade union activities declined drastically.
- 6. The present political situation that has already created ethnic groupings in the country surely is a heavy blow to the trade union movement in the country. The national leadership of trade unions has always been dominated by the Baganda tribe. Most of other tribes still do not feel that this should be the case. They feel that the movement is only for a particular tribe and not for the workers of various tribes in the country as a whole.
- 7. Trade union activitism will be successful in an economy which is booming and well organised. The current economic situation of Uganda renders trade union activity more or less useless.

However, Uganda unlike elsewhere in East Africa most of the trade unions are found in the public sector especially the parastatals. This is because the

Uganda Government had always been anxious to give a lead to the private sector of the economy by encouraging trade unions so long as they could be diversed from political elements. This arguement is even made more authoritative by the fact that the majority of private businesses were nationalised by Amin. Even the present government is encouraging private investements especially foreign on the basis that it must have a share capital of 51% of that particular investment 21. Again the government is very important accounting for a significant part of total employment, for that reason labour is mostly organised when the employer is easily identifiable rather than when the number of employers is large. Also the government and the parastatal employees constitute a more stable work force than the private sector. In many cases they include more educated groups such as teachers, and clerical civil servants.

Apart from leadership and organisational problems, the trade union movement has had financial problems. These financial problems have definately contributed to difficulties in trade union organisation. The major problems include:-

- the reluctance of workers to join the movement and hence their reluctance to pay their dues regularly.
- the lack of qualified personnel to keep proper books of accounts.

- 3. the government directive of having all foreign financial assistance scrutinised by the Ministry of Labour.
- 4. lack of proper supervision of the custody of trade union funds in the recent years that has led to fraud and embezzlement.
- 5. the lack of welfare schemes within the trade unions to cater for dismissed or suspended workers in case of agitation for higher pay.

However, the check off system has been the most effective weapon in reducing problems of collecting dues from the members. But the problem still remains because not all workers under a given shop are willing to join trade unions and have their pay deducted.

The last aspect of trade union organisation is
the legal aspect. Trade unions fall under the Ministry
of Labour. However, trade union activities are
ascribed under the 1970 Trade Union Act passed by
Parliament. However, since the suspension of political
activities, trade unions have been governed by
through decrees. This of course means that there has
been no participation by trade union leaders in the
enacting of legislation affecting. Everything that
has been decreed has been taken by word up to the letter.
This definately an anybody can conclude has had its
own effects. Furthermore, the Registrar under the 1970
Trade Unions Act has power to register or deregister a
trade union at his own discretion. This means that the

Uganda government like most developing countries has greater control over trade unions than is the case in developed countries.

To study only the problems without looking at the seccess is nevertheless to say that the trade union movement has achieved nothing. This is not the case. The movement has had considerable success in settling the disputes, especially following the establishment of the Uganda Industrial Court of Appeal with the late Ssebugwaho Amooti as its chairman. Ssebugwaho himself championed the cause for the workers. However, the achievements of the trade union movement in Uganda are not attributable to NOTU but they are attributable to individual trade unions. Because as already said some unions are well organised and stronger financially than the National Organisation of Trade Unions itself. However, to prove the arguement I will cite a few aspects of the unions whose leaders I managed to interview.

(a) THE NATIONAL UNION OF COMMERCIAL AND TECHNICAL EMPLOYEES:

This union from my conclusions and those from the Registrar of Trade Unions is the most businesslike and best organised of all the trade unions in Uganda. They have agreements covering terms and conditions of service for all unionisable employees in Banks, the motor trade, the distributive and merchants as well as

covering employees in insurance and several large factories in Jinja and Kampala.

(b) THE UGANDA BUILDING CONSTRUCTION CIVIL ENGINEERING AND ALLIED WORKERS UNION:

This union has very effectively represented the workers in the building and construction industry. They have earned a name for themselves by their reasonable attitude which has considerably helped to improve working conditions in these formerly notoriously bad area of employment.

(c) NATIONAL UNION OF PLANTATION AND AGRICULTURAL WORKERS:

Uganda being an agricultural country, this union should have the largest potentiality. It has the largest membership, but this number should even be bigger taking into consideration that labour force employed in agriculture is the largest. Unfortunately it is extremely difficult to organise agricultural workers and this union has never been particularly effective. However, its activities reached their peak in 1976, when working conditions drastically deteriorated. The union was banned in that year. But with the overthrow of Idi Amin the union has now revived. be fair, however, it should be pointed out that a large percentage of workers in agriculture come from neighbouring countries like Sudan, Zaire, and Rwanda and they are unwilling to pay money to join a union since they stay always for a short duration in Uganda.

However, it is hoped that with the rehabilitation of the sugar and tea factories the movement will this time gain momentum.

(d) THE UGANDA PUBLIC EMPLOYEES UNION:

This union covers junior employees in the public service except the parastatals. Their terms and conditions are rigidly controlled by the government and I should be fair to say that this union does not enjoy the freedom of action available to other unions in the private sector.

It should be noted that trade unions in Uganda are organised according to industrial occupations as I said elsehwere in the study. This system is different from that one of our ex-colonial masters in Britain, where unions are organised in craft basis. From the lattest figure available, there are approximately 350,000 persons in paid employment in the country, and of these less than one sixth are members of any recognised trade union.

B. UNIONS AND THE FUTURE OF UGANDA

Irrespective of the various successes and failures of the various unions some effort still have to be made for the future success of the trade union movement in Uganda. These aspects include:-

(a) tackling the problems of how rural workers are to be organised, relationships with farmers' organisations and community development.

- (b) developing trade union research services as a basis objective and justified action.
- (c) developing trade union competence including training of leaders, representatives and rank and file.
- (d) developing social ammenities and education for the young workers.
- (e) promoting better image of the unions and better public understanding of unions and their role.
- (f) improving working and living conditions i.e. securing compensation for their members injured at work, the prevention of industrial accidents by promotion of safety accident prevention measures, and provision of canteen in factories.
- (g) helping in the moral rehabilitation of the workers of Uganda thus to end such things as tribalism, nepotism and corruption.
- C. SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH AND THE EFFECT OF LIMITATION:

Research: of this nature needs time end a good amount of funds. This study has only dealt with the Central Union in this case the NOTU. However, the amount of time available and also taking into account that this research has been conducted in chaotic conditions, it has not been possible to support my findings with concrete figures. For example apart from Roger Scott³, there hasn't been any such comprehensive

study on trade unions in Uganda up to the present day.

Definitely this would be a great challenge for such
an academician for:-

- (a) most of the documents at the Ministry of Labour headquarters have either been looted or destroyed. In the current chaotic Uganda it is not surprising to find a vendor of groundnuts along the streets using government confidential documents as his packaging bags.
- (b) most of the would-be interviewees for such a study are either dead because of the political upheavals or have taken refuge in other countries, this definitely making computation of information difficult.
- (c) to get information from an officer in Uganda is very difficult as the case is it is only the ministers, their deputies and permanent secretaries who change with regimes, but middle subordinates remain. One has actually to take great pains which I did take to convince even the union leaders that I was a genuine student strictly doing my study for academic purposes and not for political purposes before I could get any information from the officers I wanted to interview. Definitely this took time and money and hence reduced my chances of doing more research using Makerere Library. For a researcher who is interested to persue the topic more I

would recommend Makerere Library as the most valuable source of information as it has not been affected by the commonly known word "looting".

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DEFINITION OF THE MAJOR TERMS

AGENDA:

Means "things to be done" and refers to the items of the business to be considered in a meeting.

AMALGAMATION:

Two or more unions joining together to form a single union.

AMENDMENT:

A method of modifying a motion which is being discussed at a meeting in such a way that the basic idea or spirit of the motion is unchanged.

ANNUAL RETURNS:

These are financial statements of the trade unions made available to the central union or government.

AUDIT:

"is to hear" and refers to the periodical examination or checkign of the accounts.

BOOKS:

The official records of the union.

BRANCH:

 An organised group of union members in the same craft or industry forming the basic unit of union organisation and democracy.

CHAIRMAN:

The person who presides at a meeting and upon whom the main responsibility for the proper conduct of the meeting falls.

COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT:

Also known as "Labour Agreement, Labour Contract or Collective Contract".

COLLECTIVE BARGAINING:

The various methods and procedures generally used to reach agreement between an employer or an association of employers on the one hand and the trade union or group of unions on the other hand regarding wages and conditions of work.

CHECK-OFF:

An arrangement between a union and an employer undertakes to deduct trade union dues from the wages of the members and pays the proceeds to the union.

COMMITTEE:

A body to which any business has been referred or committed.

CONSTITUTION:

The specification of the principles of a union expressed in a written form and the manner it is to conduct its business in achieving its objectives.

DELEGATE:

Someone given the right to execute some specific act on behalf of the member or a section of the membership.

DEMOCRACY:

"Government of the people, by and for the people".

DISPUTE:

To argue in opposition.

TRADE DISPUTE:

A difference which arises between workers and employers on a matter connected with conditions of employment.

ELECTION:

A method of choosing officers, representatives, committees, a democratic procedure wherein each member has equal voting rights.

EMBEZZLEMENT:

To squander wrongfully or waste union funds.

EMPLOYEE:

A person who is employed by another for a salary, wage or commission.

EMPLOYER:

One who uses others or buys the work of others.

EXECUTIVE:

A body elected by a union which is responsible to the membership for the execution of the policy made by the membershp at general meetings and delegates conferences.

FEDERATION:

A grouping of National Unions (meaning as far as this study is concerned).

FINANCE COMMITTEE:

A committee responsible for advising the union on problems of finance.

GENERAL UNION:

A union whose membership is not restricted to workers in a certain craft, industry of occupation but is open to all workers.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS:

Relations between labour and management.

INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS CHARTER:

A machinery for collective bargaining between employers and trade unions.

INDUSTRIAL UNION:

A union which organises all workers in the industry irrespective of skill, grade or position.

LABOUR LEGISLATION:

A term used to describe the various laws dealing with conditions of labour.

LEADERSHIP:

The ability to influence the behaviour of others in a particular direction.

MEMBERSHIP:

Belonging to a particular group - a union is a membership organisation.

MIGRANT WORKERS:

Workers who cannot secure permanent employment or for a variety of reasons do not desire permanent employment.

MINIMUM WAGES:

The lowest wage rates stipulated by the laws of a country.

ORGANISING:

The job of creating union strength, discipline and self confidence among groups of disunited and weak workers.

ORGANISATION:

A structural process in which persons interact to achieve certain objectives.

REGISTRAR OF TRADE UNIONS:

A person responsible for the law relating to trade unions.

RULES:

The principles and regulations by which an organisation is governed.

STRIKE:

A stoppage of work; a collective withdrawal of labour, the most powerful weapon economically the unions have in their struggle for better life for union members.

SUBSCRIPTION:

The regular amount of money paid periodically by a member to his union.

TRADE UNION:

A continuing permanent and democratic union created by the workers to protect themselves at work, to improve the working conditions of their lives through jcollective bargaining and to provide a means of expression for the workers' views on the problems of the society.

TREASURER:

The elected officer of the union who is responsible for its finances.

UNION SHOP:

A place of work where it mandatory that all employees shall become and/or remain members of the union.

WAGES:

The amount paid for the work done and/or time at the disposal of the employer.

WORKER:

A person who is gainfully employed.

Tops Moove 1968 Page 198.

APPENDIX B

FOOTNOTES

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