BEYOND BUTIAMA

THE AGENDA FOR PEACE, TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

JAFFAR AMIN

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Introduction

Global Peace Ambassadors Jaffar Amin (left) and Madaraka Nyerere (right) sitting side by side and getting along at a historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony in Nyerere’s home town of Butiama, northwestern Tanzania, East Africa. The meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony was part of a Program offered and sponsored by the BBC World Service, spearheaded by Solomon Mugera, head of the BBC Swahili language service.

It occurred on Thursday, April 9, 2009 on the eve of the 30-year anniversary of a war that erupted between Uganda under Idi Amin Dada and Tanzania under Julius Nyerere in 1978 and led to the ouster of Idi Amin Dada from power in Uganda on April 11, 1979. Prior to this war, relations between Julius Nyerere and Idi Amin Dada had become severely strained after Julius Nyerere offered sanctuary to Uganda’s Former President Apollo Milton Obote whom Idi Amin Dada overthrew in a Military Coup on January 25, 1971. The hostility between the two heads of state would boil over and culminate in a war that cost Ugandans and Tanzanians very many lives and left survivors with deeply rooted scars.

Jaffar Amin is the son of Idi Amin Dada, the Ugandan President who ruled Uganda from January 1971 to April 1979 when he was ousted from power by a
combined force of the Tanzania Peoples’ Defence Force and Ugandan exiles operating through Tanzania. Madaraka Nyerere is the son of Julius Nyerere, Former President of Tanzania, who sanctioned the war to overthrow Idi Amin Dada through Tanzania.

Thirty years after a war that should have been resolved by peaceful means, the two sons of the Protagonists saw it fitting to meet face to face for the first time and participate in a long overdue Reconciliation Ceremony. When their fathers went to war and “dragged” other Ugandans and Tanzanians along, Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere were youngsters. However, like all Ugandans and Tanzanians, they felt and experienced the devastating effects of the unprecedented war between two neighbouring African countries for which their fathers were politically responsible.

The historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony between Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere was to commemorate the 30-year Anniversary of a vicious war that would not have happened if the fathers subscribed to the message the two sons wish to convey to local and global communities. The message being, promoting Peace in the world over War and advocating for the resolution of conflict through Peaceful Means and not Violence!

The historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony was also to honor the memory of victims of the war while speaking to efforts and a commitment by a younger generation of "First Sons and First Daughters" to “correct” mistakes made by their parents. In addition, the meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony spoke to the responsibility of "First Sons and First Daughters" to seek Truth and Reconciliation for their nations of origin following years of conflict between opposing parties, as Jaffar Amin is advocating for in Uganda.

Through their historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony, Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere are leading the way in proving that Protagonists can “extend a hand of peace” to each other instead of resorting to maiming and murdering perceived enemies. If Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere can put aside their fathers’ historical differences, forget a resulting enmity and violent past and move forward with an agenda for Peace and Reconciliation, so can all Protagonists and warring factions that use violent methods to resolve conflict.

To that end, Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere have earned their place in history as role models for younger and future generations. Their efforts to promote Peace and Reconciliation locally and globally are worthy of support by local and global communities as are Jaffar Amin’s efforts to contribute towards Uganda’s Peace, Truth and Reconciliation initiative currently being discussed by proponents of the initiative and the Parliament of Uganda. Their efforts will go a long way in modeling and teaching the global community about Peace. It is anticipated that Uganda’s National Reconciliation Bill 2009 will be modeled after similar Commissions and initiatives in Africa and around the globe and
Jaffar Amin looks forward to working with stakeholders in realizing the intention and objectives of the Commission. If people in countries like South Africa and Rwanda can extend a “Reconciliatory Hand” to “sworn” enemies and live side by side in Peace after enduring atrocities from opposing parties, so can Ugandans and other communities around the globe.

Lessons in Peace and Reconciliation: Madaraka Nyerere (right) receiving the gift of a colourful Nubian mat from Jaffar Amin (left), while extending a hand to Jaffar Amin during their grand meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony in Butiama, Tanzania on Thursday, April 9, 2009. In the background are Julius Nyerere’s brother and Elders of the Nyerere clan and the District Executive Director (DED) of Musoma, Tanzania all of whom supported the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony between Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere.

“In Islam, we offer mats as a sign of hospitality” Jaffar shared before adding, “I was taking a leaf out of Barack Obama’s request for the 1.5 Billion Muslims to unclench our fists when offered an extended hand”.

Jaffar is referring to initiatives and efforts by Barack Obama, President of the United States of America to reach out to Muslims worldwide, for purposes of resolving conflict and grievances by Peaceful Means and not Violence. Jaffar Amin, a practicing Muslim looks forward to complementing the efforts of
President Barack Obama and similar minded individuals and groups in implementing initiatives to attain Peace in the World by peaceful means. He plans to do so by building on the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony he had with Madaraka Nyerere on April 9, 2009 and continuing to implement his own agenda for Genuine Peace, Truth and Reconciliation through the Al-Amin Foundation which he is in the process of establishing.

The Al-Amin Foundation is a socially responsible, independent, non-partisan, non-governmental and non-profit making foundation whose aims include but are not limited to realizing genuine Peace and Reconciliation in Uganda, attaining Social Justice and building a just local and global community.

Among several ideas that will be incorporated into the work of the Al-Amin Foundation, the Junior Amin hopes to galvanize and garner support from sons and daughters of past and present leaders of Uganda for purposes of building a just Uganda. Through this vision, Jaffar Amin hopes to realize a Uganda characterized by Peace, Truth and Reconciliation along with practical compassion and fair distribution of wealth. Plans are underway to invite past leaders’ progenies to provide insight into a Social Justice Agenda for Uganda that will transcend the tribalism, racism and classism that has wreaked havoc and derailed Uganda’s economic progress and many of the “good intentions” of its leaders and people since the country’s inception.

However, Jaffar Amin’s outreach is not limited to sons and daughters of past and present leaders of Uganda as demonstrated by the warmth with which he embraced the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony between him and Madaraka Nyerere that was spearheaded by Solomon Mugera, head of the BBC Swahili language service. He intends to reach out to communities beyond Uganda including communities in other African countries and the rest of the world!

The meeting between Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere did not only make history but it provided an opportunity for Jaffar Amin to formally and symbolically launch the work he plans to do through the Al-Amin Foundation locally and in the global arena. He is beginning with his work relating to Peace, Truth and Reconciliation while developing strategies for implementing the Foundation’s other programs and projects.
In addition to the Foundation’s work relating to Peace, Truth and Reconciliation, plans are underway to pursue programs and projects in areas including but not limited to:

- Culture;
- Religious tolerance;
- Vocational training;
- Non-predatory trade;
- Social economic welfare;
- The empowerment of youth;
- The empowerment of women;
- Anti-corruption;
- Research;
- Civic education;
- The rehabilitation and compensation of war veterans;
- Adequately compensating and honouring Labour and Workers through fair wages, proper pensions and gratuities;
- Linking with, galvanizing and garnering support from Ugandans and other Africans in the Diaspora.
Jaffar Amin intends to provide leadership in pursuing the projects and programs of the Al-Amin Foundation while strictly adhering to the Foundation’s vision and philosophy to be a socially responsible entity.

Asked if Jaffar Amin plans to run for Political Office, he says:

“My criterion for running for Political Office is tangible development success through my efforts. That is the basis with which I would like to join politics”.

He has repeated this conviction numerous times as he prepares to achieve the tangible development success he speaks of above through the Al-Amin Foundation and by networking and collaborating with like minded individuals and organizations that share his vision.

“I envisage myself coming to Parliament to review the projected implementation of various projects in my constituencies rather than coming with a begging bowl so to speak” Jaffar laughs when probed about when and how exactly he plans to run for Parliament or any Political Office for that matter.

While establishing the Al-Amin Foundation and undertaking a number of lead-up activities to its Formal Launching, Jaffar Amin has been focusing on a soon to be launched book series titled “Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His Son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak”. He intends to donate a substantial percentage of proceeds arising from the book series to the Foundation.

Speaking engagements designed to promote his message of Peace, Truth and Reconciliation will be one method for accomplishing Jaffar Amin’s vision, along with “conversations” about issues raised by his father Idi Amin’s legacy. The expulsion of Ugandan Asians from Uganda by his father in 1972 ranks very high on the list of issues Jaffar Amin intends to “converse” about which is why he was very pleased to hear from Vali Jamal, a Ugandan Asian expelled by his father Idi Amin in 1972. Vali Jamal is writing a major book on the 1972 Asian expulsion from Uganda in the words of the expellees.

“I am including around 70 people who never left Uganda and who used to see your father on Kampala’s streets and wave to him and he waved back”, writes Vali in an email he sent Jaffar Amin through the website Jaffar has established to discuss issues related to his father. Vali was pleasantly surprised to hear from Jaffar who wrote back and revealed in an email message responding to Vali’s request for a meeting to “converse” collaborate and “compare notes”:

“Jamal, I would dearly love to collaborate with you on your project…. One thing people do not realize is how close Idi Amin was to the Baluchistan people especially the Sulieman Bai Family. He only had issues with the Caste System practiced by the Hindu faith, which disenfranchised a lot of African and Indian
Nationals too. He also claimed to have compensated the affected British Nationals...... He even tried to explain the circumstance.... We welcome your whole list of cc to this our project. We have to square the Karmic Forces through genuine reconciliation.”

When asked about the Sulieman Bai family he refers to above, Jaffar’s response always brings about a chuckle as he recounts how his father and Sulieman Bai shared their mothers’ breasts. Idi Amin and Sulieman were both babies when their mothers developed a very close friendship that included breast feeding each other’s babies. It is a story Jaffar includes in the series titled, Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His Son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak” and tells with all the drama that characterizes Kakwa storytelling.

Vali Jamal was very happy to meet and have a warm face to face “conversation” with Jaffar Amin over a delicious lunch. Vali could not resist Jaffar’s invitation and “temptation” to check out the cuisine offered by the Makerere University Guesthouse where they proceeded to after meeting at the entrance to the Makerere University Mosque.

“They make a nice traditional dish with matooke, rice and stew” Jaffar offered and Vali loved that.

“Matooke was on every homecoming diasporan Asian’s wish-list”, Vali has shared before expanding on a well known fact in Uganda relating to “Indianized” Ugandan dishes that have become staple foods savoured by Ugandans of all cultural backgrounds.

Matooke is a dish many Ugandan Asians uprooted from Uganda in 1972 love to reminisce about while younger generations born outside Uganda listen and wonder what on earth older generations see in matooke.

“It is an acquired taste” many Ugandans always wink when asked questions about foods considered “different”.
Jaffar Amin (left) and Vali Jamal an Asian expelled by Idi Amin in 1972 (right) at their very first meeting in Kampala, Uganda, East Africa. Vali Jamal was the Senior Economist for the UN-International Labour Organization from 1976 to 2001. He is an original Ugandan Asian and possesses a BA from Cambridge University and a PhD from Stanford University. He is currently based in Kampala, Uganda, East Africa.

For their first meeting, Vali and Jaffar “conversed” about a number of topics including the enormous economic contribution the Ugandan Asians have made to Uganda’s economy. When Vali brought up the topic of their expulsion by Jaffar’s father in 1972 and the losses he and other Asians incurred as a result of being uprooted from Uganda, Jaffar quipped:

“I was only five years old when dad expelled the Asians from Uganda. Moreover he claims to have fully compensated them to the tune of 1 Billion Dollars” before invoking the teachings of Islam relating to children not being responsible for the sins of the father – with a knowing smile. Jaffar was well aware that as a practicing Ismaili Muslim, Vali subscribes to the same teachings and he would agree with him.
Jaffar and Vali have continued their warm “conversations” and look forward to extending an invitation to others to join the “constructive chats”. They both deem these “conversations” to be very necessary for Asians to feel welcome in Uganda!

“For there to be actual Peace, Truth and Reconciliation in Uganda, the Ugandan Asians must be involved in the initiative currently being discussed by proponents and the Parliament of Uganda”, Vali asserts regularly as they continue their warm “conversations” and Jaffar always nods in total agreement!

The soon to be launched book series titled “Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His Son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak” and the book Vali Jamal is writing on the “1972 Asian expulsion in the words of the expellees” promise to be great “reads” and great “conversation openers” about the Asian expulsion by Idi Amin and other issues raised by his legacy.

Additional information about the historic meeting between Jaffar Amin and Vali Jamal and their ongoing “conversations” is provided in a section below titled “Conversations” with Ugandan Asians expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972”. The section includes articles by Vali Jamal which are reproduced in the section in their entirety to preserve their depth and the openness with which Vali embraces the opportunity to meet Jaffar Amin in person and their ongoing “conversations”. The meeting between Jaffar and Vali fell right in line with the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony that Jaffar and Madaraka Nyerere had on Thursday, April 9, 2009.

Madaraka Nyerere (left) and Jaffar Amin (centre) are seen in a photograph below sharing warm conversation while Madaraka’s first cousin Vincent Nyerere (right) looks on. Vincent is the son of Julius Nyerere’s brother and he was present at the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony between his cousin Madaraka and Jaffar that was offered as part of a Program sponsored by the BBC World Service, spearheaded by Solomon Mugera, head of the BBC Swahili language service. The photograph was taken at a luncheon organized during the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony in Butiama, Tanzania, East Africa.
Upon seeing this photograph, Margaret Akulia teased with a mischievous laugh, “I hope you didn’t overwhelm Madaraka and his countrymen with our rambunctious Ugandan ways!” and Jaffar laughed back knowingly. Margaret Akulia was referring to a common joke among many East Africans about Tanzanians possessing gentle spirits while Ugandans are always rambunctious and have to be the center of attention.

“Your dad’s “bombastic” ways must have rubbed off of Ugandans” Margaret Akulia continued to tease and laugh. It was the same way Ugandans used to laugh as they had funny encounters with Idi Amin and mimicked the animated way he talked while making sure no member of the notorious State Research Bureau was within earshot. It was also the same way Jaffar and his siblings used to tease and make fun of their father like the time Jaffar’s brother Ali nicknamed him “Bahrain”.

Above: Photographs of African American Forest Whitaker depicting Idi Amin in the hit movie “The Last King of Scotland”. Below: Idi Amin in Photographs showing postures similar to the ones Forest Whitaker mimicked in the hit movie “The Last King of Scotland” that Ugandans used to laugh about and Jaffar
mimics constantly as he continues to make fun of his father in jest. Forest Whitaker captured Idi Amin’s animated mannerisms very well.

Regarding how his brother Ali came up with the nickname “Bahrain”, Jaffar offered that, “Dad would head furiously for the Communication Services in Jeddah and call the Bahrain BBC Bureau, vehemently explaining the issue of the Expropriated Property relating to the Asians he ordered out of Uganda in 1972. He insisted that the Asians had been fully compensated for the Properties they left behind even though no one paid any attention to his explanations and protests. Then he would gather us around to listen to the Focus On Africa news
at 19:00 East African Time, until it became a standing joke amongst the inner
circle of siblings and my brother Ali Nyabira Kirunda code named dad Bahrain.”

Then Jaffar Amin reiterated some of his standpoints about his father Idi Amin
propagating African pride for Africans and going ahead to implement the
Common Man's Charter after taking over the government of Uganda from Apollo
Milton Obote in a Military Coup - Obote being the very person who prepared
Uganda’s Common Man’s Charter that Idi Amin also subscribed to. Jaffar
insisted that his father wanted all Africans to feel proud of themselves and the
results of his consistent prompting are evident in Ugandans as they continue to
exude self confidence rarely seen anywhere in the continent of Africa.

“Ask anyone who has had encounters with “raucous” Ugandans”, Jaffar
continued - laughing hard at his reference to Ugandans as “raucous” in jest.
Then he added - also in jest, “They never used to be as “rowdy” as the
Congolese before dad took over power from Apollo Milton Obote and pursued a
strong relationship with Mobutu Sese Seko!”

Jaffar was referring to the tendency for Ugandans to be very assertive and stand
up for themselves. He was also referring to another common joke among East
and Central Africans about the Congo being a Party House, Congolese being the
noisiest Africans when partying and enjoying their music because Mobutu Sese
Seko encouraged them to “flaunt” their culture and music when he renamed the
Congo Zaire and encouraged every Congolese to wear mostly African attire.

When Margaret Akulia started laughing again as she mimicked Idi Amin saying,
“The Black people of America must be the President of the United States of
America”. "They must be the Secretary of State", Jaffar chuckled and said, “Dad
wanted all people of African descent to feel confident and proud of their heritage and he succeeded in doing so for Ugandans”. Then he added:

“Need I say that his predictions and so-called “nonsensical ramblings” regarding an African American President and Secretary of State came to pass” he poked back – still laughing. Jaffar was referring to his father’s statements relating to African people everywhere needing to be liberated. He was also referring to the labeling of statements his father made in English as “nonsensical”, by individuals who despised him and have a lot to contribute to the debate relating to the “Villain” side of the soon to be launched book series “Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His Son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak.

“Dad always mouthed that “Black people are more brilliant than other races”. He did this to the horror of people who worried that such statements would invoke more backlash against him and other Ugandans but he didn’t give a damn about making such audacious statements on Camera” Jaffar continued, while shaking his head at his father’s audacity.

“Many of dad’s statements have been labeled nonsensical because he conveyed them in English - a language he didn’t care for but was “forced” to communicate in because of Colonialism. Dad was very eloquent, very articulate and very fluent in a number of African languages and if he was afforded the opportunity to convey his statements in one of these languages, his statements would have had the clarity he intended” Jaffar argued.

“Was that the reason he addressed the United Nations General Assembly in Luganda in 1975?” quizzed Margaret Akulia - laughing hard at a “defiance” displayed by Idi Amin at the United Nations in New York in 1975. Many Ugandans still laugh about that “defiance” to this day.

On that occasion, Idi Amin chose to defy United Nations rules respecting languages accepted as Official Languages at the United Nations and spoke in Luganda while addressing the United Nations General Assembly as Chairman of the Organization of African Unity in 1975. Luganda is a Ugandan language Idi Amin was very articulate and very eloquent in and he chose to address the United Nations General Assembly in it.

During his trip to New York to address the United Nations General Assembly, Idi Amin also sent his favourite Dance Troupe “The Heart Beat of Afrika” ahead of him. He did this so that they could dance for him, entertain and welcome him on American soil at the Airport, while “flaunting” the beauty and talent of Africa. Ugandans who remember this “flamboyant defiance and audacity” by Idi Amin on American soil still laugh to this day as well.

“Dad said it was his way of poking fun at the United States of America for the evils of the African Slave Trade. He said he wanted to remind Americans that
Africans are the brightest and most talented human beings on earth and they made and built the United States of America. So Americans better treat Black Americans better than they have been doing for centuries.”

Above: An Associated Press photograph featuring Idi Amin arriving in New York to address the United Nations General Assembly as Chairman of the Organization of African Unity in 1975. Idi Amin’s wife Sarah Kyolaba, newly wedded at the time and two of his sons Moses (left) and Mwanga (right) accompanied him on this trip. Moses who was allegedly sacrificed and cannibalized by Idi Amin in 1974 is alive and well in France.

According to individuals who admire and regard Idi Amin as a hero despite characterizations of him as a villain, the allegations were a deliberate false rumour started for purposes of tarnishing his reputation and permanently turning the “International Tide” against him. Many of these individuals also have a lot to contribute to the debate relating to the “Hero” side of the soon to be launched book series “Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His Son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak”.
Above: A photograph of Moses Amin as a grown man alive and well in France. He was allegedly sacrificed and cannibalized by Idi Amin in 1974.

In the 1975 photograph of Idi Amin, his wife Sarah Kyolaba, his sons Moses and Mwanga descending the plane in New York, Idi Amin traveled in the Jet Gulf Stream II that was given by the Saudi Royal Family during the time he terminated his relationship with Israel in 1972. By the time Idi Amin traveled to New York to address the United Nations in 1975, the once strong relationship he had with Israel had become irreparable. It had disintegrated beyond recognition, prompting Ligito a very controversial character in Margaret Akulia’s book projects to mouth:

“"Awon'go", "Awon'go", "Awon'go", you should never ever have become involved in the fight between the descendants of Isaac and Ishmael. You should have stayed away from the controversy the way Kakwa Christians and Muslims do Awon’go.”

Ligito is from the Kakwa tribe, he has an opinion about everything under the sun and he has no qualms whatsoever, about “telling it like it is”. He likes to refer to Idi Amin by his Kakwa names especially when he is addressing fellow Kakwa and wants to emphasize teachings by Kakwa Temezi (Elders). In the above statement, Ligito is alluding to the strict teaching by Temezi for members of the
Kakwa tribe to favour kinship over religious affiliations. He was also referring to teachings by Temezi for members of the Kakwa tribe to never fight among each other because they belong to different religions, even though Kakwa Christians “silently” favour Israel and Kakwa Muslims “silently” favour the Ummah (Community of Muslim Believers). Despite the bulk of the Kakwa tribe being practicing Muslims or Christians, they have managed to co-exist for centuries and every Kakwa extended family has both Muslims and Christians in the family including Idi Amin. The majority of members of the tribe know you don’t dare violate the Elders’ Teaching.

The only time religion reared an ugly head in direct opposition to the teachings of Temezi was during the time a rift developed between Idi Amin and Senior Christian Army Officers from the Kakwa tribe. There were other reasons for the rift but here is what Jaffar Amin had to say about the religious factor in the rift:

“Dad claimed that deep down the Christian Kakwas felt he made a wrong choice where the Israelis were concerned. He claimed that they felt that he should have kept what to them was a watertight engagement with the battle hardened Israelis to the very end - much in the mould of the Warrior Kakwas of old. This factor came to a head the next year in 1974, when three battle-hardened Kakwa Christian Army Officers along with a Justice plotted a mutiny against dad”.

Even then, Temezi were quick and decisive to “put out the fires” that could have cost more lives. Ligito’s controversial opinions and events that unfolded in relation to how Idi Amin’s relationship with Muslim Arabs affected his relationship with Israel are discussed in more detail in the series “Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His Son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak. However, suffice it to say that at the United Nations General Assembly in 1975, Idi Amin was very instrumental in the passing of the United Nations Resolution 3379, equating Zionism with Racism and Apartheid.
Above: Idi Amin and a newly wedded wife Sarah Kyolaba being welcomed at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York on their arrival in 1975. The Waldorf-Astoria Hotel is where they stayed while on the trip to New York.

“During dad’s speech at the United Nations in New York, he was instrumental in passing the United Nations Resolution 3379 equating Zionism with Racism and Apartheid”, Jaffar confirmed before adding:

“The arising resolution stood the Test of Time from 1975 to 1991 when George Bush Senior sought an Alliance to fight against Saddam Hussein. At the time of the passing of Resolution 3379, Africans came together as one to protect their wayward Chairman”, Jaffar said laughing at his reference to his dad as wayward.

“On his return home from New York, dad once told the family that the CIA had even the cleaning ladies as spies. He said he got fond of one Black American cleaning lady and gave her a very large tip. He had said to the lady, “I know you are suffering under the White man, but you have this. It will help you”, while relishing the look of shock on the woman’s face when he handed over 10,000 US Dollars Cash!”

“The incident tickled dad so much he would laugh hard as he retold the story numerous times”. 
“Dad never got tired of reminiscing about that Waldorf-Astoria Hotel incident. The next time I saw the very hotel located in Manhattan was in the movie “Trading Places”, starring Eddie Murphy”.

“What went through your mind when you watched Trading Places? Did dad watch it too while you lived in Saudi Arabia?” quizzed Margaret Akulia.

“The grandeur of the place! It was a “Rags to Riches” story of a Black man who made good. The story was similar to dad’s story - a former Kasanvu (coerced labourer) rising to the position of President of Uganda. Dad loved watching “Trading Places” and “enjoyed” the reversal of fortunes in the movie.”

What was going through your dad’s head when he spoke in Luganda? Why did he speak in Luganda? - probed Margaret Akulia coming back to the fact that Idi Amin caused a murmur at the United Nations when he spoke in Luganda, a language he mastered while growing up among the Baganda people of Uganda.

“When dad defiantly forced the Luganda language on the United Nations General Assembly in New York in 1975 and gave an address in Luganda, he was very clear in articulating his points.”

Jaffar was referring to the fact that as Chairman of the Organization of African Unity that year, his father felt it necessary to clearly articulate his position at the United Nations in relation to United Nations Resolution 3379 without the constraints of language.

“He was always aware of his constituency. He had already set up the International External Service of the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation and knew the people that mattered were listening”, Jaffar added in reference to the fact that his father enjoyed a lot of support from members of the Baganda tribe of Uganda.

“He was speaking directly to his constituency and Luganda was actually the one language he spoke fluently. Even the Baganda were stupefied and elated to hear him speak their language on the world stage, for Swahili was the preeminent language - actually the only language with a translatable service at the UN. Dad could also speak Swahili fluently but he chose to speak in Luganda”.

“Kinene, Uganda’s Ambassador to the United Nations at the time had to be the “Impromptu Translator” for Luganda back to English”.

“Dad was making a statement. He understood the significance of the occasion and did not wish to be compromised. He understood that he represented Africa at that moment as the OAU Chairman and he was aware of the significance of the occasion and necessity for eloquent articulation”.
“Dad’s humble upbringing and crowd pleasing style resonated with the teeming masses. This style stemmed from his gift of speech. He had the astonishing ability to lead a Nation due to his extraordinary fluency in at least a dozen Indigenous African languages. His memory for words, for people and places never ceased to amaze his former Kings African Rifles Commanding Officer Major Iain Grahame. He spoke directly to the people in a language they understood. The essence of good communication in today’s ICT generation is the ability to get your message across. This factor is quite often ignored by his detractors, but it is the most indelible testament as to why he continues to resonate with the majority of the now revived underclass (Common Man) under this structurally adjusted society in the 21st century”.

“I would venture to say that dad did very well in attempting to communicate in English. I doubt that many people would perform so well if they were “dumped” in a hostile environment and expected to pick up and communicate in a language they had no interest in learning or mastering. I know they would sound just as “nonsensical” to Native Speakers. However, the irony of dad’s so-called “nonsensical” statements is that they came to pass with the appointments of Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice as United States Secretaries of State and the election of Barack Obama as President of the United States of America” Jaffar reiterated.

**A Sample of Reflections by Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere on the meeting and historic Reconciliation Ceremony they had on Thursday, April 9, 2009 in Butiama, northwestern Tanzania, East Africa**

A lot of preparation went into receiving Jaffar Amin in Butiama because Madaraka Nyerere wanted his guest to feel very welcome as is characteristic of true African hospitality. In Butiama, the BBC as the sponsor of the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony between Jaffar and Madaraka was very instrumental in keeping track of preceding events. The events included reactions by the public to the meeting of the descendants of two men who fought a war to the death between 1978 and 1979 and “dragged” innocent civilians along.

There were concerns for Jaffar Amin’s safety as Madaraka also alluded to when he told a crowd of well wishers that had assembled to witness the historic event.

"This is a good idea because when it was initially reported, some people thought that it would provoke tensions but it has not been the case," Madaraka told the attentive crowd. Madaraka had assured the BBC that his “unlikely” guest would be safe and well taken care of as daddy Mwalimu Julius Nyerere would also have done – even to Jaffar’s father Idi Amin despite their vicious war to the death!
Following is a sample only of Reflections by Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere on the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony they had on Thursday, April 9, 2009 in Butiama, northwestern Tanzania, East Africa.

Source: BBC NEWS

http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/africa/7992195.stm

Jaffar Amin

“The two families - President Mwalimu Julius Nyerere and President Idi Amin - ought to have met because they were the two protagonists.

So, after carefully considering BBC’s request, I agreed to travel more than 1,000km to Tanzania to meet Madaraka Nyerere in Butiama [his hometown in northern Tanzania].

Both of us were young when the war broke out. Madaraka was 16 and I was only 12.

Madaraka Nyerere comes from a family of somebody who's revered as a father of the nation and a great symbol of African socialism.

Idi Amin represents African proactive nationalism and sought to instill a sense of confidence within the common people.

But today I find my immediate family in an undefined state that feels like we are deliberately being ostracized at a political level.

There are those who condemned my father as a tyrant who killed or ordered the killing of those he perceived to be opposed to his rule.

Yet there are those who knew Idi Amin Dada as a man who loved his country, family and culture as an African.
My father is somebody who came from a poor background and always reminded us of his poor origins.

He had a stint in the 1940s as a sharecropper in the Mehta sugar plantations in Lugazi, Buganda District, but rose through the military to become a leader of a country.

Some dismissed him as a stooge of the colonialists.

Suddenly this "stooge" became very independent, populist and very nationalistic.

He propagated African pride for Africans and went ahead to implement the common man's charter, which was prepared by his predecessor.

The purpose of his leadership was to make Africans proud of themselves.

It's self-evident that as Ugandans, we exude a level of self-confidence you rarely find anywhere else on the continent.

His downfall can be traced to some of the controversial decisions he made during his seven-year rule.

For example, when he expelled Asians from the country, international opinion ran against him.

However, he claims he compensated them to the tune of $1bn through the assistance of the OIC [Organisation of the Islamic Conference] countries during the Opec heydays.

Also, when fellow Muslims convinced him to move away from the loyal relationship he enjoyed with Israel, he soon found the tide going against him.

There are those who will find it bizarre that I can decide to pay homage to a man who kicked my own father out of power and sent us into exile.

But considering the great efforts towards patriotism and a united identity that Tanzania enjoys I would wish for this virtue to become an example to Ugandans.

I also take a leaf out of [US] President [Barack] Obama's message to the Muslim world to unclench our fists when offered an extended hand.

But there is a common ground between Mwalimu [Julius] Nyerere's son and myself to reconcile historical animosities that have lingered for a long time.

It's been 30 years during which no one from both families ever dreamed of meeting.
Madaraka and I are taking that tough yet historical step. We do not want to be on the wrong side of history.”

Madaraka Nyerere

“When the Kagera war - Tanzania versus Uganda conflict - began I was a student in Shinyanga.

I remember how we tuned in to the radio to hear my father declaring war on Uganda, his voice was rich with anger.

Shinyanga, in north-western Tanzania, is the main route from the commercial capital, Dar es Salaam to Kagera - scene of the war.

I used to see a lot of military equipment and soldiers passing through, soldiers going towards Kagera.

My father had been at loggerheads with Idi Amin for nearly seven years before their differences boiled down into war.

By then, the Tanzanian public had been fully sensitised about why their countrymen were being sent to war.

I sometimes wondered whether our troops would emerge victorious dislodging Idi Amin who had presented himself as a very tough man.

Incidentally I met the Ugandan leader in very bizarre circumstances.

Back in 1972 just after he had taken over power through a military coup, he landed unannounced in the Tanzanian lakeside town of Mwanza.

He went straight to the state lodge where my father was meeting Zambia's former President Kenneth Kaunda.
I'd been given a room at the state lodge in Mwanza. I had gone out in the morning and while away, Idi Amin was given the same room without my knowledge.

When I returned, I walked straight to my room, opened the door and who do I see? It was Idi Amin.

He seemed busy working on something, which I couldn't quickly discern. So I greeted him in Kiswahili: "Shikamoo" (greeting for elders), and he responded: "Marahaba" (I am fine).

There was no more conversation. I left the room and that's the only time I ever came into close contact with him. Luckily he stayed in the room for only a few hours and left for Uganda.

I never found out what my dad made of Idi Amin's sudden appearance at the meeting. Typical of dad, he never spoke about and it never seemed to bother him.

Come 1979, around lunch time, together with college mates, we tuned in to the radio to hear my father declaring war on Uganda.

Most people who listened to that speech recall that they had never seen Mwalimu Nyerere so angry.

His tone of voice was rich with anger as he explained in a live broadcast reasons and the preparedness of attacking Uganda.

Amin's troops had launched several air raids on Tanzania, invaded it and occupied the north-western region of Kagera.

I had never heard or seen my father so angry because he wasn't this type of person who brought home his daily stresses as the president.

He made sure there was a clear and strict demarcation of his roles as president and head of the family. He never brought his work at home.

That seemed to dictate how we related with him, we would hardly ask him anything to do with work.

Even at dinner time, he would talk about anything else but not his work.

He kept his family insulated from work-related issues.

When the war broke out two of my brothers, Andrew and John, were in the air force.
And even after the war ended, my other brother Makongoro couldn't resist the allure of joining the army. He spent nearly two years in Uganda doing military work.

When the BBC asked me whether I could meet Jaffar Amin, all sorts of things rushed through my mind.

It took time to agree.

What convinced me is that both of our fathers are now dead.

Also, my father was a peace-loving man.

Even after the war, he would have agreed to meet Idi Amin and even invited him to his home Butiama.

Whatever bitterness there was in the past, all we can do now is to learn the lessons and open a new chapter for the future.”

**Reflections by other people on the historic meeting between Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere on Thursday, April 9, 2009**

Other people reflected and made observations about the historic meeting between Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere including Musoma District Executive Director (DED) Dr Karaine Kuney who asserted, “Let us forget the past and the effects of the Kagera war and focus on development issues. What is needed now is to ensure that this candle that has been lightened by Madaraka and Jaffar reminds to be sustainable and we should forget the effects of Kagera war and focus on development”.

Chief Japhet Wanzagi, Spokesman of Mwalimu Nyerere's family offers, “We are very proud to see you here. This is a historical event that is not only bringing Mwalimu and Idi Amin's families together but the East African Community people as a whole.”

**A record of Jaffar Amin’s historic Trek to Butiama, Tanzania, to meet Madaraka Nyerere**

For the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony with Madaraka Nyerere, Jaffar Amin traveled from his home in Arua in northwestern Uganda to Butiama in northwestern Tanzania after first going to Koboko, home of the Kakwa tribe in Uganda and his father Idi Amin’s ancestral home. While in Koboko, Jaffar received blessings from Temezi (Elders) of his and his father’s Adibu Kakwa clan for a safe and successful trip to Butiama.
“Koboko was always close to the Dada family, despite their “wanderings” in “foreign” lands”, Jaffar has said. So for Jaffar, it was fitting to begin his trek to Butiama and officially and publicly launch his agenda for Peace, Truth and Reconciliation and the other work he plans to do through the Al-Amin Foundation from Koboko. He needed to know he had the full Blessings of Elders from his and his father’s Adibu Kakwa clan for the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony with Madaraka Nyerere.

Jaffar Amin recounts his historic trek to Butiama, Tanzania to meet Madaraka Nyerere in the book series titled “Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His Son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak” in more detail. However, following is a sample of reflections excerpted from his notes on the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony with Madaraka Nyerere on Thursday, April 9, 2009:

“Solomon Mugera of the BBC Swahili Program chose Arua as a starting point but I preferred Koboko our ancestral homeland” offered Jaffar before clarifying, “…for most Kakwa Muslims including members of my family ended up in Arua. They are now considered Nubi even though they have a very strong allegiance to Koboko and the Kakwa tribe”.

Jaffar is referring to the De-Tribalised Community referred to as the Nubi (Nubians) which emerged from 19th century political upheavals in Africa that were linked to the colonization of Sub-Saharan Africa. Predominantly Muslim, this De-Tribalised community, which spans present day Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and other parts of Africa comprises of uprooted tribal populations whose ancestors
were conscripted into colonial armies and used as mercenaries to subdue and conquer Indigenous Kingdoms in Africa.

Of how his family became labeled as Nubi (Nubians) despite being from the Kakwa tribe, Jaffar offers:

“My family’s history with the Kings African Rifles dates back to the 19th century political upheavals in Africa that were linked to the colonization of Sub-Saharan Africa. During the time in 1914 when Grandpa was forcibly conscripted into the Kings African Rifles in order to fight in the First World War (WWI) alongside colonial soldiers, many other members of my family were also forcibly conscripted to fight in the war”.

“From the time it was colonized, the West Nile region of Uganda was a fertile recruiting ground for the Kings African Rifles. As a result, when the Second World War (WWII) erupted, the Colonial Administration in Uganda recruited many soldiers from that part of Uganda including more of my family members. However, at the end of the Second World War, the few surviving soldiers were discharged and encouraged to re-enter farming as Kasanvu (coerced labourers), a system introduced by the Colonial State in Uganda in 1909”.

“By the time several of my extended family members were discharged from the Kings African Rifles after the First World War (WWI) and “settled” as peasants and indentured labourers, the bulk of my family had fully embraced Islam. Because of their Islamic faith, many members of the Kakwa community in Arua and other parts of Uganda have been equated and associated with the De-Tribalised Moslem Community referred to as the Nubi (Nubians) and my family was no exception”.

“Family members that had fully amalgamated with the De-Tribalised Community referred to as the Nubi (Nubians) were encouraged to ignore our Kakwa ethnicity and culture and identify with the Muslim Ummah (Community of Muslim Believers) instead and speak only Colloquial Arabic”.

“Because the bulk of the mercenaries were recruited from African communities that had been colonized by the Arabs and the uprooted tribal populations were encouraged to ignore ethnic backgrounds and languages, Colloquial Arabic became the de facto Lingua franca of the De-Tribalised Community referred to as the Nubi (Nubians). This included the bulk of my family and it continues to be the case to this day. However, the majority of members of my family continued to hold onto our Kakwa roots, including Grandpa and Grandma”.

The De-Tribalised Community referred to as the Nubi (Nubians) is discussed in more detail in the series “Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His Son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak”, along with the significant role this Community played in influencing Idi Amin’s life story and “writing” his script. This is because his family’s “amalgamation” to this Community raised a lot of issues and created a lot
of problems for Idi Amin. It had a direct bearing to events that unfolded in Uganda before and during Idi Amin’s rule in Uganda and what precipitated his overthrow in April 1979 during the war with Tanzania.

Idd Seif of the BBC Swahili Program accompanied Jaffar during this unprecedented trip sponsored by the BBC World Service and the two have a lot to share with the world in relation to retracing the footsteps of the soldiers who fought in a war that cost so many lives needlessly. Before Idd Seif landed in Arua, Jaffar poked and jested about him “polishing” his Kinubi. He was referring to the Colloquial Arabic spoken by the De-Tribalised Community referred to as the Nubi (Nubians) which is referred to as Kinubi in Uganda.

Featured in a photograph above are Idd Seif of the BBC Swahili Program (left) and Jaffar Amin (right) at the Koboko Town Council Offices in Koboko, Idi Amin’s ancestral home. In Koboko, Jaffar obtained Blessings from Elders of his Ethnic group for the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony with Madaraka Nyerere in Butiama on April 9, 2009.

Featured in a photograph below are Idd Seif of the BBC Swahili Program (left) and Jaffar Amin (right) at what used to be his father Idi Amin’s quaint clay tiled house in Tanganyika Village in Jiako, Arua District. Built in 1962, the house was
razed to the ground in 1979 when Idi Amin was ousted and it still lies in the rubble-state. Upon returning from Koboko and before embarking on the trek to Butiama for the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony with Madaraka Nyerere, Jaffar made sure to stop over at the “rubble site” of his father’s home. He wanted to capture the destruction that accompanied the war to overthrow his father in April 1979.

Of the reason why his father’s house in Arua has stayed in the rubble-state since the war during which he was ousted in 1979, Jaffar offers, “Dad’s house has lain in the rubble-state for 30 years. None of the 60 children have felt the need to rebuild it for most of us have taken up foreign citizenship. All if not most took up foreign citizenship as a seeming justification and resounding testament to the continued assumption of our presumed foreign origins in Arua as the accusations by many political foes continue to fly around in Arua and affect us at a family level”.

From Monday, April 6 2009 to Thursday, April 9, 2009, the BBC followed Jaffar Amin to Butiama in northwestern Tanzania, as Jaffar embarked on the trek to meet Madaraka Nyerere and retraced the footsteps of the soldiers who ousted his father Idi Amin from power on April 11, 1979. During the trip, Jaffar Amin couldn’t help noticing and reflecting on the signs of the war that ended 30 years ago on April 11, 1979 but still haunts survivors and victims to this day! He
couldn’t help reflecting on the fact that 30 years after a conflict that should have been resolved peacefully, the arising damage and destruction and the signs of the war are still visible, while survivors and bereaved families suffer in silence.

“Only other survivors and bereaved families can relate to the “invisible” psychic scars that accompany all wars”, a survivor of the war pointed out.

Jaffar Amin (left) and Eric, the North Western BBC Correspondent (right), standing by an Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) at the town hall grounds in Kagera, Tanzania during Jaffar’s trip to meet Madaraka Nyerere. The APC has been in this location since the war during which Idi Amin was ousted from power on April 11, 1979. The location is where APC troop carriers were destroyed by the Tanzania People’s Defence Force in 1979. Thirty years after the war, the signs are still visible even though the psychological scars aren’t.

Needless to say, surviving veterans and victims of the war between Uganda and Tanzania have a lot to say about the war, as do refugees who were forced to flee the war to escape certain death in the hands of pockets of soldiers on the opposing sides. Survivors of other wars in Uganda, parts of Africa and around the globe and individuals and groups who have ever been caught between opposing sides determined to fight to the death know first hand the devastating
effects of war. They have experienced first hand the African Proverb that says, “When two Elephants fight, it is the grass that suffers”.

In a Public Service Announcement put out by the BBC World Service, Solomon Mugera the head of the BBC Swahili language service conveyed the sentiment of the above African Proverb. He reiterated the role of the BBC in spearheading the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony and recording it for future generations when he observed:

"Idi Amin and Julius Nyerere were avowed enemies. Their differences dominated regional politics throughout the Seventies. Their leadership had profound impact on their citizens, with enduring legacies. Exploring the impact that war has had on Tanzania, Uganda and the entire East African region, BBC Swahili has spearheaded the meeting between the sons of the two adversaries. We are looking forward to covering every moment of their historic journey."

It is for the sake of the “grass” referred to in the African Proverb that Jaffar Amin and Madara Nyerere are committed to Peace and Reconciliation. It is for this reason that Jaffar Amin hopes that their unprecedented meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony will prompt peaceful resolutions between groups at war with each other in Uganda, the rest of Africa and around the globe instead of war. It is also for this reason that Jaffar Amin hopes that the Parliament of Uganda will pass legislation relating to an effective Truth and Reconciliation Commission for Uganda. He plans to be very instrumental in advocating for and pursuing the agenda for Peace, Truth and Reconciliation through the Al-Amin Foundation he will be launching formally, shortly.

In “extending a hand” to build a Peaceful Uganda, Jaffar Amin is following in the footsteps of his older brother Taban Amin who “waved a white flag” when he laid down arms as the head of a group initially opposed to the government of Yoweri Museveni. A year and a half after returning to Uganda under an amnesty offered by President Yoweri Museveni, Jaffar’s brother Taban Amin, a former army officer was appointed a deputy director of Uganda's internal security organization. Until 2003, he was the leader of the West Nile Bank Front, a 6,000-member group of former members of the Uganda Army intent on fighting the government of Uganda under Yoweri Museveni.
Above: Jaffar Amin’s Brother Taban Amin (middle, bearded) with members of a group he commanded in the Democratic Republic of the Congo before returning to Uganda under an amnesty offered by President Yoweri Museveni.

As Jaffar Amin prepared to meet Madaraka Nyerere in Butiama in northwestern Tanzania on Thursday, April 9, 2009, he reflected on the role Julius Nyerere played in the emancipation of Tanzania and Africa. He could not heap enough praises for Madaraka’s compatriots when he said “Nyerere is a hero of a united Tanzania … he has shown the world the real meaning of what a union ought to be.” The Journalist who premised Jaffar’s quote with “Tanzania had set a good example on how true national unity could be achieved under the good leadership of the late Mwalimu Nyerere” was very accurate in his assertion.

Jaffar has a dream to encourage and pursue Mwalimu Nyerere’s vision for Uganda by contributing towards building a Uganda that is devoid of the rampant tribalism that has persisted since the country’s inception. He plans to pursue this dream through the Al-Amin Foundation and other institutions and structures he becomes involved in.

“Madaraka welcomed Jaffar’s visit, saying the historical event would help to cement relationship between the sister countries” offered yet another Journalist covering the event before quoting Madaraka who said, “This is also a morale boost of the intention of our countries to unite and become one …”.
Uniting the countries of East Africa is a vision and agenda Jaffar Amin is also committed to honouring and supporting through the Al-Amin Foundation. He looks forward to having Madaraka and others as “co-drivers” of a long overdue agenda for the countries of East Africa to unite under the banner of the once thriving “East African Community” that disintegrated when their fathers became nemeses. Jaffar will implement the “East African Community’ agenda while also jumping onto the “band wagon” of a push for a United Africa as envisioned by their fathers and other Gallant sons and daughters of Africa.

Jaffar Amin made a point of paying homage to the late President Julius Nyerere during his historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony with Madaraka Nyerere.

“Accompanied by his colleague and religious leaders, Jaffar laid a wreath on the grave of the late Mwalimu Julius Nyerere shortly after arriving here. Jaffar then proceeded to the visitors' room where he signed the visitors' book”, offered a Journalist before quoting Jaffar who said, “I feel blessed to be here … and that is what I have written in the visitors' book”.

Jaffar does feel blessed to have been the one that was chosen by the organizers of the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony with Madaraka Nyerere in Butiama. They could have picked any one of Idi Amin’s children but they picked him. He feels blessed to contribute towards reigniting the “fire” that once sustained a vibrant “East African Community” – before the “fight” between his father and Madaraka’s father caused the celebrated “East African Community” to disintegrate beyond recognition.

Jaffar felt blessed when he gushed to Margaret Akulia in a telephone conversation initiated by her to confirm that he was safe:

“I am having a great time…This trip is like living the chapter we just completed revising...”

Jaffar was referring to a Chapter in the series, “Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His Son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak” that reconstructs events that occurred 30 years in 2009 on the very same route taken by him to meet Madaraka Nyerere for a “Peaceful Handshake”. Jaffar’s Baritone voice reverberated with excitement during the nerve wrecking phone conversation initiated by Margaret Akulia to confirm that Jaffar and his entourage hadn’t been “ambushed” by individuals vehemently opposed to his visit to Tanzania to meet Madaraka Nyerere.

A couple of Internet “Bloggers” had left no doubt in anyone’s mind about how they detested Madaraka’s “audacity” to meet Idi Amin’s son. In direct opposition to Madaraka’s wishes to “extend a hand” to Idi Amin’s son, others had voiced that Jaffar should not be allowed on Tanzanian soil. However, Madaraka had defied the “Bloggers” and others opposed to Jaffar’s visit and extended an open hand to Jaffar nonetheless. Jaffar was grateful to Madaraka for his “defiance”
and relished the opportunity provided by the trip for him to bring to life and relive the Chapter in the series that outlines the footsteps taken by the army that overthrew his father in April 1979.

“Did you know that Al-Qadhafi build a mosque in Butiama?” inquired Jaffar Amin, in another telephone conversation with Margaret Akulia who was surprised by the revelation and chuckled

“Your dad’s convoluted story just gets more interesting by the day! I can’t wait to see how it ends”, while jesting and laughing, “Wasn’t Al-Qadhafi one of your dad’s closest friends? If so, how come he was Julius Nyerere’s friend too?”

Margaret Akulia was referring to the close friendship Idi Amin and Muammar Al-Qadhafi of Libya shared that contributed to Idi Amin’s broken relationship with Israel and the safe passage Al-Qadhafi gave Idi Amin and his immediate family and associates to Libya after he was ousted from power 30 years in April 2009.

Idi Amin (left) with Muammar Al-Qadhafi (right) in a 1977 photograph taken while Idi Amin was visiting Muammar Al-Qadhafi in Libya. The series “Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His Son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak” includes a section devoted to discussing the strong relationship Idi Amin shared with Muammar Al-
Qadhafi including a joint communiqué they signed and issued in Tripoli on February 14, 1972, relating to their unwavering support for the Arab People. In addition to the friendship with Muammar Al-Qadhafi, Idi Amin enjoyed a very close relationship with the Saudi Royal Family and other Arab countries. Idi Amin’s unwavering support for the Arab Peoples would have profound implications on his long-term relationship with the People of Israel.

These are the profound implications of which Jaffar Amin writes in the section above titled “A Sample of Reflections by Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere on the meeting and historic Reconciliation Ceremony they had on Thursday, April 9, 2009 in Butiama, northwestern Tanzania, East Africa” when he offered:

“All, when fellow Muslims convinced him to move away from the loyal relationship he enjoyed with Israel, he soon found the tide going against him”.

After Idi Amin was ousted from power in April 1979, Jaffar’s family was forced to flee, first to Libya and then to Saudi Arabia. At the time of Idi Amin’s fall, Al-Qadhafi even sent a C130 Hercules Transport Plane to pick up Idi Amin from Arua on April 23, 1979 where he had retreated to after the fall of his government on April 11, 1979.

“After dad arrived in Arua, he continued his feeble broadcasts on the Gilgili Radio Station at Arua. On April 23, 1979, he was still in Arua when a Libyan C-130 Hercules landed at Arua Airstrip right next to his Tanganyika Residence to pick him and several of his associates for the plane trip to Libya” writes Jaffar Amin.

“That fateful day, dad embarked on the outbound journey into exile. He and his entourage left Arua for Libya in a special plane that flew him to Tripoli, Libya where he was reunited with us. However, after about a year in Libya, a rift developed between dad and Al-Qadhafi, which was one of the reasons why dad relocated us to Saudi Arabia”, continued Jaffar Amin.

Sample Articles gathered from the Internet on the historic meeting between Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere on Thursday, April 9, 2009

Following are articles reproduced in their entirety in order to preserve their depth:

Umaru M. Kashaka of Mbale, Uganda, offered:

“EDITOR—I am grateful to the BBC for organising a colourful event and going an extra mile to have it aired on its Outlook programme several times. This historic moment saw Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere, sons of the late Idi Amin and Mwalimu Julius Nyerere sit side by side in the same sofa last week in Butiama village, Tanzania.

It was a good gesture for Madaraka to invite the son of his father’s bitter enemy
when the East African Federation is in the pipeline.

They have indeed demonstrated to the world that they can let bygones be bygones and therefore deserve a pat on the back for that good gesture of true love and friendship. This shouldn’t however be taken for granted but should be emulated by all peace-loving Africans be they political leaders or not. It should be extended to our homes, in the neighbourhood, at workplaces, everywhere.

Parents should instill in their children the spirit of forgiving and forgetting. They should not encourage them to keep grudges against those they have fallen out with as this may retard development or be a recipe for disaster not only for them but also the entire region.

Umaru M. Kashaka
IUIU, Mbale

(Source: http://www.newvision.co.ug/D/8/21/678047, Tuesday, 14th April, 2009.

Victor Lugala a Nairobi-based Sudanese journalist who was trained in Tanzania opined:

“The big story in East Africa recently was about the meeting of the sons of Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere of Tanzania and Idi Amin Dada of Uganda. The two former presidents are dead. Jaafar Remo Amin, one of Amin’s more than 30 children traveled all the way from his ancestral home of Arua, west Nile district of Uganda to meet Mwalimu Nyerere’s son, Madaraka Nyerere, at Nyerere’s ancestral home in Butiama.

In 1979, Idi Amin, Uganda’s ruler for eight years was ousted from power by a combined force of Tanzanian troops and Ugandan revolutionaries. Mwalimu Nyerere who was then the president of Tanzania declared war on Uganda as a counter attack following Uganda’s invasion of Kagera in Northern Tanzania. Amin claimed Kagera was part of Uganda

Amin died in exile in Saudi Arabia in 2003, and Mwalimu Nyerere died in a London hospital in 1999. Until their death, the two leaders were sworn enemies who never got the chance to reconcile. Exactly 30 years after the bloody war between Tanzania and Uganda, the British Broadcasting Service (BBC), arranged the meeting of the two sons of the two leaders on Tanzanian soil, on the request of Jaafar. This was the first meeting of Amin junior and Nyerere junior.

How the BBC carefully picked on the almost like-minded two gentlemen shows that the BBC (Swahili service) as leading international broadcaster most listened
to in Africa is championing peace journalism on the continent. I was not only impressed by the professional coverage of the historical event, but I was overwhelmed by the diplomacy displayed by the two gentlemen (Jaafar and Madaraka).

Solomon Mugera, the BBC Swahili Service boss, tells us that the process that culminated in the meeting of Jaafar and Madaraka was painstaking indeed. The scouting, consultation, and cajoling might have been the reason the BBC did not settle, for instance, on Taban Amin, or Makongoro Nyerere.

Jaafar is an Islamic name - may be he was named after Sudan’s military leader, Jaafar Nimeiri (1969-85)? His ethnic Kakwa name is Remo, which loosely means a son who was born during a dispute or conflict between his father and some external antagonistic forces like in-laws. The verb remo loosely means to spear.

So, whatever the circumstances led to the naming of Jaafar as Remo, may not concern the reader at this point, but the fact that he is Remo at all, a man whose father (Amin) was in conflict with the father of African socialism, was fitting indeed for him to be the one to visit Butiama so he could reconcile with his fellow East African, Madaraka.

Of course, Madaraka, like Uhuru (Kenyatta) are names that are reminiscent of Africa’s struggle for independence from colonialism. (Uhuru Kenyatta, son of Mzee Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya’s first president from his younger wife, Mama Ngina, was actually named so by the current president of Kenya, Mwai Kibaki."

To give the occasion proper meaning, let us put the two names, Remo and Madaraka that are both nouns and verbs, in context: Remo, he who was born after a dispute, traveled to Butiama to embrace Madaraka, which they will be set free of the animosity of the dads.

The two gentlemen come from different family backgrounds. Remo, or Jaafar's father, was a soldier who rose from rags as a shoe shine boy in army barracks, a farm hand in Indian farms in Lugazi sugar estates, to become a president of his country through means best known to him: the barrel of the gun.

Amin loved to have many children. Being a Muslim, he was licenced to have several wives, which of course translated into children. Amin’s children knew him as a loving father. Whatever their father did in state house was none of their business. It seems Amin wanted his children to be like him. Pictures of Amin at state functions with some of his small boys dressed up in military fatigues bear testimony to his wishes. One of his sons, Taban, is now a major general in the Ugandan Army under Museveni.

But from the look of things, Remo Amin seems to be his father’s total opposite. He is soft-spoken, wise, polished, well read, Allah-fearing and eloquent. He is not
parochial, he thinks global, quoting Obama and philosophers, and wants to repair the damage caused by his late father. His father broke up the East African Community in 1978. But the son has a vision of united East Africa. I am not sure if he is not nursing some political ambitions.

Madaraka, is a likeable character, a typical ordinary Tanzanian. He is down to earth and hospitable. Although he is soft-spoken like his father, Mwalimu, he doesn’t seem to talk like a politician; neither does his voice betray his political ambitions. That is so because of his family background. Mwalimu, as we learn from the son, was a completely different and rare breed of African leaders. If he was another one of those who enjoy clinging to power for life, he would have groomed one of his sons as his successor, as if political leadership is hereditary like a bad disease.

But for the poor old man of Butiama politics was strictly the business of state house, the office where he worked and public domain. At home he was a simple husband, father, who talked about the ordinary things of life, cracking a joke here and there, and made his presence as a father of his children felt.

How some of Mwalimu Nyerere’s children ended up in the army is a story for another day. For a man who translated Shakespeare’s Julius Caesar into Kiswahili, one would have thought one of his children would have ended in the arts as dramatists, novelists or poets. For a man who introduced Ujamaa, as a means of poverty alleviation, one would have wished his sons would have followed in his footsteps to complete his father’s stalled project in countries where there are internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees.

IDP and refugee camps are the best places for reviving Ujamaa philosophy of villagisation or collective settlement. When Remo came to Butiama, so we are told, he brought with him a gift of traditional Nubi mat. By the way, the Nubi are ex-Sudanese who fought in the two world wars who decided to settle and spend their post-service benefits in East Africa. These soldiers of fortune found a common identity in Islam. Hence, Nubi black people or Black civilization of the Nile valley.

Most of the Nubi in Tanzania who first settled in Mnazi Moja are either dead, or went to Zanzibar where they fitted culturally. Nubi women are good at making handicrafts like weaving baskets and making mats. So for someone like Remo who is half Kakwa and half Nubi, a mat – which is the work of human hands – is the greatest honour one can bestow a brother or friend.

Chairs are modern furniture of today. The mat is an African symbol. During important occasions, visitors sit on a mat; we sleep on it, and have fun on it. The mat is a Nile valley item, from the source of Lake Victoria to Upper Egypt, the home of the real Nubians, a people who invented their own script and their civilization spans thousands of years even before the pyramids were built.
The Bahaya people of Bukoba by the shores of Lake Victoria are known for their hospitality and spoiling visitors with gifts. Apart from the traditional dry coffee beans (emwani) that are given to visitors to chew to keep them awake, a mat is an indispensable wedding gift. It is the bed where the newly wedded couple sleeps on and to bear fruits (whatever fruits).

Solomon Mugera and his colleagues at the BBC brought Jaafar Remo Amin and Madaraka Nyerere together to bring hope for a new beginning in East Africa in particular, and mother Africa in general. For you Remo and Madaraka, that symbolic mat must bear abundant fruits of lasting peace on our continent.

Article by Victor Lugala

(Source: http://www.dailynews.co.tz/feature/?n=1420&cat=feature, Thursday April 23, 2009 – posted on April 20, 2009 @ 02:49)

A compilation of additional reflections and observations will be made available as the book series, “Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His Son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak” unfolds.

The conception of Jaffar Amin’s Agenda for Peace, Truth and Reconciliation

Jaffar Amin began envisioning his agenda for Peace, Truth and Reconciliation years before the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony with Madaraka Nyerere on April 9, 2009. By the time he attended the funeral of the very Former President of Uganda that his father Idi Amin Dada overthrew in a Military Coup on January 25, 1971, he had already mapped out a strategy for the agenda.

At the funeral of The Late President of Uganda, Jaffar left a lasting impression on Obote’s family and the other mourners. However, no one captures the impression left by Jaffar Amin during the funeral better than David Kaiza in an article titled “Thirty years after his overthrow, nation comes to grips with Amin’s grim legacy”.

The article, which was posted on Saturday, April 11, 2009 at 00:15 on the East African following Jaffar Amin’s historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony with Madaraka Nyerere is reproduced below also in its entirety in order to preserve its depth:

(Source: http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/amin)

“Trying to beat the traffic after the funeral of the former Ugandan president Milton Obote in October 2005, we left Apac immediately the service was over.
We were crossing the ferry over the Nile at Masindi Port when I saw him walk out of his double-cabin pick-up to stand at the prow.

Crossing from the east to the west bank, the sun was directly in our face, glittering on the surface of the mile-wide river.

Beyond that was the immense flatness of Bunyoro-Kitara. Still, he had his family’s characteristic build, and I knew him – Jaffar Amin, son of Idi Amin, another former president of Uganda who had died two years before.

Looking more thoughtful than we ever saw his father do in public he stood there, staring into the churning water.

Back in Akokoro, Obote’s home town, the master of ceremonies at the funeral had introduced him to the mourners.

Words were said about forgiveness and reconciliation and, as he acknowledged the applause, it was as if a tension accumulated over the 34 years since the 1971 coup had dissipated in a deep sigh of relief.

I thought of walking over to him, but the questions that came into my mind did not sound right.

I then thought to tip off the international journalists I was travelling with.

But I held my tongue. Being welcomed to Obote’s compound would have done things to Jaffar’s mind; he must want to be alone.

As a Ugandan you are brought up to instinctively revile Amin.

But, standing on that ferry, a strong sense of protectiveness towards Jaffar overcame me.

Anyone sticking a microphone in his face would only feed the gluttonous Amin media mill.

The terse lines on the website of the Al Amin Foundation, quoting Jaffar on that event, do not capture the expression I saw on his face that afternoon:

“My presence at Obote’s funeral in Akokoro as one of many of the children of the late Field Marshal Idi Amin Dada was to show respect and convey my personal condolences to the bereaved family of the late Dr Apollo Milton Obote,” he says.

Now another landmark connected to his father is upon us: For the whole of last week, the BBC radio programme Network Africa reported on the crossing of another divide, with Jaffar reaching out to the family of another man his father
fought – the late Tanzanian president Mwalimu Julius Nyerere – to mark the passing, on April 11, of 30 years since the fall of Amin.

Thirty years is a long time. The principal actors from that age – Obote, General Tito Okello Lutwa, Major-General David Oyite Ojok and Amin himself are long dead. A sizeable contingent of the Ugandan Asian community whom Amin expelled in 1971 have returned.

Since 1979 Uganda has never stopped fighting: hundreds of thousands have been slaughtered, and mayhem beyond what even Amin dared commit has come to pass.

While they were still alive there was always the anxiety – ridiculous, yes – that these men might somehow return to rule the country. With the death of Obote in 2005, the past finally retreated harmlessly into the shadows.

Idi Amin’s death in 2003 sparked off soul searching in Uganda.

Some called him the common man’s hero, whose 1972 economic war made it possible for ordinary Ugandans to enter business. Others, among them those who fled the country or lost relatives in the wanton killings that marked his nine-year rule, swore that even his body would not be buried in Uganda.

The first group’s claim, fuelled by hatred of the colonial economy and anti-Asian sentiments, amounted to saying he brought light to the country by setting it on fire.

The second group, which included President Yoweri Museveni, was powerful enough to prevent the return of Amin’s body home for burial. And so, like an accursed man banished into the desert, Amin lies buried in Saudi Arabia.

The Amin family, led by Jaffar, has been on a campaign to rehabilitate the patriarch’s image and bring to an end the four-decade opprobrium surrounding his legacy.

It is building the Al-Amin Foundation, initially to promote a “social justice agenda for Uganda that will transcend the tribalism, racism and classism that has wreaked havoc on Uganda”.

The BBC Swahili Service organised the meeting between Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere.

But what Amin was and what happened on April 11 all those years ago touched every Ugandan family.
While this was a priceless public relations exercise for the Amin family, the BBC was simply exploiting the shock attraction of the name.

And it is an immense attraction: out of the nine presidents who have ruled the country, only Amin has had not one but three big films made about him.

Amin had in excess the qualities that spark a story to life – part bully, part clown, his personality made for suspenseful transformation at each turn.

He had an actor’s capacity to be what he needed to be.

Like the multifaceted reading of reality in a post-modern interpretation of things, he did not keep one face constant for too long.

The Last King of Scotland itself differed from previous movie depictions of Amin by presenting him as harmless; Forest Whitaker’s dictator was a stuffed bear – still looking big and menacing, but a harmless lover of jokes, a victim of sorts.

In reality, Amin left Uganda quite unrecognisable; his destruction of its moral fibre has set a permanent seal on the country.

You only have to move beyond its borders to see that what there seems normal – war and impermanence – is a sad syndrome of a society traumatised en masse.

His image is now softening in Uganda. But like any reading of history, this is not a reading of the man per se but a criticism of the present: when Ugandans see the current tinkering with constitutions to extend presidential term limits, they remember that Amin was devoid of personal ambition. When they see the shameless corruption of our rulers, they recall that Amin never really stole public money and had those accused of doing so executed.

One can only imagine what it was like growing up as Amin’s son, amid the constant condemnation of your father, the reviling of your name....

To hear Idi Amin’s children’s voices is to see the past differently. Now Amin looks human, closer.

The past becomes confusing, the present less clear. It is what happens when the personal crosses the public.

In this confusion is a thick layering of history – of the oppressive colonial administration responsible for moulding Amin during the suppression of Mau Mau in Kenya. It begs questions of how a country should be run and what becomes of it when the military takes over.

In Uganda, the military is still in charge.
This year, then, is the beginning of the final stretch of years, beginning in 1979, in which Amin’s shadow will hang over Uganda.

Time is driving out the leaders who formed extreme opinions during his rule – who are finding out that it is harder now to evoke his name to whip the masses into line.

Aspects of what Amin was will remain beyond redemption: the spectacle of human degradation, of men stripped naked, blindfolded and shot in public, and the grabbing of property and businesses in 1972 from Ugandan Asians must not be recast in any way.”

(The above article by David Kaiza was posted on “The East African” on Saturday, April 11, 2009 at 00:15 (http://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/amin).

Jaffar Amin’s idea to meet Madaraka Nyerere was born in part during the funeral of Dr. Apollo Milton Obote. Since that time, he has been working on a strategy to implement that vision which vision came to fruition during a meeting Jaffar had with Solomon Mugera, Head of BBC Swahili in Nairobi, Kenya, in February 2009. The meeting was to discuss the idea in more depth and map out an implementation strategy.

At the meeting, Jaffar suggested to Solomon Mugera, “since I had paid my respects to the Father of the Nation of Uganda Apollo Milton Obote in Akokoro, I would like to do the same to the Father of the Nation of Tanzania in Butiama” and Solomon agreed. So, the BBC set the wheels in motion for the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony between Jaffar Amin and Madaraka Nyerere in Butiama, northwestern Tanzania.

**Jaffar Amin’s resolve to build on the meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony he had with Madaraka Nyerere to encourage other “First Sons and First Daughters” to subscribe to his vision**

Jaffar Amin hopes to use the example he and Madaraka set on April 9, 2009 as an incentive to encourage a younger generation of Former and Current "First Sons and First Daughters" to replicate their initiative for resolving conflict by peaceful means and not war. He hopes that the meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony will serve as an example and model for other Former and Current “First Sons and First Daughters” to “extend a hand” to perceived adversaries and to take on the responsibility of seeking Truth and Reconciliation while correcting “mistakes” made by their parents. Jaffar Amin hopes that the spirit of reconciliation that was demonstrated at the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony between him and Madaraka will promote a unified voice for the development of Africa.
Jaffar Amin’s resolve to enlist the support of “First Sons and First Daughters” to map out a “Democratic Vision” for African countries is evident when he asserts his standpoints:

“We as recognized members of the First Families do and will be able to wield the kind of influence governments only dream about, both in the country and the Diaspora at large. This is because we have the undying love and affection of our country and regions in totality. This goodwill cannot be ignored and it has the capacity to disrupt whole processes including “political harmony” in many circumstances. We saw this with the Kabaka Yeka movement, the 1966 Crisis, the 1971 2nd Republic, the 1972 civil war, the 1979 Liberation War, the 1980s election crisis, the anarchy of the early eighties, the guerilla insurrection in 1981 and the toppling of Obote for the second time by his high command”.

Jaffar speaks from the heart and gives credit to Uganda’s President Yoweri Museveni when he says:

“...I was heartened when H.E. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni responded with a conciliatory note on all past leaders following the demise of The Late President Dr. Apollo Milton Obote and hope this shows the way forward for the whole nation of Uganda following the demise of the “Father of the Nation”. My presence at Obote’s funeral in Akokoro city, as one of many of the children of The Late Field Marshal Idi Amin Dada was to show respect and convey my personal condolences to the bereaved family of The Late Dr. Apollo Milton Obote. We went to Akokoro to convey a personal condolence to the bereaved family of The Late Dr. Apollo Milton Obote. The Proposed Truth and Reconciliation Commission when implemented will resolve the matter of seeking forgiveness from each other”. Jaffar is speaking about Uganda’s Peace, Truth and Reconciliation Initiative currently being considered in the Uganda Parliament.

Jaffar Amin expands by offering, “My focus on the “First Families” is based on our historical antagonistic, dichotomous approach to Ugandan politics. I saw an opportunity when H.E Yoweri Kaguta Museveni started talking reconciliation. I wish to utilize these key families as the liaison points in the particular regions to garner support for "politics of development". We enjoy that distinction of blind loyalty from our constituencies that in some regions can be an instant mark up of up to 50% guaranteed support. The proof as they say will be in the pudding”.

The list of “First Children” of Uganda’s leaders from Frederick Muteesia II, Benedicto Kiwanuka, Apollo Milton Obote, his father Idi Amin Dada, Yusuf Lule, Godfrey L. Binaisa, Paulo Muwanga, Tito Okello and Yoweri Kaguta Museveni will provide a starting point for Jaffar Amin. It will be a list from which Jaffar will draw participants who have political insights possessed by only “First Children”.
Jaffar brings his insights to the “Political Round Table” as Idi Amin’s son - a man reviled by some and praised as a hero by others and he plans to be a major player in unraveling the conflicting characterization of his father as hero and villain at the same time. This he will do while pursuing his own vision for Uganda, Africa and the rest of the world through the Al-Amin Foundation. Upon successfully implementing his vision to galvanize and garner support from Uganda’s Former and Current “First Sons and First Daughters”, Jaffar Amin hopes to replicate a similar model with other “First Sons and First Daughters” in Africa and around the globe.

Jaffar Amin is adamant and consistent in asserting that his father had a noble vision for Uganda, East Africa, Africa and the rest of the world but he was derailed and he intends to implement several projects and programs relating to his father’s vision through the Al-Amin Foundation. Many of these projects will surface and come to fruition as the series, “Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His Son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak” unfolds and as Jaffar establishes and implements programs and projects through the Al-Amin Foundation.

**Uganda’s Peace, Truth and Reconciliation Initiative**

The Refugee Law Project, a leading Ugandan organization which produces research and analysis on refugee issues and seeks to ensure fundamental human rights for all asylum seekers, refugees, and internally displaced persons within Uganda has noticed Jaffar Amin’s activities relating to modeling Peace, Truth and Reconciliation. Consequently, they have approached him to enter into a collaborative partnership to implement a vision they share which includes advocating for the passing of Uganda’s National Reconciliation Bill, which is making its way through Uganda’s Parliament as Jaffar gains momentum in his work relating to Peace, Truth and Reconciliation and establishing the Al-Amin Foundation.

According to Jaffar Amin, the National Reconciliation Bill 2009 once passed is mandated to work for five years. It will be like the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission that was instituted to deal with injustices committed during South Africa’s Apartheid System. Jaffar has been pushing for such a Commission for Uganda. He welcomes the Bill and looks forward to contributing to its vision through the Al-Amin Foundation and other avenues.

“The gloves will come off then and under Statute, the Nation needs to know what happened between 1962- to date for us to heal. This is my call to life - square the Karmic Forces”, Jaffar says while reiterating, "Our father had his faults. I do not see the period of his rule in Uganda with "rose tinted glasses". However, we need to counter balance history with all the truth!” – continuing to sound like a broken record.
Jaffar Amin is looking forward to participating in a project conceived by the Refugee Law Project titled “Beyond Juba”. The Project is a joint initiative of the Refugee Law Project (RLP), the Human Rights and Peace Network (HURIPEC), and the Faculty of Law (FOL), Makerere University. It builds on work undertaken by the three organizations and others in addressing issues related to peace and conflict in Uganda. The project derived its name from ongoing peace talks between the Government of Uganda and the Lord’s Resistance Army/Movement which are mediated by the Government of Southern Sudan headquartered in the Southern Sudan city of Juba. A violent and protracted war of unimaginable proportions has been raging on in Northern Uganda for over two decades and the Refugee Law Project is seeking strategies to end the brutal war and attain sustainable peace in Uganda.

“If the Juba Peace Talks offer hope for sustained peace and create opportunities for meaningful national reconciliation in Uganda, then considerable efforts to create a climate conducive to change should be made. The Beyond Juba Project aims to generate support for a national reconciliation process in Uganda by demonstrating the extent to which conflicts and their legacies are a national problem and by assisting in the development of appropriate transitional justice mechanisms with which to address these legacies.”

Jaffar agrees with the foregoing statements that appeared on the Refugee Law Project’s “Beyond Juba” website and looks forward to contributing to the project’s vision. He welcomes Media Interviews based on a project he has titled “Beyond Butiama” which hinges on and complements the Refugee Law Project’s “Beyond Juba” Project.

Other projects relating to Peace, Truth and Reconciliation that Jaffar Amin has been involved in include projects being implemented by PRADO (Peace Reconciliation and Development Organization and the African PACT (Partnership Alliance for Citizen Transformation).

“Conversations” with Ugandan Asians expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972

Above: Photographs of Asians expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972
(Source: The Internet)
As Jaffar gains momentum in reaching out to sons and daughters of past and present leaders, he has also been "extending a hand" to Ugandan Asians expelled from Uganda by his father Idi Amin in 1972. He was on a program offered by WBS TV titled “Issues at hand” with the Honourable Jimmy Akena Obote, Dr. Apollo Milton Obote’s son as he made plans to meet Vali Jamal, an original Ugandan Asian expelled from Uganda by Idi Amin in 1972.

Currently based in Kampala, Uganda, East Africa, Vali asked to meet Jaffar for a “conversation” after Jaffar’s historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony with Madaraka Nyerere in Butiama northwestern Tanzania and Jaffar obliged.

Jaffar Amin looks forward to working with Vali Jamal and other Asians to ensure that all the truth and actual facts about their expulsion in 1972 by his “notorious” father Idi Amin come to light, along with lessons to be learnt. In an article posted on Sunday, April 26, 2009 on the Sunday Monitor on line titled “Rethinking Amin: An Asian’s perspective”, Vali Jamal offers very revealing information about what actually happened in 1972 when Idi Amin asked the Asians to leave Uganda. The article is reproduced below also in its entirety to preserve its depth. In an email to Jaffar Amin, Vali Jamal writes:

“I have enjoyed - well, appreciated - the series brought out by Timothy Kalyegira in the Monitor on President Amin. I am impressed by his command of history and local-level details of those times...I read about the launch of the Al-Amin Foundation by you on 11 April, 10th anniversary of his fall. Truth was created to suit powerful interests. I allude to that in my article below”.

The series brought out by Timothy Kalyegira that Vali Jamal refers to provides a lot of information about what actually happened during Idi Amin’s rule in Uganda along with in depth analyses by Timothy Kalyegira. A compilation of his articles along with other people’s articles and reflections will be available as the series “Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak” unfolds.

http://www.monitor.co.ug/artman/publish/insights/Rethinking_Amin_An_Asian_s_perspective_83813.shtml

Rethinking Amin: An Asian’s perspective

VALI JAMAL

“There’s considerable discussion in the media these days about the reign of Idi Amin Dada, most of it centring on the question of terror he unleashed in the last five years of his rule.

It is estimated that he killed 300,000 - 500,000 people. Taking the medium figure, that is like four per cent of Uganda’s population at that time and one-fifth of adult males.
If one were to narrow it down to males in the age group 30-50 (because those were in some kind of opposition position) we get a ratio of over 40 per cent; similarly if we factor in that most “targeted assassinations” (a term now popularised) happened amongst selected northern tribes we have to contend with multiple disappearances of adult males among them.

The revisionists point out such facts and in general dispute them. We have to have a sense of proportion. I myself have wondered about the state of the country in which over 200 people were being liquidated everyday. Did people see this going on? Each family in the country should be affected in this way?

In the north, each family should be left with none of their adult males? Did bodies actually float down to the Owen Falls dam and muck up the turbines?

To us Asians, Idi Amin was the ultimate nightmare, uprooting us from our country of birth, depriving us of our lifetime’s savings. Is revisionism possible there? Yes, but only in the way the world saw the expulsion and in the way it zeroed-in on Amin, ignoring similar moves in neighbouring countries. I relate that to the way the world wanted to portray Amin, and he gave them the paint brushes.

To us, the expulsion was the only thing happening in the world at that time; our place in the history books. Whereas to the outside world it was all about how the British could accommodate “60,000” of their subjects on their “overcrowded” islands. Not a word of indignation was expressed – let alone fulmination, as in post-independence Kenya and 2008 Zimbabwe - that “British” property was being confiscated.

Enoch Powell had just made his “rivers of blood” speech. They put out adverts in the Uganda Argus advising Asians “in the interests of their own families” not to come to Leicester. In the end, no more than 30,000 of their subjects were still left in Uganda in 1972. They succeeded hugely in England, and now they only want to talk about that. Ten thousand went to Canada and an equal number went as refugees to various countries.

They obfuscate that despite the expulsion, the British wanted to continue to business-as-usual with Uganda. They had winked him into power, with the Israelis in the driving seats of the jet planes, so to speak.

Why did it change?

Amin went to his sponsors within six months of his coup expecting to be showered with gifts of arms. Then Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meier said, “Did you say Phantoms? Don’t you know we have to buy them from America ourselves?” Amin switched sides to Libya and Saudi Arabia, kicking out the Israelis and nationalising British properties.

At the UN, he praised the holocaust. He was now Adolf Hitler incarnate and the world had something inside Uganda to latch onto this image – well-publicised public executions, disappearances of public figures (Chief Justice Benedicto
Kiwanuka, Archbishop Janan Luwum), the 1976 hijack of the Air France flight to Entebbe by Palestinians over which Amin seemed to be presiding and it was said he personally participated in the murder of passenger Dora Bloch. Like the gruesome murder of his wife Kay in that fictional movie, The Last King of Scotland, right?

Some of us on being expelled and meeting reporters at Britain’s Stansted Airport had stoked his demonisation, because that’s what they wanted to hear, not some namby-pamby stuff about losing a duka in Wobulenzi. So we spoke of our fear of imminent death, actual murders and rapes. Fear there was.

There was shooting all the time. We saw the town empty one evening, cars dashing out on both sides of the road to just get away. The Tanzanians had invaded. But murders and rapes? In researching for my book on Ugandan Asians – centred on the expulsion, of course – I came across just five murders and they were quite as likely done by kondos (thugs). Amin himself pronounced very strictly on any such acts. No one spoke to me of rape.

Unknown to many people, around 100 Asians stayed put in Uganda, having been confirmed of their Ugandan passports and having braved a fiery speech by Amin to rusticate them to Karamoja.

They speak of meeting Amin on the streets, riding his Volkswagen or a bike even.

To Amin, the expulsion was a step to return the economy to its rightful owners. It was a popular move in Uganda at that time and something that had been tried in several other African countries.

In Kenya they had restricted work permits to citizen Kenyans, forcing the foreigners to exit. Dr Apollo Milton Obote (RIP) had tried it in his Common Man’s Charter. And, as Amin shrewdly reminded former Tanzanian president Julius Nyerere (RIP) in a telegram, he had wanted to do the same in his creeping nationalisation of Asian properties in the late 1960s. True to his character, Amin went on to say that he would have married the Mwalimu but for his grey hair. That went around the world – the buffoon.

The objectives were the same - to equalise the economy in favour of Africans. And that was it: 50,000 people (half a per cent of the population) of Asian extraction controlled over half of the nonfood economy of Uganda in 1972.

Unfortunately, in distributing Asian property he favoured his cronies and created a new land-owning class as unegalitarian as the Asians.

What about now? Around 25,000 people of Indian origin now live in Uganda. Of these, the ‘original’ Asians number less than a 1,000.

All of them are grateful to President Yoweri Museveni for bringing them back. They have done wonders to revive the economy.
Just to give one statistic: Sugar production at Madhvani’s estate declined by 90 per cent from 1972. Since repossessing the estate, sugar production has exceeded its 1972 level by one-third!

There are around 50 or so major industrial enterprises controlled by Asians/Indians. Add to that transport, construction, services and we could be reaching 20 per cent of the GDP – a GDP that is five times as big compared to 1972.

Will questions again arise about foreign domination? I hope not. It’s now a much larger economy in which the Africans have a much bigger stake than Asians in all fields except manufacturing”.


As Jaffar makes strides in his own book projects including the series titled, Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak” he encourages other people to speak about their own experiences and events that unfolded during his father Idi Amin’s rule in Uganda because he is passionate about Peace, Truth and Reconciliation. He knows this cannot happen without people “talking”.

Lending a hand in resolving other conflicts

Jaffar Amin used the historic meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony with Madaraka Nyerere as an opportunity to forge forward with his agenda for Peace, Truth and Reconciliation in Uganda, Africa and the rest of the world. He is hoping to lend a hand in resolving conflicts in and outside Uganda like the conflict that has raged on in Northern Uganda between the government of Uganda and the Lord’s Resistance Army/Movement for decades. He hopes to enlist the support of Former President Tito Okello’s children and others in resolving issues related to the war in Northern Uganda. He is certain that peace can be reached between the government of Uganda and the Lord’s Resistance Army/Movement through traditional methods of conflict resolution.

One of Jaffar Amin’s points of reference for turning to traditional methods for resolving conflict as opposed to “western” methods is a mystical gathering and reconciliation ceremony called up and organized by the father of the late Okoya, a colleague and very close friend of his father Idi Amin’s who was allegedly murdered by Idi Amin.

Following an unnecessary “enmity” between the tribes of the West Nile region of Uganda and the Acholi and Lan’gi tribes of Uganda, Okoya’s father took a decisive step to put an end to the “enmity” in 1985.

The unnecessary “enmity” had arisen from the tribalism that has persisted since Uganda’s inception and culminated in Idi Amin taking over power from Apollo
Milton Obote in the 1971 coup and the resulting unnecessary loss of Ugandan lives. The reconciliatory gesture by the late Okoya’s father for the so-called “staunch tribal enemies” to attain Peace, Truth and Reconciliation shocked everyone but the opposing sides consented and committed to ending their “animosities” and unnecessary “enmity” which they did!

“For the mystical gathering intended as a Reconciliation Ceremony, the late Okoya’s father invited all tribes from the West Nile region of Uganda who together with the Acholis converged on a sacred Acholi riverside gathering where a ram was slaughtered. Then Okoya’s father gracefully stood up and solemnly declared to the dignitaries that “Amin did not kill my son; the blame lies “elsewhere”. Two spears were brought forth and their sharp ends were ceremonially bent backwards and Okoya's father declared that “Amin is Okoya's friend! Whom shall ever amongst the Acholi fight with the people from the West Nile and they meet in battle, then may the bullet from the West Nile strike us first; let the vengeance between these two cultures stop forth with I declare!” The slaughtered ram was then sliced into tiny nuggets and eaten raw with hot spices by the whole gathering in line with the Reconciliation of two bitter rivals. One bent spear remained with the Acholi’s and the other was taken by the people of West Nile back to Arua where it is kept at the Municipal Council as a reminder of the Peace Covenant between the Acholi and the People of West Nile.”

Jaffar shares the foregoing information including the false accusations levied against his father in relation to Okoya’s death in the series titled, Idi Amin: Hero or Villain? His Son Jaffar Amin and Other People Speak” and other writings. The Reconciliation Ceremony referred to above is a close variation of “Mato Oput”, a Restorative Justice method currently being explored to resolve the horrendous conflict that has raged on in Northern Uganda for more than two decades. “Mato Oput”, which in the Acholi language loosely translates to “to drink a bitter potion made from the leaves of the ‘oput’ tree” is a traditional method practiced by the Acholi people of Northern Uganda for resolving conflict, forgiveness and reconciliation.

If the tribes of the West Nile region of Uganda can reconcile with the Acholi and Lan’gi tribes of Uganda after atrocities committed because of a “Game of Russian Roulette” with Ugandan Politics, so can all warring factions in Uganda, Africa and the rest of the world. If the people of Rwanda can live side by side after an unthinkable genocide committed on the ground of “invisible” ethnic differences, so can all “sworn” enemies. If Madaraka Nyerere and Jaffar Amin can rise above past grievances instigated by their parents and resolve to give lessons in Peace and Reconciliation by holding an “unlikely” meeting and Reconciliation Ceremony, so can opposing sides determined to fight to the death.

Contact and additional information: www.idiamindada.com