

# **The State of Democracy in Africa: The Left Conception, Tasks and Challenges**

## **KABALE SOCIALIST CLUB – UGANDA**

### **WHAT IS MEANT BY DEMOCRACY?**

Democracy is a political form of government where governing power is derived from the people, either by direct referendum (direct democracy) or by means of elected representatives of the people (representative democracy). The term comes from the Greek: δημοκρατία – (dēmokratía) "rule of the people", which was coined from δῆμος (dêmos) "people" and κράτος (krátos) "power", in the middle of the fifth-fourth century BC to denote the political systems then existing in some Greek city-states, notably Athens following a popular uprising in 508 BC. Even though there is no specific, universally accepted definition of 'democracy', equality and freedom have been identified as important characteristics of democracy since ancient times. These principles are reflected in all citizens being equal before the law and having equal access to power. For example, in a representative democracy, every vote has equal weight, no restrictions can apply to anyone wanting to become a representative, and the freedom of its citizens is secured by legitimized rights and liberties which are generally protected by a constitution.

There are several varieties of democracy, some of which provide better representation and more freedoms for their citizens than others. However, if any democracy is not carefully legislated – through the use of balances – to avoid an uneven distribution of political power, such as the separation of powers, then a branch of the system of rule could accumulate power and become harmful to the democracy itself.

The "majority rule" is often described as a characteristic feature of democracy, but without responsible government or constitutional protections of individual liberties from democratic power, it is possible for dissenting individuals to be oppressed by the "tyranny of the majority". Especially the challenge is when such majority are wrong and or fatally wrong. An essential process in representative democracies is competitive elections that are fair both substantively and procedurally. Furthermore, freedom of political expression, freedom of speech, and freedom of the press are essential so that citizens are informed and able to vote in their personal interests.

Popular sovereignty is common but not a universal motivating subject for establishing a democracy. In some countries, democracy is based on the philosophical principle of equal rights. Many people use the term "democracy" as shorthand for liberal democracy, which may include additional elements such as political pluralism; equality before the law; the right to petition elected officials for redress of grievances; due process; civil liberties; human rights; and elements of civil society outside the government.

In the United States, separation of powers is often cited as a supporting attribute, but in other countries, such as the United Kingdom, the dominant philosophy is parliamentary sovereignty (though in practice judicial independence is generally maintained). In other cases, "democracy" is used to mean direct democracy. Though the term "democracy" is typically used in the context of a political state, the principles are applicable to private organizations and other groups also.

Democracy has been called the "last form of government" and has spread considerably across the globe. The Right to vote has been expanded in many Jurisdictions over time from relatively narrow groups (such as wealthy men of a particular ethnic group), to include all men; then later women and slaves with New Zealand the first nation to grant universal suffrage for all its citizens in 1893.

So in respect of these definitions, almost in all the African states, democracy does not exist. Most of African countries are awash with wars, conflicts, violence, insurgencies, rebels and terrorism as a result of oppression and suppression and dictatorial regimes that look at their political opponents and competitors as enemies; where the ruling ideas are only those of the ruling class or group. There is a lot of corruption, nepotism, poverty, preventable and curable diseases. All these pose a lot of challenges to the left in pursuing for establishment of real participatory democracy.

Everybody in the REVOLUTIONARY LEFT has equal value and equal power. There are no rulers and or kings and no ruled. Real democracy is fundamental to leftists. The revolutionary transformation of society must be brought about by the will of the great majority of the people if it is to succeed.

- \* We have no rulers.
- \* Every member can take part in making decisions.
- \* Our democracy works both locally and globally.
- \* Most meetings are open to the public.

The REVOLUTIONARY LEFT consists of working class people who have organised themselves democratically with one objective; to bring about a complete change in world society. In short, the main objective is to abolish capitalism and start socialism on an international scale.

The Revolutionary Left believes capitalism cannot meet the needs of the majority of us, the workers of the world, no matter how progressive it might become in the future.

To meet these needs we contend, capitalism must be replaced by socialism/communism.

#### TASKS AND CHALLENGES:

The tasks and challenges of revolutionary leftists in the 21st Century is to de-toxicate the masses (the workers) and the exploited of universal misunderstanding and negative concept build about real socialism in the past centuries and the universal confusion and misunderstanding of what is socialism/communism. To remove mass indoctrination caused by religions and capitalist politics.

To give the exploited the real understanding of the world we live in, the need to change it and how we can change it.

To show the masses the need for the establishment of society based on common ownership of the means and instruments of production and distribution of the earth's wealth; where each could contribute according to their ability and take from society according to their self determined need.

Work based on cooperation and voluntary basis not on competition. Production for human consumption not for profit as it is now the case where those who don't have money to pay go without. In simple terms real democracy is where everybody is a participant leader and there are no rulers. People would concentrate on their maximum talents and abilities unlike now where people tend to concentrate on maximum financial gains, whether or not the people have talents.

All the necessary conditions of production and communication now exist for establishing a world socialist society. What is lacking is the understanding and will among those men and women who would most benefit from it. The task for socialists is to spread the necessary information as widely and thoroughly as possible. This often involves correcting a great deal of misinformation put out by those who want society to remain as it is, with all its poverty, oppression, and war.

- \*To publish pamphlets, books, as well as regular journals, audio and video data.
- \* To give talks and take part in debates and other social activities.
- \* To contest elections when practical and possible.

We have a thorough analysis of the workings of present society, how it is developing, and what needs to be done to make changes that would be beneficial for the human race.

- \* Discussion and debate are essential to the progress of the left. We welcome them.
- \* Everyone is encouraged to put their point of view.
- \* We also welcome suggestions for new activities for spreading our information and all offers of help and financial assistance.