

Popular Pan-Africanism in Idi Amin's Uganda

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Government in Idi Amin's Uganda was conducted in the open. There was no anti-politics machine. Matters that had been formerly transacted by experts, scientists, and bureaucrats were, under the Amin government, thrown open for public comment and deliberation. Even the most anonymous men felt enabled to take public affairs into their own hands and lay out programs of remediation and reform. In this lecture I will focus on commoners' engagements in the field of international diplomacy. President Amin was himself an active and intrusive presence in foreign affairs: he insisted on asserting Uganda's centrality in matters that had formerly been far outside an African leader's purview. Here I bring to light the work of one man, Peter Wankulu, an otherwise anonymous worker at a sugarcane factory who, in 1964, founded a national organization called the 'OAU Patriotic Volunteers'. Over the course of years Wankulu and a few colleagues pasted together a set of posters that advocated for the territorial integration of the African continent. Here was a cut-and-paste internationalism, a form of advocacy that used the techniques of collage to assemble, on the page, exciting alignments and interesting possibilities. In the study of Wankulu's bricolage I hope to show how—in a time of violence, austerity and insecurity—international politics mattered for Ugandan commoners.

Derek R. Peterson teaches African history at the University of Michigan. He is author of two books, most recently *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival*, which won the 2013 Herskovits Award of the African Studies Association. He is editor or co-editor of seven books, including (with Stephanie Newell and Emma Hunter) *African Print Cultures: Newspapers and their Publics in the Twentieth Century*. In 2016, Peterson was elected Fellow of the British Academy and awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in African Studies. He is currently writing a book concerning Idi Amin's Uganda.



Poster by Peter Wankulu, 1974, Jinja District Archives (Uganda)

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