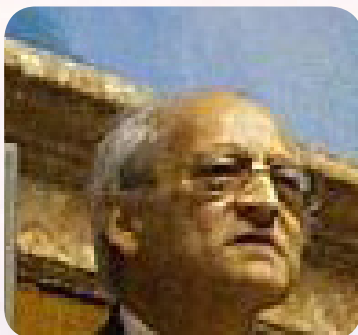


UNITED NATIONS INTELLECTUAL HISTORY PROJECT



Dharam Ghai

Dharam Ghai was educated in Kenya and at the universities of Oxford (BA) and Yale (PhD). He taught economics at Makerere University, Uganda, and was Professor of Economics and Director, Institute for Development Studies at the University of Nairobi. He was a senior economist on the World Bank-appointed Commission on International Development under the Chairmanship of Lester Pearson, former Prime Minister of Canada and Nobel Peace Prize recipient. He spent a year as Visiting Fellow at the Economic Growth Centre, Yale University.



In 1973, he was appointed as Director of Research of the World Employment Programme of the International Labour Organization (ILO). He headed the secretariat of the ILO's World Employment Conference of 1976 and coordinated ILO's work on rural development. In 1987, he was appointed by the

Secretary General of the United Nations as Director of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development. On his retirement from the UN, at the end of 1997, in 1998-99, he was tapped by the ILO Director General Elect, Ambassador Juan Somavia, to head his Transition Team. He was advisor to the Secretariat for the World Commission on the Social Dimensions of Globalization and to the International Institute for Labour Studies of the ILO.

He has participated in or led UN agency missions to over 30 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Eastern and Central Europe. These missions identified projects for support by the United Nations agencies, and gave technical assistance and policy advice to governments. His work dealt with questions of poverty reduction, employment generation, meeting the basic human needs of the poor people, environment, and social development and social dimensions of structural adjustment. He is the author or editor of 24 books and numerous articles in professional journals on these topics. He has been on the Advisory Boards of several international and national research institutes and served as editor or as a member of the Advisory Panels of many professional journals.

UNIHP

Dharam Ghai was an important contributor to the UNIHP project. The project records the history of ideas about economic and social development cultivated within the UN organization and the impact of these ideas on wider thinking and international action.

Co-directors

Louis Emmerij, senior research fellow at City University of New York's Graduate Center.

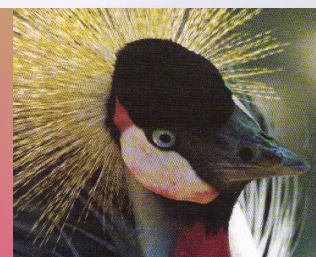
Richard Jolly, senior research fellow at CUNY's Graduate Center and honorary professor and research associate at the Institute of Development Studies at the University of Sussex.

Thomas G Weiss presidential professor of political science at CUNY's Graduate Center, director of the Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies, chair of the Academic Council on the UN System.

Makerere: 1960s Golden Years

Dharam Ghai

Former Director, United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Geneva, and Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi



I came to Makerere in 1961 as a young man of 25. I was working on my doctorate in economics at Yale University when I decided that I had been away too long and needed to get back home to play my part in nation-building. East African countries were then on the verge of independence. There was a desperate shortage of educated persons to take over from the departing expatriate staff. In fact I was in such a hurry to rush home that I did not even take up my fellowship to enable me to finish my doctorate. I had to earn my doctorate the hard way burning midnight oil while struggling with my teaching and parental responsibilities!

Makerere University College was at that time the only university-level institution in the whole of East Africa. In fact it trained students not only from the three East African countries but also further down from Nyasaland and Northern and Southern Rhodesia - then members of the

STILL IN DEMAND AFTER ALL THESE YEARS.

At the right are just 2 books out of 50 of which Dr Ghai is author or editor.

Central African Federation controlled largely by European settlers. The Lectureship in Economics that I had applied for had become vacant when the incumbent, one Mwai Kibaki resigned to take up the post of the Executive Officer of Kenya African National Union. In recent years, I could boast that in my first job I succeeded the President of Kenya!

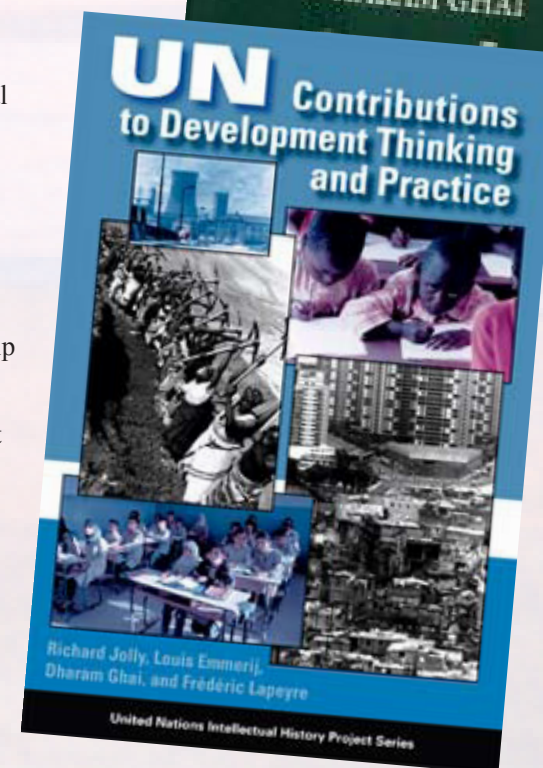
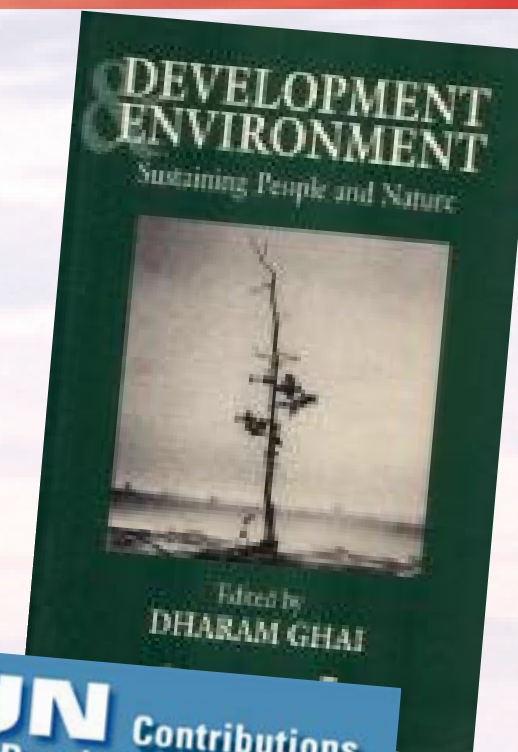
This was my first visit to Kampala. I was astonished by the lushness of the countryside. And Kampala itself, nestled amidst hills and valleys, was a highly picturesque city. The campus was spread out on a hill amidst rolling lawns and groves of tress and bushes. Apart from the central administration, there were halls of residence, science laboratories and sports facilities including tennis and squash courts and a swimming pool.

As an academic institution, Makerere boasted of high standards. Entry was fiercely competitive. The faculty was largely expatriate, mostly from Britain. The degrees were of London University, which also monitored course content and examination papers. Makerere's medical and agricultural schools enjoyed international reputation, while the East African Institute of Social Research was a leader in Africa on anthropological and sociological research. Makerere also boasted an

excellent School of Fine Arts.

The four years I spent at Makerere were truly its golden period. The College attracted outstanding teachers and many gifted students from prestigious universities abroad came to complete their doctorate at Makerere. Seminars and conferences were almost a weekly feature, adding to the university's vibrant intellectual environment. The social life was relaxed and easy-going.

Many of our students subsequently assumed leadership roles. I recall Benjamin Mpaka, active as a student journalist, who was twice elected as the President of Tanzania. Apollo Nsibambi, my student in Economics, went on to become Uganda's Prime Minister, a post that he still



ANTIQBOOK
fine books - fair prices

[Search Antiqbook](#)

[Ask a question or Order this book](#)

[Browse our books](#)

[Search our books](#)

[Book dealer info](#)

GHAI, DHARAM P **Portrait of A Minority - Asians In East Africa**
Oxford University Press, Nairobi, 1965, 1st edition. Paperback, VG. x+154pp, spine yellowed, 2pp with pencil underlining, a nice copy. Paperback, no dustjacket. Account of Indo-Pakistani settlers in East Africa, their problems and prospects as the nations gain independence from Colonial powers who encouraged their settlement.

Offered for GBP 7.50 = appr. US\$ 14.93 by: Eastleach Books -
Book number: 27663

UGANDA ASIANS

holds. Another of my students, the late Philip Ndegwa, held most of the top civil service jobs in Kenya and was Governor of the Central Bank and later a leading businessman, while also writing several books and articles on African development problems. James Ngugi became a famous novelist while still an undergraduate, with his book *Weep Not Child*. John Nagenda occupied high positions in journalism ending up recently as a Presidential spokesman in Uganda. Mayanja-Nkangi was among my students, too, later to become a Minister in both of Obote's regimes.

Among the foreign graduate students, several friends in the social sciences come to mind. Joseph Nye, who did his doctoral dissertation for Oxford on East African Integration, subsequently became Dean of the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard. Richard Jolly, my colleague at Yale, went on to become Director of the Institute for Development Studies at Sussex and Deputy Director of UNICEF. Michael Todaro won distinction as the creator of a new model of rural-urban migration and author of a best selling text on economic development. Charles Frank became a prominent Washington policy advisor and Chief Economist of European Development Bank. Brian van Arkadie and Reginald Green became prominent development economists and advisors to African governments and international agencies.

When I joined Makerere, there were only a handful of East African teachers, but most of those were destined for higher things. Among my contemporaries were the famous artists Gregory Maloba and Elimu Njau; the biologist David Wasawo who subsequently became Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Nairobi; the geographer Simeon Ominde, later Professor of Geography and Director of the Centre for Population Studies, also at Nairobi; and Senteza Kajubi, a prominent educationist. In subsequent years, the East African contingent was much reinforced by the addition of the eminent historian Alan Ogot, the world famous Ali Mazrui, and Yash Tandon, now Executive Director, South Centre. The Ugandan poet, Bitek Okot, the author of *The Song of Lawino*, was a major literary figure at the campus. Among the economists, I recall Semei Nyanzi and Yoeri Kyesimira who went on to become respectively the Director of the Uganda Development Corporation and a senior advisor at UNEP.

The campus hosted many well-known expatriate academics, among them: Colin Leys, a former Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, Professor of Political Science; Raymond Apthorpe of the Sociology Department, later to become Professor at the Institute of Social Studies at the Hague; Paul Clarke, who headed the newly created Economic Development Research Project (EDRP); Philip Bell, Professor of Economics; and Ian Livingstone, who subsequently became Professor at the University of East

Anglia.

Makerere also attracted expatriate literary figures. Paul Theroux, now a famous novelist, taught English in the Department of Extra-Mural Studies and about the same time Makerere hosted VS Naipaul as a Visiting Professor. He later won the Nobel Prize for Literature. The first ever conference of African writers and poets was held at Makerere.



The Duke of Gloucester School Boy Scout Troop. Dharam Ghai is first standing row 7th left/6th right, c1949

Let me end this brief memoir with my own contributions at Makerere. My PhD thesis for Yale, completed in 1964, dealt with the tax system in Uganda. I criticized several aspects of the-then regulations and proposed a number of reforms. I was most gratified when most of my ideas were picked up by the Minister of Finance and incorporated into subsequent budgets. My dissertation was later published as a monograph under the title, *Taxation for Development: A Case Study of Uganda*. My research was integrated into the EDRP programme, headed by Paul Clarke. This was a major initiative supported by the Rockefeller Foundation to boost economic policy research and enhance national capabilities in this field. The model was later replicated in Kenya and Tanzania with equally beneficial results.

It was also during this period that I conceived the project of a book to be written by Asian scholars on the history and social, political and economic life of the East African Asian community, something that was glaringly needed to fill a gap in our knowledge of a community that had by then existed in East Africa for almost a century. *Portrait of a Minority: Asians in East Africa* published by the Oxford University Press filled the gap.

Finally, I can hardly end this memoir without mentioning that among the ties that bind me to Kampala are that I met my wife Neela Korde there, who was among the first Ugandan women lawyers, and that our first daughter Kamini was born there.

I left Makerere in 1965 to join Yale University as a Visiting Fellow at the Economic Growth Centre. I returned to East Africa the following year to take up a research post at the Institute for Development Studies, University of Nairobi.

Makerere was not spared the violence and upheavals that overwhelmed Uganda in the 1970s. Makerere was never the same again, but fortunately for me the only memories I have of it are of happy times - in fact of Makerere in its golden period.



L2R: Sister Sharda, brother Yash, family friend Krishna, sister Krishna, Dharam.
Going from Thika to Ruiru "ancestral village", c1952



With Hannah Ashrafi,
the Palestinian leader c.1997



With the President of India, c.1951



With Sheikh Hassina, PM of Bangladesh, c.1995



With Nitin Desai, former Undersecretary General of UN and Professor Ali Mazrui, c.1996.



Starstruck with Raj Kapoor c.1951!



With the Executive Secretary of UNECA (centre)
Adebayo Adedeji



With the Commonwealth Secretary General Sonny
Ramphal



With Muhammed Yunus, founder Grameen Bank
and Nobel Peace Prize winner, and Professor
Rahman Sobhan, Director, Bangladesh Institute for
Development Studies, 1996.



At Dag Hammarskjold Foundation in Uppsala with, inter alia, Minister Amir Jamal (Tanzania; second row centre, in front of Prof Ghai) Minister Robert Ouko (Kenya; seated right), and the first Executive Secretary of the UNECA, Robert Gadiner (Ghana).

A nostalgic return home, May 2008: Dharam Ghai

After my Makerere days, the last time I was in Kampala was in 1970 and so it was with a great deal of anticipation that I looked forward to my return in early May 2008. The occasion was the meeting of the International Council of Human Rights Policy (ICHRP), of which I have been a member for some years. It was the first time since its creation more than ten years go that the Council had met in a Sub-Saharan country. Our host for the meeting, a member of the Council, was Professor Sylvia Tamale, Dean of the Faculty of Law, at Makerere University. After years of one-party or military rule in our region, it was refreshing to find so many committed and courageous defenders of human rights and a vigorous and flourishing civil society in East African countries. The session on the human rights situation in Uganda was for me the highlight of the meeting.

Two unexpected events made my visit to something special that I will cherish for the rest of my life. I attended a reception at Makerere given by our Ugandan hosts for participants at the ICHRP meeting. At the conclusion of this, Professor Joe Olaka Onyango and Deputy Vice Chancellor Dr Lilian Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza kindly accompanied me to Livingstone Hall where I was a resident tutor soon after I joined Makerere in 1961. It was for me a pilgrimage. Subsequently, they drove me over to Livingstone Terrace where I had moved into a townhouse after my marriage in 1963. Our neighbours were the historian Alan Ogot and political scientists Ali Mazrui and Yash Tandon.

The second surprise was that Vali Jamal and Alex Aboagye, Senior Economist at the UNDP (both former colleagues at ILO), organized a public lecture for me in conjunction with Makerere University on the theme of "Migration, Diaspora and Development." Despite the short notice, a huge and diverse group of politicians, civil servants, teachers, students, and business and ordinary people packed the lecture hall

in a prominent downtown hotel. The two organizers discreetly intimated to the Prime Minister Rt. Hon. Apollo Nsubambi of my lecture, and he generously agreed to attend to honour his economics teacher from 1961! He even chaired the meeting and introduced me to the audience. John Nagenda, Presidential Media Advisor and Spokesman, also attended and gave the vote of thanks. He was an undergraduate at Makerere. The Deputy Vice Chancellor Dr Tibatemwa-Ekirikubinza, Vali Jamal and Alex Aboagye also spoke at the opening session.

Uganda has changed beyond recognition since I first stepped foot there in the early 1960s. The most dramatic change and one that affected everything else was the growth of its population from around 8 million to nearly 32 million. Kampala has grown from a small charming town of around 200,000 persons to a bustling metropolis of over 2 million! Makerere student numbers had escalated from around 1,000 to over 30,000! The road between Entebbe and Kampala is a sprawl of the capital. It is thus hardly surprising that I had difficulty finding my way around in Kampala and recognizing its famous landmarks.

My visit to Kampala and to Makerere and the public lecture were deeply moving and emotional experiences for me. They brought back wonderful memories of an era long gone by. It was truly a home coming after an absence of several decades. My one regret was that I could not taste Vali's famous pillau at his restaurant café Viva, as he called quits before my arrival after struggling for a number of years. He agreed with me that the famous Asian business acumen is not always passed on from generation to generation and that neither I nor he were cut out to be entrepreneurs! On the other hand, Vali showed me the pages from his planned commemorative volume on Ugandan Asians. It promises to be an exciting publication. He told me he might include the recipe of his "smoked" biryani in the book!



Prime Minister Apollo Nsubambi at Dharam Ghai's public lecture, holding up DG book