THE MINORITY RIGHTS GROUP is an international research and information unit registered in Britain as an educational charity under the Charities Act of 1960. Its principal aims are —

- To secure justice for minority or majority groups suffering discrimination, by investigating their situation and publicising the facts as widely as possible, to educate and alert public opinion throughout the world.

- To help prevent, through publicity about violations of human rights, such problems from developing into dangerous and destructive conflicts which, when polarised, are very difficult to resolve; and

- To foster, by its research findings, international understanding of the factors which create prejudiced treatment and group tensions, thus helping to promote the growth of a world conscience regarding human rights.

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OFFICE
29 Craven Street London WC2N 5NT
01-930 6659

Uganda
By Ed Hooper and Dr Louise Pirouet

Ed Hooper, the author of Uganda: Part I, has spent many years in Africa including Uganda, where he has worked as a teacher, aid worker and journalist. He is presently a freelance journalist specializing in East Africa.

Dr Louise Pirouet, the author of Uganda: Part II, is an academic who has taught at Makerere University, Kampala and at Nairobi University and is currently Senior Lecturer in Religious Studies at Homerton College, Cambridge. She is a joint co-ordinator of Charter 87 — A Charter for Refugees. She wishes to thank a number of people who have helped her in preparing this report and who have been generous in giving of their time and advice, in particular Dr Michael Twaddle and Hugh Dinwiddy.

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The United Nations
Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarism and pollution on the part of man in his treatment of both his fellow man and the environment, and the advent of a world in which humans shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from any fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people.

Whereas it is essential, if a man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law.

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations.

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom.

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore,

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

proclaims

This Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to grant and maintain to all an equal right to development in order to bring about the constant improvement of human conditions.

For the achievement of this end, the Members of the United Nations have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of, human rights and fundamental freedoms.

This Declaration may be cited as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The General Assembly proclaims the following Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

Furthermore, no distinction shall be made in the application of the law by the competent national authorities to any person on account of his or her birth or other status.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law.

All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national authorities for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the Constitution or by law.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

Article 10. Everyone is entitled to full equality as a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11. (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed.

In a free society, no one should be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home, correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation.

Everyone has the right to protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14. (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15. (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16. (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17. (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21. (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23. (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25. (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the healthy growth and development of his personality, including his balance, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disablement, widowedness, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance.

Article 26. Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

Article 27. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of speech and to such protection as is necessary for the free development of his personality.

(2) Everyone has the right to freedom of belief.

Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 28. Everyone has the right to freedom of association with others.

Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 29. Everyone has the right to freedom of association with others.

Everyone has the right to protection against interference with his privacy, family, home, correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation.

Everyone has the right to protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 30. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.
Introduction

Uganda is a multi-ethnic pluralist state that has been beset with major ethnic conflicts and the gross abuse of the human rights of minorities. Today, the Minority Rights Group finds itself in the unusual position of issuing a report on a country which has not, not a deterioration in minority rights, but a huge improvement. A new government in Uganda is pledged to restore the rule of law and respect for human rights, and major steps have been taken towards this end. But no country can experience fourteen years of such massive repression as the people of Uganda have endured, without there being damaging long term effects which will take years to overcome.

The report examines whether Uganda is able to avoid this vicious cycle of violence and whether conciliation and development are linked to peace and security. What is happening in Uganda and the lessons that can be learned from the past and the present may have implications for minorities in other parts of the world. President Museveni’s ten point plan with its emphasis on human rights for all minorities, the willingness to have open dialogue with opponents and free elections, the disciplining of the army where abuses of civil rights are discovered, and the establishment of new institutional frameworks such as the proposed Human Rights Institute and the Inspector General of Government are all major steps. However the situation needs watching closely.

The theory of establishing a democratic pluralist multi-ethnic state is much easier than the practice. Uganda, like many African countries south of the Sahara, is a nation of minorities. It is so easy to create or perpetuate tensions that lead to conflicts, but hard to find lasting reconciliation among communities once they have become embittered. There are still serious difficulties, in the north of the country where banditry continues to be rife, and remnants of insurgent movements are still able to create problems and stir up ethnic strife. This is now being complicated by the recent flight of over 30,000 refugees from southern Sudan. The new government faces a major task in trying to win over the north, and avoid continuing minority conflicts. The role of the army, of the police, and attitudes of neighbouring countries are crucial and highly sensitive issues. It is evident that some of the areas in the north, including Lira, Apac and Kitgum, are becoming stable through the promotion of a range of confidence-building measures. However, Gulu and Soroti remain major problem areas. The report investigates some of the genuine concerns and criticisms voiced by Amnesty International and other monitoring organizations which describe the detention without charge of political opponents from northern Uganda and give evidence of some prisoners being tortured and killed. Although this is primarily in army operational areas in the north, evidence is cited of arbitrary detention and torture of prisoners in Kampala.

Uganda has demonstrated many times in its history how tensions between communities can lead to violence. Violence and destruction has led to instability and poverty, which in turn sowed the seeds for more violence. The report examines ways in which Uganda is seeking to break this vicious cycle and the current initiations of conciliation and reconstruction that may lay the solid foundation for peace and development. Crucial ingredients in this programme are resources for the Ugandan Government to bring economic security and confidence to all ethnic groups. Uganda, although fertile and agriculturally self-sufficient in most areas, is a very poor country and desperately requires outside aid to overcome its legacy of ethnic and religious conflict.

The international community has taken a considerable interest in Uganda since the early seventies with the expulsion of the Ugandan Asians by President Amin. The continued abuses of human rights led to countries breaking diplomatic ties and cancelling aid programmes. Consequently in this report Minority Rights Group examines the performance of donor aid agencies and the impact aid and loans have on the current debt burden in Uganda. It is educative to compare the level of aid given to President Obote with the responses given to President Museveni’s appeals for assistance in the light of their governments’ respective human rights records.

The first part of this report was written by Ed Hooper at the end of 1984. It was quickly overtaken by the momentous events of 1985/6, and today, in 1989, the situation in Uganda has changed greatly. The Minority Rights Group decided to report on Uganda in 1984 because of mounting evidence of major human rights violations directed at particular ethnic groups during Milton Obote’s regime. The Uganda Government, the United Nations, a foreign supporter, the United Kingdom (the former colonial power), disputed the account given by the Minority Rights Group and others. The Ugandan Government denied the accusations out of hand; the United Kingdom insisted that the situation was improving, and continued to give training, albeit on a small scale, to the Uganda army which was blamed for the human rights violations. Subsequent events have fully vindicated the assessment of the situation given in Part I of this report. It is therefore hoped here to provide an essential background and understanding to what follows.

The second part of this report was written primarily by Louise Prouet and covers the period from the end of 1984 to 1989. Although it can stand alone major lessons can be learnt on minority rights and development by contrasting the two situations and the two methods of government. The most obvious comparisons can be seen in the behaviour and composition of the army and of the police which, though not without criticism today, presents a remarkably different picture in many areas of Uganda. The position of law, the constitution, the welcoming of publicity and access to outsiders, the determination to remove corruption, and the attention given to the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights present interesting contrasts. The activities of NGOs and churches are also considered in addition to the way in which neighbouring countries can increase instability through their support (often covertly or passively) of armed conflict. The number of refugees and displaced people created under Presidents Amin and Obote and the number remaining under Museveni have fallen sharply as refugees have returned home and are interesting indicators on minority rights. Perhaps the most illuminating comparison can be made between the discredited elections of 1980 that led to President Obote coming to power a second time and the widely accepted elections of 1989 that led to Museveni’s current presidency.

The separate insertion is drawn from an initiative between the Ugandan Government, International Alert and the International Peace Research Institute, Oslo (PRIO), and was written by Frances D’Souza. It describes a seminar held in September 1987 convened between International Alert and the Institute of Social Research in Makerere University with the full support of the Ugandan Government. It brought together academics, practitioners and government officials from many countries to discuss frankly the international conflicts that bedevilled Uganda. It was a brave decision by President Museveni and his colleagues to welcome, endorse and participate in such an open discussion. It forged the clear link between conflict resolution, peace and development. It showed that reconstruction and development can in turn lead to confidence, and reinforce attitudes to resolve conflicts and maintain stability.

This was followed up by a special mission in January 1989 by International Alert and the Norwegian PRIO to make recommendations on the development activities in the north, and a mission by Frances D’Souza in April 1989 to report on the famine and health care in Gulu. The latter makes depressing reading and shows the effect of scorched earth policies, caused by army and guerrilla activity. The level of child mortality in the hospital at over 20% is appalling evidence of the tragedy of Gulu, which is so easy to create or perpetuate tensions that lead to conflicts, but hard to find lasting reconciliation among communities once they have become embittered. There are still serious difficulties, in the north, including Lira, Apac and Kitgum, which make it difficult to form the solid foundation for peace and development. Crucial ingredients in this programme are resources for the Ugandan Government to bring economic security and confidence to all ethnic groups. Uganda, although fertile and agriculturally self-sufficient in most areas, is a very poor country and desperately requires outside aid to overcome its legacy of ethnic and religious conflict.

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Although the International Alert reports may seem become dated and the conferences highlights only one area of conflict, Minority Rights Group felt it was important to note this different perspective. However the views of Minority Rights Group are not necessarily the same as those of International Alert, or indeed the authors of this report.
Part I: UGANDA TO 1984

1. Introduction: 'The Pearl of Africa'

Winston Churchill christened Uganda 'the pearl of Africa', and described it as 'an island of gentle manners'. But in August 1984, reports from Washington suggested a very different situation there. Elliott Abrams, the US Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, described the Ugandan situation as 'horrendous'; Roger Winter, director of the US Committee for Refugees, alleged that conditions were 'worse . . . than they were under Idi Amin'. There was talk of 100,000 to 200,000 people having been killed since 1981, and of an army that was murdering, or intentionally starving to death, thousands of people in an area of the country known as 'the Luwero Triangle'.

Abrams stated: 'There comes a point at which one has to recognize that a certain amount of honesty . . . is really required.' In similar vein a French reporter, Jacques de Barnin, recently commented: 'Uganda must have sunk very low for many of its people today to have arrived, out of sheer desperation, at the point of refurbishing Amin Dada's reputation, of acknowledging that regimes of "murder and terror" are not all alike, that some are worse than others.' But the world should give attention to a problem that very clearly exists, without resorting to vague assessments of which regime may have been 'worse', and without bandying imprecise death-tolls. The American estimate for the period 1981-4 presumably represents the same sort of guesswork as the 100,000 to 500,000 who are said to have been killed during Amin's time. (At the other end of the scale, a spokesman for the Obote government has recently conceded that 15,000 have been killed by both sides since 1980).

Yet tragedy cannot be measured by the size of the graveyard, especially in a situation where it would appear that many of the dead are not even afforded graves. It is a sad indictment of our standards of human rights when such a debate descends into mere statistical argument, and when media coverage depends on the number of zeroes. Partly responsible for this is the
fact that ‘Obote’s regime discourages publicity as assiduously as Amin’s courted it.’ Reports of massacres within, and refugees without, are neither heard of as they were for some time, for life and liberty are cheap in present-day Uganda. Yet the Uganda government’s denials of such reports, and its reluctance to admit independent journalists to verify the facts, has meant that it has required headlines from Washington to highlight the issues internationally. Clearly there is an overdue need for more information.

This report seeks to fill the gap. It will examine the position of not just a single Ugandan minority, but of a number of groups which claim that they have suffered, and are suffering, at the hands of the present government. First of all, to explain and help understanding of the situation, it is necessary to provide some background: ethnological (chapter 2), and historical (chapters 3-5).

2. An Ethnological Synopsis – Lines Drawn on European Maps

The diverse peoples who comprise the present-day nation of Uganda had, of course, been living there for centuries before Speke’s arrival in 1862 and the Heligoland Treaty of 1890, which established the territory as a British sphere of influence. Modern Uganda, a have indigenes of the time that life and liberty are

a. Bantu-speakers who are primarily, but not exclusively, agricultural, are found in the south, south-west and west of the country, and may be divided into: (i) More centralized societies (once governed by royal families): the Baganda, Banyankole, Banyoro, and Batoro; (ii) Less centralized societies (their social organization varying from local chiefships to extended family units), including the Basoga, Bagisu, Bagwere, Banyoli, Basamia, and Bagwe in the south-east; the Bakiga in the south-west; and the Baamba and Bakonjo in the west; (iii) In among (i) and (ii) there live in some places groups of specialized pastoralists, the Bahima and Batutsi. Both groups established supremacy over the agricultural areas where they settled – the Bairu and Bahutu, respectively. Bahima and Bairu are collectively termed Banyankole; Batutsi and Bahutu are known as Banyarwanda.

b. Nilotic-speakers can be categorized in two main groups: (i) Western Nilotes occupying the north-west of Uganda, such as the Acholi, Langi, Alur, and Jongom. Closely related to the Kenyan Luo, they are mixed agriculturists, organized in chiefdoms; (ii) Southern Nilotics from the East of Uganda like the Karamojong, and Iteso are related to the Kenyan Turkana; they were originally pastoral, with a social organization based on clans and age sets.

c. Central Sudanic-speakers like the Lugbara, Kakwa and Madi are found in the north of West Nile province, and also extend across the border into Sudan and Zaïre. They are agricultural peoples with a non-hierarchical social organization.

Thus the present-day national borders of Uganda cut across ethnic and language boundaries, and place together over 40 ethnic groups which formerly had little in common, and which even today may not understand each other’s languages.


The first visits to the region, by Arab traders and European explorers, occurred in the latter half of the 19th century – and their reports about the richness and fertility of much of the land awakened considerable interest. In 1875, the explorer Henry Stanley met with Mutesa I, the Kabaka (or king) of Buganda, and wrote a letter on his behalf to the London Daily Telegraph, appealing for missionaries to come out to the kingdom. Mutesa, at this stage, probably equated the white man with the power of the gun, and it is likely therefore that his prime concern was actually to enlist European backing to neutralize the threat of Egyptian expansionism from the north.

The first British Protestant recruits from the Church Missionary Society arrived promptly enough in June 1877, and were followed in February 1879 by the White Fathers, who were Roman Catholics, mainly from France. Both missionary groups embarked on enthusiastic campaigns of evangelization among the Baganda chiefs and members of Mutesa’s court. Moslem influence in Buganda was already established, for the Kabaka had observed certain Islamic rituals (such as Ramadan) during the period 1867-76. But it was the arrival of Christianity which gave religion prominence as a factor in political rivalry. The new politico-religious groups assumed further power when Mutesa I died in 1884. Subsequently the Moslems, and then the Christians, with their own army of foreign-backed converts, fought out a battle for supremacy that was resolved only in 1890, with the reinstallation of Mutesa’s successor, Mwanga, by the Catholics. Unlike his father, the new Kabaka was the prisoner of political forces rather than their master.

The Berlin Conference of 1884-5 had established general guidelines for the European powers involved in the ‘scramble for Africa’. The Imperial British East Africa Company was subsequently formed, and provided an administration for the area that roughly corresponds to present-day Uganda, between the years of 1888 and 1893. Captain Lugard, its first accredited representative, encapsulated the thinking of the time in his comment: ‘It is for our advantage [his emphasis] – and not alone at the cost of others that we have undertaken responsibilities in East Africa.’ Lugard managed to persuade both Mwanga and the two Christian factions to sign a treaty with the company – he also worked to consolidate the Protestant faction at the expense of the Catholics. Twice more Mwanga, backed by the Catholics, attempted to reassert his authority, but on both occasions he was defeated and forced to make further concessions. First, in 1893, the Union Jack was raised over Kampala, and Mwanga was deposed, and had to accept British protection, and the right to levy taxes. Then in 1897, after an attempted ‘rebellion’, he was deposed in favour of his infant son Chwa, for whom the British appointed three chiefs to act as regents. The ‘Kabakaship’ was by now firmly allied to the Protestant camp. The Buganda Agreement of 1900 formalized the position of Buganda within the British protectorate of Uganda.

The effective take-over of the remainder of Uganda’s regions continued apace, though nowhere else was religion to play so crucially divisive a role as within Buganda. By 1921 the British protectorate had achieved a definite shape, and was ruled by a civilian administration. The Native Authority Ordinance of 1919 ‘exported’ the Buganda model of local administration, together with Buganda civil servants, to the other regions; the British officials, such as district commissioners, retained overall control, with local African chiefs acting as subordinates. This system was extended by the Local Government Ordinance of 1949, whereby district and provincial councils were appointed by the British Governor. This ordinance further polarized ethnic divisions, since the majority of districts (with some exceptions, such as West Nile, Bukedi, Kigezi and Toro) had their boundaries drawn up to include only a single ethnic group. Only the British rulers had any sense of Uganda as a national entity, or, as one Briton expressed it: ‘The establishment of districts based wherever possible on tribal residence has contributed to a sense of district nationalism and separatism that in many cases did not exist prior to the arrival of the British.’ The prevalence of cheap imported goods also meant that the pre-colonial inter-regional trade in salt, foodstuffs, crafts, and iron products was almost completely curtailed, thus adding to each region’s insularity.

The introduction of cash crops like cotton and coffee meant that by 1916 the Protectorate was financially self-supporting. Moreover, the cash crop system was not as oppressive as in other colonies – in most of south and west Uganda, the land was sufficiently fertile for rain-fed farming, and it flourished, and was not forced at the dictates of duty, which would cover the payment of taxes and the purchase of luxury items. The northern districts such as Lango, Acholi and West Nile were the last to be occupied and the last to be developed. The northern branch of the railway reached Soroti in the 1930s, but was only extended to Gulu in the 1950s. Although missionary schools were being established by the early years of this century, provisions for education were generally poorer than in the south. Increasingly, such deprived areas came to be regarded as the main source for recruits to the colonial army, prisons and police.

* Baganda refers to the ethnic group: Muganda to an individual; Buganda to the region; and Luganda to the language. The same set of prefixes applies to the other Bantu groups. The ethnic groups which feature most prominently in this report have been italicized.
Meanwhile, the Bantu, and the Baganda especially, continued to prosper. Their early contact with the missionaries, and hence education, allied to their already-developed feudal hierarchy, meant that both groups quickly marked them out as ‘model subjects’. Shortly before independence, Buganda boasted nearly half the country’s graduates, businessmen and civil servants. Increasingly many Bantu tended to look down on the Nilotic and Central Sudanic peoples as the ‘bakidi’ – the naked ones – while many northerners began to resent the Baganda, in particular, as colonial favourites. This colonially-encouraged north/south division, ‘sentiment of the divided classes’ was a legacy the Ugandans of Buganda, and the rest of the country, had to live with for many years. The coalition ‘was a collection of individuals who had come together for a single purpose . . . to get info power’. It was thus that on 9 October 1962, Dr. Obote became the first prime minister. However by the next elections held in April of the following year, he kept his part of the bargain by arranging for DP’s Catholics, KY and UPC ‘had divergent views on almost everything possible to prevent the people of Buganda from take over and consequently raised no objections about Buganda’s claims to autonomy within the state of Uganda. The final years before independence were stormy. A new, relatively enlightened and energetic governor, Sir Andrew Cohen, was appointed in 1952, and he attempted to increase African participation in government. He set up the Buganda Assembly, while elsewhere in Uganda UPC defeated DP by 37 seats to 24. Apart from their desire for Protestant ascendancy over Catholic influence, the party’s real raison d’etre was opposition to the Bantu Catholics, and to Buganda’s claims to autonomy within the state of Uganda. The historical differences between north and south were thus reflected in the earliest political alignments that developed in the final years before independence. In the next Legco elections, in 1961, Mutesa and the Lukiiko did everything possible to prevent the people of Buganda from registering and voting. The 3 or 4% of the Buganda electorate who resisted intimidation and voted were largely Catholic, and they voted for DP, now under the leadership of Ben Kiwanuka. Thus, with 119 seats in Buganda, DP won an overall country-wide majority over UPC, by 43 seats to 35. At the granting of internal self-government on 1 March 1962, Kiwanuka became Uganda’s first prime minister. However by the next elections held in April 1962 Mutesa and the Buganda Protestants had come to an accommodation with the UPC. Mutesa dropped his demands for secession, and in return Buganda was allowed to conduct indirect elections, by means of the pre-monarchist Lukiiko. The departing British were probably keen to see a Protestant leadership take over and consequently raised no objections about Buganda’s ‘special status’. The Kabaka Yekka (King Alone) party thus provided all 21 of the Buganda representatives to the National Assembly, while elsewhere in Uganda UPC defeated DP by 37 seats to 24. Apart from their desire for Protestant ascendancy over DP’s and Catholic local councils. His proposals for reform to the largely Kabaka-appointed Lukiiko in Buganda (the one traditional institution which the British had allowed to survive as a provincial government), led to a showdown with the Kabaka Mutesa II, and the latter’s deportation to London where he remained between 1953 and 1955. The reorganization of the Lukiiko, to which Mutesa agreed upon his return to Kampala, was insufficient to appease the Catholic minority in Buganda. The UPC, which represented the growing intransigence and Protestant bias. Matayo Mugwanya, whose election to the post of Katikiro (chief minister) of the Lukiiko was frustrated by Mutesa in 1955, became the first significant leader of the Democratic Party (DP), an organization founded ‘for political action on a specifically Catholic basis’. By 1958, the Kabaka, rejecting the idea of Bugandan general elections to the Lukiiko, and fearing the new trend towards national political parties, refused to allow Buganda’s five seats on the newly-constituted council to be filled. Seven of the remaining twelve seats contested were won by a group of independents, all of whom were leaders in their respective districts. By 1960, this group had joined forces with another splinter party to form the Uganda Peoples Congress (UPC), under the leadership of Apollo Milton Obote. Despite its early renunciation of religious factionalism, UPC’s real raison d’être was opposition to the Bantu Catholics, and to Buganda’s claims to autonomy within the state of Uganda. The following year, he kept his part of the bargain by arranging for Mutesa II to be elected President of Uganda, thus combining his hereditary and monarchical position in Buganda with the functions of a constitutional head of state in the country as a whole.


Prime Minister Obote found himself in a difficult position. Lacking the natural inherited authority of the Kabaka, and commanding the allegiance of a disparate coalition of powerful individuals, he found himself forced to continue manoeuvring to stay in power. Portents of future chaos began to emerge. Catholics and Moslems in public office suffered discrimination, while there were reports of nepotism to Obote’s favourites and yes-men. Administrative and judicial probity began to be undermined. Obote and Mutesa fell out over Obote’s insistence on going ahead with a local referendum on the status of the ‘Lost Counties’ which a British governor had transferred from Bunyoro to Buganda nearly seventy years before. Finally, in 1964, as the gulf between the interests of KY and UPC widened, the opportunist alliance was formally dissolved. By then, the UPC had winked sufficient KY numbers across to its ranks to remain in power without a coalition. On 22 February 1966, the so-called ‘Buganda crisis’ came to a head. Obote had five ministers arrested and detained in the middle of a cabinet meeting, allegedly for planning a plot against him. They included Grace Ibingira, Secretary General of UPC, who was accused of preparing a coup with the help of Mutesa, and of seeking the backing of western powers. At the time of their arrest, the ministers had just initiated a commission of enquiry into allegations that Obote and Colonel Idi Amin had been involved in the misappropriation of gold and ivory from a Zairois secessionist group. Two days later Obote suspended the 1962 constitution and dismissed Mutesa II as president. In response, the Lukiiko had road-blocks set up, and ordered the national government to remove itself from Bugandan soil. Violence broke out, and finally Obote instructed Amin – by then Chief-of-Staff of the army – to lead an aerial and ground attack on the Kabaka’s palace at Mengo. After a day of fighting which left many hundreds of Buganda dead, the Kabaka fled into exile, where he died in London in 1969. Buganda was placed under a state of emergency which was to continue for the next five years. The army commander, Opolot, was detained in Kilima prison; Amin was duly rewarded with the top military job.

By 1967 Obote was sufficiently confident to declare Uganda a republic, and to abolish the four kingdoms with their special constitutional status. Power became increasingly centralized around the office of the president. By 1969, political detentions (generally ordered by the security chief, Obote’s cousin, Akena Adoko) and government by repression were the order of the day. Despite wholesale defections from KY and DP to UPC in previous years, Obote was now able to control the national state. To distract attention from the worsening political and economic situation, he announced his ‘Move To The Left’ strategy, a belated attempt to provide Uganda with a more positive ideology, like that of ‘Harambee’ in Kenya, or ‘Ujamaa’ in Tanzania. Uganda’s problems were now blamed on capitalists and the educated elite, and proposals were made for the introduction of national service and the nationalization of foreign-based industry. These socialist policies were anathema to the traditionalist and largely capitalist-minded Bantu peoples – as well as to the Western powers, whose economic interests were threatened. Opposition to Obote now began to coalesce around the most viable alternative, the army commander Amin. While Amin stepped up recruitment to the army of Central Sudanics from his own home area of West Nile. Obote appointed Akena Adoko pushed the promotion of Nilotics as a counter-move. The rift between army and government widened.

At the beginning of 1970, Brigadier-General Okoya, an Acholi who had been promoted to the post of army deputy, was murdered in Gulu. This came shortly after an assassination attempt on Obote himself and Amin was widely suspected of involvement in both incidents. In January 1971, Obote departed for the Commonwealth Conference in Singapore, leaving orders for Amin to be detained during his absence. Amin was forewarned by the Israelis and pre-empted the move by staging a military coup, with the help of his loyal battalions, on 25 January. The Baganda danced thei
Binaisa's government may have been corrupt. Binaisa did, General. Some observers have also alleged that elements of Binaisa, though also a Muganda, was at first seen by many Ugandans, especially the Bantu, as Obote's front-man, since he lowered after liberation) as an expression of disillusionment at the

...shop-keepers once more raised their prices (which they had

...lowered after liberation) as an expression of disillusionment at the

...and the promise to hold general elections within two months into his presidency, Lule was voted out of office by the

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In the months that followed, democratic rule was steadily eroded. At a joint meeting in June, the Military Commission and the four political parties – UPC, DP, CP, and UPM (see Chapter 5) – agreed to ban the establishment of any new parties until after the elections. During this period, Muwanga also threatened that anyone campaigning as an independent would be ‘dealt with firmly’,13 and warned candidates who had defected from UPC to DP to ‘know how to behave or else we shall teach them a lesson they will never forget’. The other parties slowly awoke to the fact that Muwanga was simply preparing for UPC’s return to power. In the final few months before the election, violence increased in many areas of the country. Many Ugandans began to fear that the elections for which they had waited patiently for 18 years, and which had generated such enthusiasm and such passion, were about to be used by the Uganda Peoples Congress to re-assume power ‘by hook or by crook’.

5. The 1980 Elections – ‘A Worthy and Valid Conclusion’?

The crucial December 1980 elections were contested by four parties. UPC, led by Obote, appealed more to the Protestant community, and its main support derived from the Nilotic northern districts and parts of eastern Uganda, together with a pocket in the Bushenyi district of western Ankole. DP, led by Paul Ssemogerere, attracted the body of Catholic support, and was expected to achieve its best showing in some of the Bantu south and central districts of West Nile. The Conservative Party (CP) of Joshua Mayanja-Nkangi, was essentially an up-dated version of Nkangi, was essentially an up-dated version of 1960, and even in Buganda its support was minimal. The Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM) of Yoweri Museveni, effectively a socialist break-away from an Obote-led UPC, also attracted only limited support, mostly in Buganda and the western regions. Throughout the campaign, religion, ethnicity and personality politics played a far more important role than the policies adopted by each party, which differed but marginally.

All the parties agreed – albeit reluctantly on the part of UPC – to invite a Commonwealth Observer Group to provide an impartial report on the validity of the electoral process. It consisted of nine observers, together with 59 assistants, and the main group arrived just over two weeks before election day, to witness the preparations for the polls. The COG report14 makes fascinating reading. Aspects of the campaign and poll are described as 'unpardonable and inexcusable' or 'contrary to law and [having] no basis in fact'; the observers also admit to having been 'astonished' and 'dismayed' by some of the Military Commission's decisions. Nevertheless, this report was to play a significant part in the international community's acceptance of the eventual result as 'valid'. Some of the factors mentioned in the COG report which militated against a 'free and fair' election were:

(1.) The unopposed return of candidates from as many as 17 out of 126 constituencies ... that they [all] belonged to one party only heightened the suspicions and doubts of the others'. These 17 unopposed UPC seats were a direct result of irregularities in the process of nominating candidates.15 Under normal circumstances, DP would have expected to have won at least eight of them. (2.) Before the process of voter registration, 14 District Commissioners (who also acted as chief returning officers for their districts), were replaced by officials sympathetic to UPC. (3.) Only days before the poll, Chief Justice Wambuzi, whose job included the responsibility for making judgements on alleged election irregularities in the courts, was replaced by a UPC man. (In the event, none of the DP candidates who dared to challenge the results won their cases.) (4.) There were allegations of harassment, intimidation and death threats by UPC supporters against their opponents, especially in Gulu, Kitgum and Kaase. Several DP and UPM supporters were locked up, and one of the DP candidates for Kaase was assassinated. (5.) The government-owned Radio Uganda was instructed to provide impartial coverage: its 'support of the UPC was un concealed and on occasions it distorted news to advance the cause of that party'. In addition, coverage by Radio Uganda gave a 'disproportionate amount of time devoted ... to the UPC'.

In addition to the objections raised by the COG, other complaints were also made by the opposition parties, which included:

(a) The effective debarment of certain prominent politicians, notably Lule, who was refused permission to return to Uganda, and Binaisa, who was held under house arrest for six months from the time of his overthrow until after the elections. (b) A pronounced UPC bias on the Electoral Commission; five members out of six were apparently supporters of that party, and Mr. Kikira, its chairman, was a prominent founder member. This affected many important decisions, such as the demarcation of constituencies (which were allegedly smaller in areas of UPC support) and the use of four ballot boxes in each polling station rather than one. (c) The down-grading of the NCC and the ignoring of the Inter-Party Committee, which facilitated the UPC-dominated Military Commission's control of proceedings. (d) The use of state machinery, particularly UPC appointments in the key ministries of Justice, Supplies, and Transport, to afford every assistance to the UPC campaign. (e) The deploying of army units loyal to Oyite-Ojok to the crucial central regions of the country, while 'less dependable' battalions were sent to border districts like Kigezi and Karamoja. (g) Muwanga's decree (dated 9 December, but only announced later in December) to the effect that the UNLA plus 'various interest groups' could also provide up to ten MPs each, to be nominated by the future president. As it evolved, the future president did not even have to stand for election.16 Obote was merely appointed after the UPC victory.17 By polling day on 10 December 1980, it was apparent to many people that UPC was determined to win at all costs. For the most part, the poll was conducted fairly, although there were instances of inexcusable delays in areas of DP support (e.g. one polling station in Ntinda, near Kampala, was not opened until 5.50 pm, ten minutes before the polls were due to close). Elsewhere there were instances of attempts to influence the vote, such as a shortfall of ballot papers in Nebbi, the loss of the official voting register in Mbarara, and a case of intimidation and coercion in Kampala West. At 5.00 pm, one hour before the official close of the poll, the Electoral Commission declared that because of the late start in many districts, the poll would be continued on the following day up to 10.00 pm. No results would be announced until after polling (except in Nebbi, where the results were announced on the night); the COG judged that overall the voting took place freely, and in an 'atmosphere devoid of coercion and intimidation'. Many constituencies which had completed the voting process on the 10th, started to submit their results on the 11th, and although the count only officially began at 2.00 pm on that day, by late afternoon the DP was proclaiming overall victory. Premature celebrations began in the Kampala streets, as the inhabitants of the northern districts felt that they had brought to Mind the Voice of America. At the UPC headquarters, the atmosphere was decidedly gloomy. At this point it would appear that Muwanga panicked. He issued a retrospective proclamation whereby he personally took over the powers of the Electoral Commission. therefor, all returns had to be submitted to him for a decision as to whether the poll had been 'free and fair'. Muwanga's decision was to be final, and could not be challenged in a court of law. Anyone who illegally announced a 'purchased result' would be liable to five years in prison or a £5,000,000 shilling fine.

This was the final nail in the coffin. No one but the protagonist involved knows exactly what did happen during the small hours of election night, but it is widely alleged that certain Ugandan leaders sat up all night18, and switched some of the DP and UPC vote. whatever happened, the candidates who had been defeated discovered on the following day that they had after all been 'elected'. Francis Bwengye, then DP's Secretary-General claims that, notwithstanding UPC's original lead of 17, the DP actually won 81 seats out of 126. Surprisingly, most of the COG had already left the country before the results were declared, having submitted an Interim Report which, possibly in the light of the unexpected result, was hastily revoked and revised. The new report was 'electoral exercise which should broadly reflect the freely expressed choice of the people of Uganda.' However, those of the COG who were left behind in Kampala denounced Muwanga's proclamation as having constituted a negation of the open basis on which the election were to have been conducted', adding that they personally would now be 'forced to consider' their position. But apparently the COG was reassured and there followed an invitation to the supposedly impartial Electoral Commission (its Secretary, V. Kasenj, having fled into hiding), beginning declaring the veto results over the radio. UPC was pronounced to have won 72 seat DP 51, and the UPM just one. (The counts in two crucial seats, or of which involved the Secretary-General of UPC, were declared null and void due to 'irregularities', but they were announced more later as having been won by UPC) West Kampa, a co-ordinated two-hour burst of gunfire by the army greeted the result, and gave warning to any who might have been tempted to dispute it. The next day, Obote appointed Pau Muwanga as Vice-President and Minister of Defence, and so afterwards announced a cabinet in which 42 out of 50 posts went to Protestants.
There were between 25 and 30 results which the DP claimed had been falsified. But to have grounds for legal redress, it was necessary for each constituency agent to produce a signed copy of the results from his particular polling station. Over the next few days, DP agents were intimidated and beaten up, and several of the DP candidates who had disputed the count were imprisoned or forced to flee into exile. In fact, if the DP were to have won, as expected, 8 of the 17 unopposed UPC seats, plus an additional 4, they would have achieved overall victory. 20 But by this stage, it was too late. The COG had already issued its final report, with pages of detailed reportage that only emphasized the contradictions embodied in its closing sentence: ‘Surrounding all obstacles, the people of Uganda, like some great tidal wave, carried the electoral process to a worthy and valid conclusion.’ It is known that some of the team’s members privately dissented from this view. It is also rumoured that Britain was keen to have the result — any result — speedily ratified, so as to avoid further bloodshed. The COG, notwithstanding its hard work and its largely excellent report, probably arrived too late and left too early to avoid being manoeuvred by the UPC/Military Commission/Electoral Commission axis. A large number of the Ugandan people, including the supporters of the three defeated parties and even some individuals within the UPC, do not agree that the events of December 1980 constituted a valid electoral exercise.

6. The Guerrillas and the UNLA

After the elections, the stage was set for confrontation. The first guerrilla group to come into being, in July 1979, was the Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF), under the chairmanship of Amin’s ex-Minister of Finance, Moses Ali. Together with other smaller guerrilla groups in the area UNRF was largely made up of Amin’s ex-soldiers, forced to flee by the liberation war and at this stage probably keen to rehabilitate the ex-president. UNRF’s major West Nile operations began only after Obote’s election victory, and between 1980 and 1982 its Lugbara, Madi and Kakwa fighters successfully held most of the northern part of West Nile, and eventually began to present themselves as a democratic group with a civilian leadership fighting to overthrow dictatorship.

Despite further military successes in 1983, the UNRF has never fully recovered from the UNLA Christmas 1982 offensive (see Chapter 7).

The most disciplined and successful of the guerrilla groups, the National Resistance Army (NRA), began to operate from the bush in February 1981 under the military leadership of Yoweri Museveni, who had received his guerrilla training with Frelimo in Mozambique and fought a guerrilla war against Amin before being murdered by Obote’s forces in Lule during the 1979 general elections. The Luwero, Mpigi, Mubende and Mukono districts of Buganda, it is largely made up of Bantu troops, notably the Baganda, Bira, Bakiga and Banyoro — though several of its officers are Bahima. Although some of its leaders in the bush apparently have Marxist or left-wing leanings, the NRA as an organization shows little ideological bias.

The chairman of the NRA’s political ‘parent’, the National Resistance Movement (NRM), is the ex-president Yussufu Lule (see Chapter 9).

The Uganda Freedom Movement (UFM), an urban guerrilla group based in Kampala, Mukono and Mpiigi, operated with some success between February 1981 and September 1982. However, its unsuccessful attempt to establish camps in the bush in early 1981, combined with the abduction from Nairobi of its political chairman, Balaki Kirya, in July, and the departure of its military leader, Andrew Kayiira, in August, led to an irreversible decline in its fortunes, and it is a matter of some controversy as to whether it still exists as a fighting unit. Its membership was largely Bantu (notably Baganda) and Western-orientated (see Chapter 9).

Members of the above three groups originally received some degree of training and funds from Libya ‘because no-one else would help’, but the arrangement terminated in 1983. Otherwise, they have gained almost all of their weaponry from attacks on UNLA bases and convoys. Their formation, in 1981, of a loose alliance called the Uganda Popular Front, founded even before it got under way, although there was some casual co-operation between NRA and UFM. Another more politically-orientated opposition group is UNLF (Anti-Dictatorship) or UNLF-AD, based on the UNLF ‘Gang of Four’ of Rugumayo, Nabudere, Owomoy-Okwo and Tandon. Other smaller guerrilla groups include FEDEMU, which claims to have taken over the UFM forces, and which was led, until his abduction from Kampala in May 1980, by Tito Okello. Other contenders are Kamwoka and Charles Saali’s UDRU, believed by many to be fictitious. The principal objectives of all the main guerrilla groups include: liberation from dictatorship; the establishment of an interim government to restore human rights and security; the creation of a national army free from ethnic and religious divisions; and the introduction of democratic rule in the shortest possible period.

The UPF’s retention of power since the election has been heavily dependent on the support of the UNLA, which is now dominated by Acholi, Langi, and Iteso officers and troops. Scorched earth policies, and the wholesale killings of civilians, have been consistent features of regular army activities in areas such as West Nile and Buganda, not noted for their support of the government. The most disciplined and successful of the guerrilla groups, the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA), under the chairmanship of Amin’s ex-Minister of Finance, Moses Ali. Together with other smaller guerrilla groups in the area UNLA was largely made up of Amin’s ex-soldiers, forced to flee by the liberation war and at this stage probably keen to rehabilitate the ex-president. UNLA’s major West Nile operations began only after Obote’s election victory, and between 1980 and 1982 its Lugbara, Madi and Kakwa fighters successfully held most of the northern part of West Nile, and eventually began to present themselves as a democratic group with a civilian leadership fighting to overthrow dictatorship.

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UNLA was not allowed to progress further than Pakwach Bridge, the gateway to the West Nile region. During the next year, under Binaisa’s presidency, peace prevailed in West Nile, largely due to the efforts of the TPDF. The threat of ethnic revenge was averted, and several of Amin’s ex-soldiers elected to lend assistance to the liberating armies. Although there were instances of looting, and allegations that other Amin soldiers were detained or killed after handing in their guns and applying for surrender certificates, the overall situation remained stable. One of those who returned to Zaire in expectation of a massacre duly returned; and both food and essential items at official government prices were to be found in the shops. To this day, many West Nilers speak warily of ‘the time under Binaisa’.

After Binaisa’s overthrow, Muwanga’s Military Commission transferred the Tanzanian commander of West Nile together with most of his troops elsewhere. They were replaced by UNLA battalions and militia from Kitgum (Acholi) and Apac (Langi), and tension mounted as killing and looting by the troops spread. In August 1980, Obote and Tito Okello came to address a UDP rally at Koboko, the main town of the Kakwa, the ethnic group of Amin’s mother. Meanwhile, two vehicles of the presidential convoy which were checking the onward route to Moyo were ambushed by guerrillas six miles north of the town. After the news reached Koboko, Obote bravely delivered a short speech, before making a hasty departure. In the days that followed the army killed many people in the villages between Koboko and Aringa. On 9 October 1980, a group of ex-Amin soldiers from Zaire crossed the border and invaded Koboko barracks, killing over 50 soldiers, and forcing the UNLA to retreat southwards through Arua to the main army barracks at Bondo. For a few days, these Amin soldiers, backed by another group who had taken the possession of the Koboko barracks from the army, took over Arua town; then army reinforcements including thousands of Nilotic militia volunteers poured across the Pakwach bridge to punish West Nile. The thousands of Langi and Acholi killed by Amin’s army were about to be avenged. As one Acholi soldier allegedly announced to a Lugbara man he was beheading: ‘You, who have made us suffer, now it is your turn to die’. Although the UNLA was in retreat for a long time, UNLA spent several weeks reducing large parts of Arua and Koboko to rubble; while in the countryside, huts were filled with people and set on fire, men were shot and women raped. In addition, several churches were desecrated, grain stores were overturned, and property that could not be removed was wantonly destroyed. Acholi war-flutes piped their victory songs. The battle at Moyo had also fled, after hearing about the Koboko invasion on the radio. (The actual announcement had been made by Obote himself, even though he was at that stage a civilian, without official rank.) Some days later, a similar punitive expedition was mounted to re-take Madi. Some local people have reported that Acholi soldiers were soon to be seen walking through Moyo with the genitals of their victims hanging from belts, while in East Madi, certain men were said to have arranged for their relatives to come along and assist with the looting and removal of cattle. Between 5000 and 30,000 civilians lost their lives during the re-taking of Arua and Madi districts. The registration of voters for the forthcoming elections was abandoned.

A fact-finding team visited the war-affected districts in October and November 1980. This team was led by Moses Apiliga (a Madi) and Antony Butele (a Lugbara) who were both then ministers after the election, despite their making bold criticisms of army activities in the report which they subsequently delivered to the Military Commission. The report points out that the Aminists who attacked Koboko ‘came virtually with nothing apart from small fire-arms (pistols, hand-grenades, rifles, pangas, spears and bows and arrows)’. There was only a minimal co-operation given to the invaders by the civilian Arua population. On the whole, their initial behaviour was apparently better than the UNLA soldiers . . . whose officers were always drunk, involved in magendo [black market deals] . . . lacked command, harassed civilians, and in one or two places, it is alleged that they murdered some people’. The report goes on to cite instances of the sufferings of the UNLA . . . massacres, such as: ‘Djaipi . . . we were informed that 39 people were killed by UNLA . . . after they were called for a meeting by the soldiers’. It also detailed the complete breakdown of law and order: ‘UNLA is very hostile towards the civilians. Their activities clearly show feelings of revenge. Most civilians are shot on sight . . . Now civilians run away when they see any soldier in uniform.’

In February–March 1981, there was another indiscriminate attack by Acholi militia on the district of East Madi, which resulted in the entire population of 50,000 being chased across to Adjumani and Pakele, or else across the border into Sudan. The area was visited soon afterwards by Prime Minister Otema Allimadi, together with army commander Tito Okello, Moses Apiliga (by now Minister of Supplies), and aid workers. The three army and government representatives were apparently so shocked by what they saw that they ‘kept openly the army commander responsible, Lt-Col Ojul, was arrested by the UNLA, and Allimadi directed that the government journalists present to report exactly what they had seen. These good intentions did not last for long, however: Ojul was freed the following day, and when the Uganda Times editor, Ilukat Ben Bella, filed a remarkably frank report entitled ‘Tragedy in East Moyo’, 14 he was detained for a week and then dismissed.

By early 1981, the guerrillas of the Uganda National Rescue Front held most of the northern part of West Nile, with the exception of the towns of Ladonga, Koboko, Yumbe and Moyo. Many civilians had fled to the UNRF area to escape either the UNLA, or the Zairois army and militia, who had also begun to harass the West Nile refugee population there. Life for the swollen population of 250,000 behind UNRF lines continued almost as normal, whereas the UNLA-held territory was fraught with insecurity. Eventually, in mid-June 1981, 2000 soldiers deserted their posts at Yumbe, Ladonga and Koboko; they had been getting increasingly nervous as the guerrillas closed in, and, in addition, had not been paid for six months. The mutiny spread as the army marched south, looting and killing civilians as they went: many civilians left for refuge. The mutineers were joined by most of the troops in Arua, and it was only the personal intervention of Oyite-Ojok that prevented the total abandonment of West Nile to the UNRF. The guerrillas speedily moved in to fill the vacuum, but while entering Arua town, two of their commanders, Galla and Abiriga, were shot by the small UNLA contingent that had remained at their posts. The wounded men were carried back to the nearby mission at Ombaci, which was already sheltering several thousand refugees together with aid officials and French and German medical volunteers. Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross agreed to admit the wounded UNRF men for immediate surgery, provided that no one molested the civilians, or the UNLA soldier who was also being treated in the mission lounge, where mission staff and aid personnel were, eventually, the only survivors. The wounded UNRF men were handed over to the UNRF, along with the body of Galla, together with the body of Abiriga who had died during the night. Soon afterwards a group of UNLA soldiers invaded the mission grounds, and began shooting wildly into the crowd; people were mown down in the compound, the church, the school classrooms, and the woodwork shop. One soldier entered the mission lounge, where mission staff and aid personnel were, and on being informed that the two missions were taking refuge, and demanded to see the ID of a West Nile novitiate priest. He examined it, returned it, and then shot the man dead. Eventually, another army group arrived, and managed to stop the massacre, but by this time 60 were dead, and another 100 seriously wounded. Some days later, it was announced from Kampala that the massacre had resulted from the missionaries having given refuge and supplies to the guerrillas; as proof, it was alleged that the Gall’s body had been found in the compound. A few days later, lieutenant, whom Oyite-Ojok had personally promised to have arrested, returned to Ombaci to demand fuel. (A subsequent IRC press release on the Ombaci massacre led to their being asked to leave Uganda in March 1982.)

The uneasy stalemate between the guerrillas and the arm continued throughout 1981 and 1982; by now, atrocities we being committed by both sides. A group of ex-Amin soldiers, under Elly Hassan, and calling themselves the LA (Uganda Army) car for across into the ‘liberated zone’ from Zaire, to join in the looting and killing. They were eventually chased back across the border by the UNRF, but the latter group was also by this time not abo shootings those who refused to pay ‘taxes’ to support the guerrilla war. The long-suffering civilians, including those who had fled from Zaire in expectation of a massacre duly returned; and both food and emergency supplies were available, and they eventually began to cross over the border to the Sudanese refugee camps from March 1982 onward. In November of that year, the UNRF held a large meeting at C in the ‘liberated zone’. This was a final attempt to unite resistance movement, remove corrupt officers, elect a civil leadership, and dissociate the UNRF from Amin, but the movement eventually came to an end. Over Christmas 1982, the UN-
mounted an enormous offensive to the north and east of its positions along the Arua-Moyo road. The guerrillas were forced back to Mount Kei in the very north-western corner of West Nile, and despite some effective attacks in 1983,21 were never to regain the initiative. In 1981 the Ugandan government announced the closure of all refugee camps and it was claimed that all refugees who managed to avoid the advancing army fled to Sudan in their tens of thousands, with horrific stories to tell. It was alleged that men had been hacked to pieces, and their dismembered bodies hung up in the branches of trees, and that mothers had been made to pummel their babies to death in the mortars used for grinding maize.

By mid-1983, there were about 60,000 refugees from West Nile in Zaire, and over 200,000 in Sudan, though the independent researcher Barbara Harrell-Bond suggests the latter figure may have been as high as 350,000. Many of them originally hid along the border regions in the hope that an improvement in the situation would permit their return to Uganda. But after several incidents of people getting caught by the military whilst sneaking back to collect food from the untended plots on the Uganda side, and many others in an attempt to persuade refugees to return, the Sudanese territory, the majority of these ‘frontier refugees’ finally gave up and also headed inland – thus increasing the pressure on an already impoverished region. The refugees complained of being neglected by the media which, they claimed, unfairly represented them as Amin supporters, deserving of little sympathy. Anti-Oboite feeling was by now running high in the camps, not least because of the widespread and probably mistaken rumour that Oboite had Thompsoned them to the Ugandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs. No other document was also circulating amongst the refugees, containing proposals for putting an end to the conflict. It suggested measures such as a general amnesty to be supervised by UNHCR and other international bodies; the withdrawal from West Nile of forces from areas such as Acholi, which were considered to have ‘hostile attitudes’; the setting up of a committee of elders from Acholi and West Nile ‘to foster an attitude of good neighbourliness’; the free provision of food and essential items for one year after refugees returned; rehabilitation of medical and educational services; and the reinstatement of at least some of the West Nile civil servants and military personnel to their previous positions. This document gives a clear indication of the strength of the refugees’ desire to repatriate under the proper conditions, but warns of the possibility of an escalated armed struggle, should the suggestions simply be ignored. Another statement reinforced this view: ‘We long to return home to help Uganda. If Dr Obote’s government were sincere, it would find a way to guarantee our lives.’

Arua, and of a principled district commissioner in Moyo. UNHCR’s eagerness may well have stemmed from the fact that their Ugandan returnee programme was apparently seen as the key to future initiatives towards ‘durable solutions’ on the continent. By June 1984, 12,000 refugees had returned from Zaire and 900 from Sudan under UNHCR auspices,11 though the latter group had to be transported via the much safer route to Arua. Since their northern border region was still not secure. Perhaps as many as 50,000 others12 chose to return spontaneously, without UNHCR assistance, mostly to the area south of Arua. But the figure of ‘300,000 returnees’,13 for which Uganda requested $17.1 million in aid during July 1984, was clearly too high. In addition, the situation for returnees was still unsafe, a factor which many UNHCR officials privately admitted to be causing some concern. In fact, over 75,000 people were forcibly evicted from their homes in what came to be known as ‘The Chasing of the Banyarwanda’.

On 30 September 1982, another wave of ethnic persecution began, this time in Ankole, in the south-west of Uganda. In the days that followed, over 75,000 people were forcibly evicted from their homes in what came to be known as ‘The Chasing of the Banyarwanda’. Some 35,000 people took refuge in existing UNHCR refugee camps in the south of Ankole; another 40,000 fled to Rwanda, where they in turn were placed in camps. The human tragedy was enormous. One knowledgeable commentator lamented: ‘... of all the refugee situations of recent years, this of the Banyarwanda was among the most preventable’.31 Once it had been created, however, it was also one of the most difficult to put right.

Those affected were from three different ethnic groups (see Chapter 2). Two of them, the Batutsi and Bahutu – known collectively as the Banyarwanda – had arrived from neighboring Rwanda and Burundi during the previous 100 years. Their absorption into Uganda may be traced to four events. Firstly, in the late 19th century, an abortive invasion of Ankole by the Mututsi king Rwabugiri led nevertheless to the establishment of Batutsi chiefs and their Bahutu serfs in the west of the district. Then, in 1910, Belgium and Britain re-drew the colonial boundaries, leaving sections of the Bahutu population as residents of the Ugandan sub-district of Kisoro. Thirdly, from the 1920s onwards, Britain encouraged the emigration of tens of thousands of Bahutu from densely-populated Rwanda, in an attempt to boost Uganda’s labour force. Lastly, in the late fifties through to the early seventies, nearly 100,000 Batutsi fled Rwanda as political power began passing to the Bahutu.32 Only those Banyarwanda who arrived after 1959 are technically refugees; the other 900,000 or so became naturalized Ugandans at independence.

The third ethnic group affected, the pastoralist Bahima, originate from Uganda. They are closely related to the Batutsi, and used to enjoy the same master-client relationship with the agricultural Bairu as did the Batutsi with the Bahutu. By 1960, the preponderantly Catholic Banyarwanda and Batutsi of the Ugandan sub-district of Kisoro. The Bairu of the upper Nile and the Banyarwanda of the lower Nile were joined with the Bahima in the shape of the movement for the unification of the Banyarwanda and the new military government convened, and there is evidence that during the seventies, many Banyarwanda refugees were encouraged to move out of the refugee camps on to available land in Ankole. After Amin’s overthrow, many of these refugees hurried back to the camps, fearing a backlash from the UPC Bairu Protestant faction. This latter group was indeed incensed by the years of perceived exploitation at the hands of both their Bahima ‘masters’ and the Banyarwanda ‘foreigners’.
Shortly before the 1980 elections, partially successful attempts were made to disenfranchise the Banyarwanda voters of Ankole and Kigezi; some Bahima were also affected. The Banyarwanda and Bahima supporters of DP and UPM represented between 10 and 30 per cent of the population in the south-western districts, and the DP claim that their partial exclusion from the polls facilitated the victory of UPC candidates in eight out of twelve seats in Ankole. The district thus came to represent a considerable pocket of UPC support in the south of the country, and was awarded five councilors in the course of the operation, or en route to the camps. Clay estimates official proclaimed that it would be 'anti-Ugandan' for anyone to be a Banyarwanda in Ankole. District were announcing that all Kinyarwanda-speakers were to be dropped after representations by Tom Unwin, the UNHCR representative in Kampala. Meanwhile President Obote himself was claiming that 'some people had been forced to be refugees in their own country', because real refugees had taken advantage of the hospitality of Ugandans. 'A visitor who does that is inviting himself to be sent away.' In July 1982, the District Council in Mbarara passed a resolution that all refugees should be moved away from the borders.

However, on 15 September 1982, two UPC youth-wingers and a policeman were shot dead in Mbarara District. Local UPC officials announced that they had been killed whilst investigating instances of cattle theft by Banyarwanda herdsman, but other reports suggest that it was the youth-wingers themselves who had been discovered stealing cows, and that they had died in the gun-battle that followed. A meeting was apparently held in Mbarara in late September, attended by two of the Ankole ministers – Crispian Rwakasisi (also the national security chief) and Patrick Rubaihayo – together with UPC officials, the local district commissioner, and county and sub-county chiefs. Jason Clay observes: 'At that meeting, local officials were given the go-ahead to move against what were labelled as “Rwandan refugees/Banyarwanda” – political opponents, both real and imaginary, of the Obote government.' By 30 September, UPC officials in Mbarara district were announcing that all Kinyarwanda-speakers were to be moved to refugee camps, with immediate effect. The directive thus applied to all Banyarwanda, whether nationals of Rwanda or their own country', because real refugees had taken advantage of the hospitality of Ugandans. 'A visitor who does that is inviting himself to be sent away.' In July 1982, the District Council in Mbarara passed a resolution that all refugees should be moved away from the borders.

The government’s response to the events in Ankole developed as follows. First, even during the operations, two of the Ankole ministers – Rwakasisi and Rubaihayo – had toured the district making inflammatory anti-Banyarwanda speeches. One of the two UPC youths who had died was apparently related to Rwakasisi. Next, Unwin, the UNHCR representative, was ordered from the country for allowing the story to be released to the international press. The order was rescinded three days later, after Radio Uganda misleadingly announced that he had ‘apologised’. On 17 October, a government spokesman announced that the ‘Rwandese’ had simply panicked and fled after the original shooting incident. Prime Minister Allimadi delivered the opinion that the refugees had voluntarily returned home because peace had been restored in Rwanda. President Obote, who had been in Italy when the operation began, waited for nearly a month before making a statement. Then, on 29 October, in a communication read to the Ugandan press, he stated: 'I am concerned that the aliens, including Rwandese refugees, who left their homes because of rumours of various kinds, did so in circumstances that gave the impression that they were actually forced to flee... It is absolutely not true that the government of Uganda, which as you all know is a UPC government, ever authorized or in any way ordered the UPC Youth Movement in your areas to uproot Banyarwanda.' Clay refers to Obote’s statement as being characterized by some as primarily for international consumption.  

However, at the very same meeting, Mr L.R. Makatu, Chairman of Mbarara District Council, declared: ‘For the past twenty years we have been generous enough to accommodate these Rwandese refugees and normal aliens of Rwandese origin, not knowing that we were nourishing a viper in our chest until recently we realized that they were dangerous criminals, killers, smugglers and saboteurs.’ At another meeting at Kamukuzi, six days later, Makatu thanked his audience ‘for that work you have done... When lifting a roof off a house you cannot avoid nasty happenings that arise therefrom’. He declared that the district council will determine a way for you to divide these [Banyarwanda] properties. Give it time...’ By this time, Makatu had been appointed chairman of the committee set up by Obote to ‘identify... who is a refugee from any other state outside Uganda’. He used his power to conduct a mapping-up operation between December 1982 and January 1983, that effectively drove out a further 8000 people. Despite the praiseworthy sentiments expressed during meetings between the Ugandan and Rwandese governments in late October 1982 and March 1983, Kampala has notably dragged its feet on the issue of repatriating the Ugandan nationals who fled to Rwanda. Although a Ugandan Ministry of Justice team (protected by armed guards) was conducted a census among the populations inside Rwanda between July and September 1983, its findings have still not been announced. The Rwandese maintain that over 90% of the persons involved are Ugandan nationals, but failure to push these claims too hard, lest their main supply route, which runs through Uganda, be cut. Meanwhile 28,000 agriculturalists (mainly Bahima) languish in Kibondo camp, almost next to the border, in very harsh conditions. They live in mildewed tents behind barbed-wire fences, and are not allowed out to cultivate food or cut firewood. They are effectively held hostage, as a constant reminder that Rwanda will accept no more Ugandan refugees. The 13,000 pastoralist refugees at Nasho camp (mainly Bahima) have lost almost 40,000 of their 50,000 cattle owing to lack of pasture-land. The Ugandan government has made no attempt to punish the evictors, compensate the victims, or prevent further instances of displacement. In fact, in December 1983, a further 20,000 Banyarwanda – ‘100% Ugandan citizens’ according to a UN observer – were evicted from neighbouring Rakai and Masaka districts. About 10,000 fled to UNHCR camps in Toro; the remainder became refugees in the Kagera salient of Tanzania. The Democratic Party MP for Rakai North, Luke Kazinja, issued a press release in which he strongly criticized the Rakai displacements, and apparently linked them to Rwakasisi. A few weeks later, Kazinja disappeared after thirty members of the UNLA raided his house. Rwakasisi now allegedly operates his own detention camp at Kamukuzi, Ankole, where political opponents are held.
Even the future of those who fled to the Ugandan refugee camps is insecure — certain ministers have advocated that refugee areas be re-designated as farming land, or as national parks. In the course of the 1982 operations, camp boundaries were reduced, and some newly approached refugee camps were garrisoned. Although over 40% of the heads of households who fled to the Ugandan camps have claims to Ugandan citizenship, most of the remainder are Batutu refugees, deeply fearful of returning to Rwanda. In November 1983, 15,000 people and 20,000 cattle from Oruchinga and Nakivale were moved to a new UNHCR camp at Kyaka II, in a bid to alleviate pressures on water and grazing. However, the Kyaka II ‘refugees’ apparently claim that the new camp lies in a tsetse-infested zone, and have expressed fears that they would be used to clear the area, and then asked to leave at a later stage. There are now 25,000 people at Kyaka II, and the overcrowding has caused increased tensions with local people. In a speech delivered in Geneva in July 1984, the Ugandan Minister of Culture and Community Development stated that ‘some nasty incidents have taken place which have attracted much international concern’, the reason being that ‘many of the Rwanda refugees identified themselves too closely with the murder squads of the [Amin] regime’. Whether or not the original directives for the operation emanated from the Kampala high command, there was evidently considerable involvement at ministerial level. The evacuations and excuses offered by the government since October 1982 have demonstrated that there is no real willingness to put matters to rights, for Obote and his party have undoubtedly benefited from the resultant situation. A large proportion of the displaced are now claiming that UPF officials inside the camps — such as the Oruchinga camp commander and the Merama Hill medical officer — have been pressurizing them to leave Uganda altogether. (Although over 40% of the heads of household who fled to the Ugandan camps have claims to Ugandan citizenship, most of the remainder are Batutu refugees, deeply fearful of returning to Rwanda.)

In the ‘Luwero Triangle’ — the area of some 4500 square kilometres along the Hoima road from within ten kilometres of Kampala, and had rendered tenuous the army’s control of Bombo road. However, with the UFM’s collapse in September 1982, the army was able to concentrate its attention on the NRA. The previous heavy military defeats, with their attendant losses of personnel and equipment, discouraged further direct confrontation. Instead the UNLA employed the classic counter-insurgency tactic of attempting to cut off the material and moral support for the guerrillas afforded by the local population. From September onwards, civilians along Bombo road were systematically driven from their homes. However, Muwanga’s claim that Luwero was now pacified was soon belied by the killing of three North Korean military advisors working in the area. Consequently, the army campaign was stepped up at the end of 1982: by this stage, members of nine battalions were involved, and by June 1983 the number had risen to thirteen. It appears that the NRA realized that this was a massive offensive, and beat a strategic retreat at quite an early stage of the operation. The UNLA swept through the Triangle, taking control of the strategic trading centres. Fleeing civilians were rounded up and others who sought to remain in their homes were evicted. From January 1983 onwards, those of the population who had not fled the district entirely were being transferred to camps ‘protected’ by the UNLA and the Special Force. These moves served both to create a ‘free-fire zone’, inside which anyone found at large could be safely identified and shot as a ‘bandit’, and also to facilitate the security screening of the population. The camps contained mainly women, children and the elderly — most of the young men had presumably either fled, been removed for interrogation, or been killed.

Aid agencies first became aware of the situation in March 1983. It is rumoured that an official in the Ministry of Rehabilitation made a private request for assistance. By May, various agencies including the Uganda Red Cross, Oxfam, SCF, The League of Red Cross Societies, World Food Programme, and UNICEF were providing help in the form of food, water, medical facilities, shelter, clothing and blankets. In November, the International Committee of the Red Cross was re-admitted to the country to assist with tracing and food relief.

The Ugandan government, meanwhile, was proving sensitive about the Luwero situation. During April, it was reluctant to admit that there was any problem. Then press reports about a massacre at Kitabya camp eventually provoked a government statement that the operation of ‘Operation Bonanza’ was still in its early stages. It is likely that the army campaign was being marked off from the ~guerrilla threat. Screening operations known as ‘security screening of the population. The camps contained mainly women, children and the elderly — most of the young men had presumably either fled, been removed for interrogation, or been killed.

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inhabitants allegedly turned into 'zombies' by the army's excesses, and thus rendering them effectively debarred from Luwero. The only camps remaining, Nakasi (on Luweero road), and Busunju (on Hoima road), were transit camps contained only 2500 civilians, according to government figures.

What exactly has the government achieved by the Luweero operation? It has scored a limited propaganda victory, by forcing the NRM to re-locate to the north and west. (It did not, however, as the NRM allege, manage to capture any guerrillas. In addition, it seems that some guerrillas are still able to move right up to Kampala without undue difficulty, and that they return a number of camps within the Triangle itself.

But experienced aid agency personnel have been deeply shocked by what they have seen in Luweero Triangle. So has the international community, which, having been sceptical about the government's version of events, now seems to be more evenly divided. The initiative turned sour, however, when the first arrivals from the dry savannah areas around Nakasongola and Nakitoma had lost their herds in the course of the army's advance, and had been suffering severe malnutrition until the aid agencies intervened. The initiative turned sour, however, when the first arrivals from the dry savannah areas around Nakasongola and Nakitoma had lost their herds in the course of the army's advance, and had been suffering severe malnutrition until the aid agencies intervened. The initiative turned sour, however, when the first arrivals from the dry savannah areas around Nakasongola and Nakitoma had lost their herds in the course of the army's advance, and had been suffering severe malnutrition until the aid agencies intervened.

In November 1983, the army suddenly began to disband its camps. The first to be affected was Ndeje, where the inmates were summarily ordered out, and their huts then set on fire. Most of the remaining camps were closed in a haphazard manner over the next five months, causing concern amongst aid officials that many villagers would now be deprived of medical and nutrition assistance, and that others were likely to be killed as 'bandits'. Occasionally the villagers would assemble at the sites of the old camps, to collect dry rations from the Red Cross and SCF, but even this practice was curtailed in March 1984 when the DC of Luweero District, Nathan Karema, and Lt-Col Orwotto of Bombo barracks, stopped all food supplies to the area on the grounds that relief food had been discovered in a 'bandit camp'. By this stage many civilians were being taken in groups and hidden in trucks destined for Kampala for re-sale. In some camps, the men were escorted by armed soldiers, and ordered to load coffee and food onto waiting army trucks. The appointment, in May 1981, of Oyite-Ojok to the chairmanship of the Coffee Marketing Board, led several observers to suspect that the army's activities in Luweero may have been prompted solely by the desire to combat 'banditry'.

Reports have indicated that it was a truck-load of UPC Youth-wingers who, with army support, swept through the camp wielding pangas, axes and knives. The government numbered the dead at 81, with 151 injured; the DP claims that at least 200 died. In the same week 80 people were reported killed in Bombo barracks while 50 other bodies, with arms tied behind backs, were dumped by an army truck at nearby Masulilita. Though the scale of the violence at this time was probably unusual, it is significant to note that it remained an intrinsic part of the soldiers' response to the civilian populations in their charge. There have been numerous horrific reports, substantiated by independent witnesses, of which the following are but examples: a party of 20 men, escorted by soldiers, being marched off into a swamp, after which several gun-shots were heard; a girl of 14 who had suffered multiple rape, and who later died from her injuries; a nine-months pregnant woman who was raped three times; women and young girls being forced to live with soldiers against their will; and a man who had failed to return before curfew being assaulted after having been shot in both legs. During the day-time, the periodic presence of aid personnel tended to mitigate the violence, but it was at night, when the agencies were being forced out of the area for security reasons, that most of the abuses and abductions occurred. One aid worker summed up the situation as follows: 'The plight of these people is appalling. There are probably few places in the world where one would witness such a cynical and flagrant flouting of human rights'. There are no available figures for those who have died during the anti-guerrilla operations, and there probably never will be. One is forced to wonder how many of the 600,000-odd unaccounted persons from the three districts actually managed to flee to other areas.
this latter group had been killed during a shoot-out between two army detaches, vieving to establish supremacy in an area rich in potential loot (in this case, corrugated iron sheets).

At the time of writing (autumn 1984), a new offensive has just been mounted against the NRA under the personal direction of Chief-of-Staff Smith Opon-Acak. In November 1984, over 200 North Korean and Tanzanian soldiers were reported to have arrived to assist the operation. Relief aid to the area has once again been stopped, partly due to government restrictions, and partly because of a shooting incident involving a Red Cross team, and this time purportedly committed by guerrillas. The conditions of those civilians remaining in the area of fighting is a matter for conjecture, but a recent independent study of 200 Luwero families indicates a 22.5% shrinkage in family size over five years, and a 78% to 22% male-female split for deaths in the 16-40 age group.13

10. Operations in Karamoja

From its assimilation into Uganda in 1921, Karamoja was treated as a closed area of 'wild tribes', like Kenya's Northern Frontier District. Even the representatives of the Verona Fathers and the Bible Churchmen's Missionary Society, who arrived from 1929 onwards, were only allowed to live in temporary dwellings. The colonial government limited itself to establishing a token administration and demarcating national and district boundaries, thus reducing the possibility of traditional traditional agitations of the various clans in search of water and grazing for their cattle. This upset the delicate balance of power between the Karamojong and their neighbours in Kenya (like the Pokot and Turkana) and in Sudan (like the Toposa), for whom cattle-raids were an integral feature of life, with herds seemingly passing in rotation between different groups and clans, providing the ascendant group of the moment with honour, bride-wealth, and the means of livelihood. After Independence, the UPC government made efforts to build schools and hospitals, but progress was retarded by the successive and terrible famines to which the area was especially vulnerable. Then, in 1979, during the liberation of Moroto barracks from Amin's troops, many thousands of automatic weapons passed into the hands of the local warriors, with the result that cattle-raids were transformed from relatively minor affairs into pitched battles in which hundreds of men lost their lives. During the 1980 election campaign, Obote was quick to grasp the importance of this new balance of power: he did much of his electioneering in the company of Apa Loris, the influential warlord of the Moroto area. During 1982, Apa Loris and his deputy were murdered by Iteso militia, while on their way to participate in government-sponsored peace talks, aimed at bringing the recent Karamojong raids on Teso to a halt. Although the Bokora clan of the Karamojong mounted a huge revenge raid on Teso, the following year was largely peaceful, due to the efforts of the district officers and local chiefs.

However, in the latter half of 1983, the security problem in Karamoja assumed a new and serious aspect. Several large organized attacks by Karamojong warriors were mounted on the neighbouring districts of Acholi, Lango, and Teso, and among the farms which suffered were Tito Okello's, near Kitgum, and Oyite-Ojok's, near Lira (this latter raid occurring at Christmas, shortly after Ojok's death). Interestingly, certain reports indicate that some of the raiders spoke good English, wore stolen military uniforms, and carried modern weapons -- in addition to which they began to kidnap people as well as steal cattle -- and all this led to speculation that there were political motives behind the attacks. That may be so, but it should be added that cattle-ownership is, as ever, probably the main driving force behind the warriors' activities. In response to the Oyite-Ojok raid, a large band of the Langi militia set off in hot pursuit, but were wiped out by Bokora warriors at Kangole, near the Karamoja 'capital' of Moroto. A larger punitive force of army and militia later located and destroyed Kangole, inflicting severe casualties on the victors and suffered heavy casualties at the hands of the Bokora, eventually having to retreat to Moroto barracks. A total of 157 soldiers died in these two battles, and reprisals against the population of Moroto have been taking place ever since. By February 1984, it was clear that the Ugandan and Kenyan armies had decided to mount a co-ordinated 'disarming operation' amongst the various pastoralist peoples living along the borders. Soon afterwards, senior officers from both the armies visited the towns of southern Karamoja, like Namalu and Nabilatuk, to give prior warning of the campaign. The fact that the majority of people in this area were settled agriculturalists, with no use for guns, seems to have been overlooked. The local population quite simply afforded easy targets -- and between 9 and 19 March the army, aided by militias and the Special Force, sacked, burnt and looted the various villages of Namalu, set fire to the crops, and forced over 20,000 people to flee. This area, together with Matany, represents 'the granary of southern Karamoja', suggesting that a more sinister motive may have been involved -- that of starving the Karamojong population into submission. Two-thirds of the available arable land in Karamoja now lies unplanted, and food prices have quintupled as normal supplies have been cut off.

At the time of going to press, the situation inside Karamoja remains volatile. Further raids on Acholi, Lango, Teso, and Sebei have caused thousands to flee, although the reports of hundreds being killed are almost certainly exaggerated. Those responsible are described variously as Karamojong warriors, UNLA soldiers, and gangs of thugs -- the exchange of uniforms means that identification is becoming increasingly difficult. In response, the Teso militia has destroyed the Karamoja border town of Iriri, and the army in Moroto, apart from killing, abducting and extracting ransoms, is reported to be 'exporting' 10,000 Karamojong cattle to Kampala.

Meanwhile Paulo Muwanga is saying that the operation to disarm the Karamojong has not yet commenced; and the arrival of very few soldiers of the UNLA in Teso districts (in the presence of white Kenyan helicopter pilots in Soroti, it may indicate that another operation in northern Karamoja is indeed being planned. The northern Jie clan, clearly frightened by this prospect, have recently handed over 100 weapons. There were meetings in April 1984 between Presidents Moi, Obote and Nimeiri, to discuss the situation, but for Obote at least, it is alleged that the Karamoja operation may be serving more than just one purpose. Since the death of Oyite-Ojok, the power struggle within the UNLA has intensified, and Obote seems to be in increasing danger of losing control over his armed forces. The Karamoja problem therefore offers a useful opportunity to remove the feuding Acholi and Langi army factions to a position well-removed from Kampala; the very remoteness of Karamoja means that any 'problems' there are unlikely to cause the government too great a degree of embarrassment.

11. The Denial of Human Rights

In the last four chapters, this report has summarized the excessive army reprisals taken against ethnic groups which are seen to be working against the government, either as 'bands' -- cattle-rovers, or as members of legal opposition parties. This tacit use of the army to suppress opposition, referred to by one observer as a 'contrived confusion of terror' has resulted in over a quarter of a million people fleeing Uganda as official refugees, and, at a conservative estimate, a total of 800,000 people displaced from their homes. (There were less than 10,000 official Ugandan refugees in 1978, the last full year of Amin's presidency.) Unfortunately there are many other types of repression and discrimination that are presently taking place inside Uganda.

Reports allege there are as many as up to 10,000 people detained in Uganda's 93 prisons and police cells, of which two-thirds are political prisoners. Treatment of these detainees varies from satisfactory to poor; conditions are tough, with crowded cells and inadequate food and medical facilities. Several prisoners have died during epidemics of typhoid and similar diseases. No-one knows, however, how many Ugandans are detained, or how many have suffered torture and death, in the other unofficial places of imprisonment, such as the military barracks of Makindye, Kireka, Bombo and Mailing, and the secret detention centres like Nile Mansions, the Milton Obote Foundation headquarters, Park Hotel, 'Argentina', and various private houses in Kampala. Some of these prisoners are accused of opposing the government and aiding guerrillas; others are rich, and represent good ransom potential; while others again may simply have incurred a soldier's displeasure over a business deal, or a traffic accident. Conditions in the military barracks are particularly harsh and inhuman, as is ominously suggested by a
professionally-made sign in the courtyard at Makindye. It reads: ‘WHAT YOU SEE HERE, WHAT YOU HEAR HERE, WHAT IS DONE HERE, YOU MUST LEAVE HERE’. Inmates are fed with half-cooked maize meal every two to four days, and they live in intensely crowded conditions, often in their own excrement. They are frequently deprived of water, and hence...
salient — despite the eight years which Dr Obote himself spent as a refugee in Dar-es-Salaam.

12. The UPC Record

Whatever international criticisms Obote suffers for the state of lawlessness and repression in his country, is offset by the praise and encouragement he receives for retaining a free press and a multi-party democracy, and for presiding over an economic recovery.

a. The free press Just before the election, the press was described as 'the freest and most prolific in Africa' — there were between 30 and 40 journals and newspapers, reflecting every political and ideological hue. Currently the number of papers that could be defined as representing views different from those of the government has been reduced to four, all of which appear only in stencilled editions. These are the DP paper Munansi, and the rather more cautious Catholic paper Munno and independent journals Equator and Pilot. The continued existence of Munansi is undoubtedly the most surprising, since it provides with untiring courage weekly accounts of the excesses of government and army. In cases where stories can be cross-checked, Munansi has proved itself to maintain a high standard of accuracy. There are accounts of illegal detentions, lists of 'charges' payable at the various road-blocks around Kampala, the names of persons murdered since the 1980 elections (50 to 75 per issue), and details of army massacres and corrupt activities by ministers and UPC officials. Recent stories have included such topics as the following: detainees in Luzira prison being persuaded to donate blood to soldiers; a UPC goondeela chief who took to tying young people in sacks and setting fire to them; and the expenditure of 400,000,000 shillings (just over a million dollars) on beer, food, transport, and expenses for 'Hero's Day', the annual UPC celebration at Bushenyi, of Obote's return from exile. While it is certainly commendable that Munansi is permitted to survive, it should also be pointed out that it has twice been closed, its printing press has been smashed, its journalists arrested, and its directors prosecuted for sedition.

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The foreign press has not fared well either. The last of the resident foreign correspondents were banned in February 1982, and nowadays often only specially favoured reporters and other 'non-controversial' journalists, many of them from communist countries, are allowed entry visas.

Government representatives constantly complain of a concerted campaign of distortion and lies by the foreign media; a team of Cuban 'media experts' was consequently recruited in late 1983 'to help improve Uganda's image'. Constant pressure on western newspapers by Ugandan high commissions and embassies abroad, allied to Obote's and Mwanga's known litigious tendencies, have served to curb critical reports since the beginning of 1983.

b. Multi-party democracy In practice, there are still three political parties in operation — the UPC, the DP, and the CP, with the UPM effectively defunct after Museveni's decision to 'go to the bush' in 1981, and the subsequent killings by security personnel of prominent UPM politicians from Ankole and elsewhere. Yet some Ugandans allege that Obote's new-found adherence to multi-party politics, after his one-party state of the Sixties, is actually little more than lip-service — a sop to Western governments who are eager to applaud 'visible democracy' in a black African state. The original indications of manipulation of the 1980 elections were reinforced in November 1983, when nominations for by-elections were staged in eight constituencies. 

Paul Ssemogerere, who has managed to maintain a remarkably level-headed stance throughout his four years as leader of the opposition, announced that DP would not contest the eight seats, on the grounds that the security situation was worsening; thirty people had already been killed in the relevant constituencies, amidst a general campaign of harrassment by UPC youth-wingers. The CP, however, decided to contest, and soon encountered resistance. One of its candidates, Julius Rwandere, was abducted as he prepared to file his nomination, and was only freed after the UPC candidate was 'elected unopposed'. There were complaints by the CP leadership following which the Minister of Internal Affairs, John Luwuliza-Kirunda, called a press conference, and 'produced' Rwandere, who rather nervously read a statement saying that the election had not been fair. A decision had been decided not to register because his UPC opponent appeared to be such a popular figure in the constituency concerned.

The economic subject of the Ugandan economy arouses almost as much controversy as the question of human rights and security. This section consequently reflects some very different interpretations of the current state of affairs. Since returning to power, Obote has rejected his 'Move To The Left' policies of the Sixties, and promoted a free market economy, concentrating on a broadening of the economic base and the export-earning sector; the rehabilitation of agriculture, mining, industry, and power; and an upgrading of the security apparatus. He has successfully sought long-term and concessional loans from the IMF and individual governments. Critics say his about-turn is opportunistic, while supporters suggest that his years of exile in Tanzania taught him some bitter lessons about the practical difficulties of implementing socialist ideals in modern Africa.

It is certainly true that Obote inherited a legacy of economic and administrative chaos from Amin's regime, and that the UNLF government, despite its efforts, had failed to conquer the problem of galloping inflation of 250% per annum. Nevertheless, Obote's concentration on the production sector of the economy at the expense of such social services as health and education, his agreement to dismantle inefficient state enterprises, and his immediate devaluation (of the Shilling five times since 1981, and effectively by another 400% since then) had, according to government figures, reduced inflation to roughly 30% by mid-1983. 

The Revised Recovery Programme for 1983-85 anticipated a growth in Gross Domestic Product of 6% per annum, and a positive balance of payments. Civil service wages were raised by 50% in the 1983 budget, and by an astonishing 350% the following year; the minimum monthly wage has also been raised in line with the devaluation: the Shilling five times since 1981, and effectively by another 400% since then) had, according to government figures, reduced inflation to roughly 30% by mid-1983. 

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produce from the shamba, magendo (middle-man dealing using the black market), or other less legal enterprises. Medical workers appropriate drugs for private sale; civil servants expect chai (tips) for services rendered; and telephone engineers demand regular pay-offs to keep private phones connected. Critics also allege that the dual window system of foreign exchange rates implemented by the IMF in a bid to rationalize the former 30-fold differential between the black market and official exchange rates, has simply provided a license for government officials and approved firms to purchase cheap dollars. 106

Obote has made some genuine efforts to rehabilitate the country - the pot-holed roads of Kampala are finally to be repaired, the ferry link to Mwanza, Tanzania has been re-opened; and he has initiated moves to re-establish economic co-operation between the three East African countries. 107 But he has restricted financial control to himself (as Minister of Finance), his foreign advisers, and his close associates such as Chief-of-Staff Oyite-Ojok (in 1981 appointed Chairman of the Coffee Marketing Board - which earns over 90% of Uganda's foreign exchange). He has thus laid himself open to opposition charges of nepotism and even worse. As the Economist commented: "it is foolish to put money into Uganda and expect it to stay there." 108 Or as Hugh Dinwiddy, ex-Dean of Makerere University put it, in a private letter to the editor of The Times: '... those with power and influence make fortunes. Hence the building of huge houses, acquisition of overseas property, the reselling of imported goods outside the country... the overseas shopping sprees and accumulation of Swiss and London... bank accounts. The disparity between the haves and the have-nots is growing. Finally, there is some evidence that nepotism and political discrimination are now once again rife in such fields as industry, the judiciary, the civil service, and educational establishments. UPC branches have been set up in all factories and industries, to 'serve as watchdogs against saboteurs and to encourage maximum production, efficiency and honesty'. 109 Predictably, this means that hiring, firing and promotions, are closely connected to party interests. The Ministry of Supplies, under Apiliga, which was meant to service the dual window system of foreign exchange rates, has simply dispensed at the whim of the local UPC chairman, who, especially in DP areas, has become the party faithful. At constituency level, favours, and allocations of government-controlled goods, are dispensed at the whim of the local UPC chairman, who, especially in DP areas, has become the most important local official, above the MP, and even the District Commissioner. Recently the Asians, who had solidly backed Obote on the basis of his pre-election promise to compensate them for properties and businesses lost in the 1972 exodus, began to complain that their claims to the Ugandan government were being ignored 110; they are soon likely to become another disaffected group. The net result is that a large percentage of Ugandans, especially qualified professionals and businessmen are heading abroad in search for security, a better standard of living, and less discrimination. Uganda is losing skills and talent it badly needs.

13. The International View

The West's current sanguine attitude towards the UPC regime is probably influenced by a number of factors:

1. Uganda's perceived strategic importance within the East African region. The other Western allies in the area, such as Sudan, Somalia and Zaire, are all notoriously volatile, and even Kenya, the staunchest of allies, nearly fell to a leftist coup in August 1982. Uganda's significance is increased by its control over the headwaters of the Nile and also by Obote's moves to rekindle interest in the defunct East African Community. Obote continues to let it be known that he can turn elsewhere if Western aid dries up; the presence of North Korean military advisers, Cuban media experts, and the continued training facilities offered by Moscow, emphasize this threat.

2. Commercial interests, particularly strong in Britain's case. Uganda's links with the Commonwealth, and already established trade connections, have been augmented by Obote's promise to encourage the Asian community to return, and by his benign attitude to British financiers and investors. 106

3. Obote's strict adherence to the IMF and World Bank guidelines, which has resulted in their citing Uganda as an example to the rest of the Third World.

4. At the time of Obote's election victory, many countries held back from immediate involvement, in case opposition groups managed to stage a coup. But the guerrillas' known connection with Libya between 1981 and 1983 served to persuade many of these governments to back Obote, whatever his shortcomings. Besides, Obote is a likeable and plausible man on a personal level and many diplomats have found it difficult to accept that in the victim of the Seventies could re-emerge in the Eighties, in a different guise.

5. Currently, the old argument of 'better the devil you know' still seems to apply. Other governments are questioning whether alternative leaders like Binaisa, Ssemogerere, Museveni, Ibingira Lule, or other younger aspirants, would actually be able to achieve unity or provide any better leadership. From 1982 onwards, several governments, notably those of Australia, Canada, West Germany, Holland and the Scandinavia countries, had made attempts to tie aid to Uganda's human right record. Nevertheless, the US statements on Uganda in August 1984 (see Chapter I) and the congressional hearings that followed came as a surprise to most observers. The Ugandan response was immediate: the reports were described as 'nowhere near the truth... and deliberately calculated to malign the government an innocent people of Uganda'. 107 The US military attaché was banned from entering Uganda, an American military training programme for UNLA officers was cancelled, and a few days later Obote, clearly feeling threatened by the press blow, finally appointed a Langi successor (Lt-Col Smith Onop-Acak) to Oyite-Ojok as chief-of-staff, fully eight months after the latter's death. The British position on Uganda has been less clear. Press reports in August 1984 indicated that Britain was casting doubts on the US initiative: a special British investigation had allegedly found 'evidence... to support the view... as an exaggeration' the US figures for those killed. 108 Sources inside the Foreign Office later insisted they had been misquoted, that there was never any special investigation, only the regular monitoring done by the British High Commission in Kampala. A subsequent statement by Malcolm Rifkind, the UK Minister of State for African Affairs, indicated that 'our view of conditions in Uganda does not differ significantly from that of the Americans'. 109 The Foreign Office apparently prefers a quieter approach than the US, exeriting diplomatic pressure, rather than criticizing the Uganda regime in public. However, on the recent occasions that Britain as an Ugandan government representatives have met, the meetings see to have been typified by the signing of trade deals and friendship pacts, rather than by real attempts to rectify the human rights situation. In July 1983, Malcolm Rifkind visited Uganda, at the height of the outbreak of 'the first massacre'; he told President Obote under no illusions about the degree of concern conditions in the camps'. However... on leaving Uganda Rifkind did not refer to the refugee crisis. He called Ang Ugan dan relations "very cordial", and said that Britain was releasing another £4 million in financial support. 110 Similarly, the signing of a military training agreement between the UK and Uganda within days of Abrams' statement was widely viewed as a discreet rebuff to the Reagan administration. 111 It is indeed time-honoured tradition for Britain to 'take a soft line' with Commonwealth members, but many observers now feel that Whitehall's stance on Uganda is at best non-committal or weak, worst short-sightedly ill-advised.

14. Conclusion

In many ways, the colonial experience left Ugandans ill-prepared for self-government, and has been partly responsible for the progressive failure of democracy in the years since independence. Uganda now presents an extreme example of the crisis faced much of post-colonial Africa. There is internal conflict based on ethnicity, religion and power-seeking; external intervention at both international and regional levels; the use of coercion and military force in the struggle to achieve civil order; economic collapse and the existence of a thriving informal economy; and factional divisions within the ruling party, the army, and opposition groups.

Milton Obote, the only African leader to be re-elected to the presidency of his country after being deposed, was beset with problems from the time of his return to office. Many Ugandans f
that he lacked a true mandate, and resented UPC's manipulations, behind by Amin. Soon afterwards began the first wave of guerrilla attacks, aimed at toppling him from power; in a short space of time, Obote had to divert his attention from the political to the military arena.

The new president faced an unenviable dilemma. The polity was being disturbed by a relatively small number of dissidents who were living within, and deriving support from, an often sympathetic local population. His response, however, was typically uncompromising. Realising that he could not, after all, hope to win over the Baganda and the West Nilers, he resorted instead to repression. Whether or not the persistent use of wanton violence by the UNLA, the scorched earth policies, and the excesses committed by the security sector were officially sanctioned by Kampire, is scarcely pertinent. The government knew full well what it was doing when it approved the transfer of large numbers of underfed, underpaid troops to areas known to be unsympathetic to UPC. Obote, as head of the National Security Agency, was also fully cognizant of the implications of stepping up the investment of cash and man-power in intelligence activities. But at nearly every crisis, the government response has followed similar lines: first, to deny that a problem exists; secondly to blame the problem on dissidents, ‘bandits’ or ‘cattle-raisers’; and thirdly to appeal to aid organizations for help in clearing up the mess. This has also created a dilemma for aid agencies, which, despite their willingness to assist the victims, realize that by their acquiescence in maintaining silence over the root causes, they lay themselves open to charges of passive collusion. The government, for its part, frequently preaches with unheard and unheeded sermons of good will by promises to the Asians dispossessed by Amin. As the writer of the previous part of this report has pointed out, the EEC continued to improve steadily, though slowly, partly as a result of training and assistance from the North Koreans. Meanwhile, it is difficult to see how Uganda, despite its natural advantages, can avoid a continuation of the political and ethnic violence that has characterized its last twenty years. During that time, northerners such as Obote and Amin have governed southerners, and in order to do so have had to resort to the use of force and repression. (One suspects that if the 1980 elections had been completely free and democratic, then the DP would have formed the government, which would have been seen by many as merely the reverse – i.e. southerners ruling northerners.) There is no easy solution. But many Ugandans now believe that a true government of national reconciliation, which respects all its citizens regardless of their ethnic, religious or political backgrounds, is the only hope for the country. President Obote has promised that 'the Pearl of Africa shall rise and shine again'. This is indeed to be hoped for the sake of its people.

Part II: UGANDA 1985-1989

1. Obote is Overthrown

Part I of this report was published in December 1984 and received rather less attention than it deserved, since it was an important contribution to what had become an international argument about conditions in Obote's Uganda. On the one hand was the Ugandan Government which denied the charges laid against it. It continued to blame 'bandits' and small groups of rebels for the unrest which it could not deny, insisted that the army was under control and on the verge of final victory, and begged for international aid to rehabilitate the economy and the new depopulated population of the Luwero Triangle. Uganda's High Commissioner in London, Shafiq Arain, demonstrated considerable skill in selling his government's version to politicians and businessmen. In October 1984 the US Government became alarmed at the arrival in Uganda of North Korean troops who were to help achieve Obote's final victory against Museveni's National Resistance Army, and set about mending its diplomatic fences. Although Sir Geoffrey Howe, British Foreign Secretary, took up the matter of human rights quite forcibly in October 1984, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office failed to follow this up effectively, perhaps because they too were worried about the North Korean presence. Publicly the British Government continued to maintain that the situation was improving steadily, though slowly, partly as a result of training given by the British military. When the US Congress demanded an explanation, the Ministry of Defence said they based their belief in 'a gradual improvement in the UNLA's standards and discipline' on the 'considered judgement of our representatives, diplomatic and military, in Uganda'. Colin McLean, British High Commissioner in Uganda, went much further. Kampala radio reported: 'Mr Colin McLean has expressed his government's appreciation of the efforts the Ugandan Government has made in improving the security situation in the country since the last general elections... He added that the British Government also appreciates the steps that are taken by the Ugandan Government to compensate or return the property to the former owners under the Expropriated Properties Act'. Plainly Obote was trying to buy British goodwill by promises to the Asians dispossessed by Amin. As the writer of the previous part of this report has pointed out, the EEC took its cue from Britain and provided aid and economic expertise to Uganda, though it sometimes went further than Britain in expressing concern for human rights.
Amnesty International, sought to publicize the barbarities of the regime in order to bring international pressure on Obote. Oxfam, Save the Children Fund and the International Committee of the Red Cross were effectively barred at this juncture from working in the Luwero Triangle. They dismissed claims that the situation was improving, and feared that up to a third of the population had perished, but they were reluctant to voice these fears openly lest they were removed from the country. The dilemmme they found themselves in is all too common in areas of conflict. The arrest in November 1984 of the Editor of the main opposition newspaper, Munyanshi, and two of his staff as well as four other journalists, two from The Star and two from the Uganda Pilot, and the refusal of visas to a number of western journalists, demonstrated that Obote's regime had much to hide.

On 19 June 1985 Amnesty International published a report entitled Uganda: Six Years after Amin, Torture, Killings, Disappearances. It was compiled from the coolly clinical reports of two British doctors, Miss Elizabeth Gordon, a consultant surgeon, and Professor Bernard Knight, a forensic pathologist. They had examined sixteen men and women who claimed to have survived torture by the Uganda army. In fifteen out of the sixteen the doctors found physical evidence to substantiate their claims of torture. Miss Gordon, who had ten years experience of examining torture victims, said, 'I have never seen such gross mutilation on these Ugandans' and Minister of State at the British Foreign and Commonwealth Office, initially responded by reiterating the government's previous position, 'There have been abuses of power over the years, but to compare it [the Obote regime] unfavourably with the Idi Amin period is, I believe, unreasonable. Compared with that situation, the situation in Uganda, I believe, is a lot better today, and a lot more acceptable'. The media and the British public, however, found the torture revealed by Amnesty's report totally unacceptable. A week later Rijkkind called in Shafiq Arain to warn him that unless the Ugandan Government acted effectively to end such human rights abuses, British aid would be at risk. 123

So what, in fact, was happening in Uganda? Subsequent evidence makes it clear that the fears of the aid agencies and the human rights organizations were correct. Obote's second presidency had produced human rights abuses on a scale even greater than those of Amin's regime, and had generated a much greater number of refugees. Later, journalists and others would be taken through the killing fields of the Luwero Triangle to see for themselves the mass graves, hoards of skulls displayed by the roadside, and devastated buildings and farms throughout what had formerly been a prosperous coffee-growing area. They would find a greatly reduced population, and children unable to discover the fate of their families.

By the end of 1984, as the writer of Part I hinted, Obote's regime was beginning to fall apart, not because of its horrific nature, but because of quarrelling within the army. The appointment of Smith Opon-Acak, a Langi and kinsman of Obote, as Commander-in-Chief of the army had angered senior Acholi officers who had been passed over, Basilio Okello and Tito Okello (no relation to one another). Basilio was responsible for brutalities when, at the time of Binaisa's overthrow, he was army commander in Kampala. In 1982 he was put in charge of operations in the Luwero Triangle where again atrocities occurred. He was moved back north to his home of his in-laws, Opon-Acak, but in Luwero the Tito Okello was a much older man with little education, but commanded greater respect. Obote may have had some reason for passing these two over, but this did not diminish their resentment or that of their Acholi supporters, especially when Obote appointed one of his own kinsmen. Moreover the Acholi in the army claimed that they were being required to bear the brunt of the fighting, and they were demoralized by their defeats at the hands of Museveni's forces.

To cut a long and very complicated story short, matters came to a head in July 1985. On 7 July there were clashes in Kampala between Acholi and Langi troops. The Acholi then retreated north, and regrouped, fought their way southward, and took the city on 27 July. 124 Once again Kampala was subjected to an orgy of looting and violence in which both civilians and soldiers joined. Obote fled across the border into Kenya and thence to Zambia, where he has remained in obscurity since. Tito Okello was sworn in as head of State and an interim military council was set up.

2. The Okello Interlude

For the remainder of 1985 the Okello junta sought means of staying in power. Since they could command the allegiance of only a part of the army, and even that was increasingly unwilling to fight Museveni's guerrillas, they could only do so by means of alliances. Paulo Muwanga and Otema Allimadi had already been included in the junta. Paul Ssemogerere accepted a position as Minister of Internal Affairs, and seized the opportunity to set about releasing political prisoners. Ominously, some of Amin's supporters and troops loyal to them returned from exile in Sudan. The overriding imperative for the junta was to come to some agreement with Museveni, but he made conditions they were unprepared to grant. Paulo Muwanga was ousted just three weeks after his appointment.

In early September peace talks started under President Moi's chairmanship in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, though they were beset with difficulties. Moi invested a great deal of his prestige in these talks, and the Kenya press gave them front-page coverage and printed a series of readers' letters praising Moi for his undertaking. On 27 September the Daily Nation printed out in full the bargaining positions taken up by the two sides. The Okello junta would have given the NRA only six seats on the ruling coalition against the UNLA's eight. Museveni demanded parity and the inclusion of more of the anti-UNLA groups than the Okello faction was prepared to accept. A cease-fire was ordered, but as the talks stalled and as atrocities continued to be perpetrated by the UNLA, this broke down. By November the Okello delegation was breaking up, and the remnants of the UNLA and Amin troops were refusing to fight. The NRA proceeded to move into the vacuum. By the end of November the UNLA barracks at Mbarara and Masaka were under siege and running out of food. It was becoming obvious that there was no real chance of a workable peace agreement being reached. Although talks continued in Nairobi, it seemed to be only a matter of time before Kampala itself fell to the NRA, strengthened as it was by almost daily desertions from the UNLA.

Nevertheless those involved in peace negotiations in Nairobi were under great pressure to reach agreement. Pressure came, not only from Kenya but also from Tanzania and the West. The scene was set for a signing ceremony on 16 December, but it had to be cancelled at the last minute. An agreement was eventually signed on 17 December. Tanzania and Kenya were to monitor the cease-fire, Britain having declined to do so. During the Christmas period Kampala remained tense and effectively divided into zones controlled by different military factions. No attempt was made by anyone to implement the peace-agreement, though a cease-fire held for the time being.

Meantime in the countryside south western Uganda the NRA had set up a system of civil administration based on village resistance committees, and those living under NRA control experienced a measure of peace and security such as Ugandans had not known for a long time. If NRA soldiers mistreated civilians, summary justice was meted out. 125 By contrast there were continuing reports of UNLA atrocities. 126

3. Museveni and the NRA Gain Power

Throughout January the situation in Kampala and in the UNLA deteriorated still further, whilst Museveni's forces drove steadily closer. No one seemed quite sure why they delayed so long before making their final attack on Kampala. At last they moved into the western suburbs on 25 January, fourteen years to the day since Idi Amin had seized power and inaugurated the ensuing fourteen years of chaos. The city fell the following day. For once no looting followed the seizure of power, and on 29 January Museveni was sworn in as head of State while the Okellos and the remnants of the UNLA fled north.

Only six months previously Africa magazine had been able to publish an article on Uganda entitled 'Return to Discipline' which claimed that the NRA had been defeated and driven out of the Luwero Triangle, peace and order had been restored in Kampala armed rebels cleared from West Nile, and a new era of peaceful cooperation for development established between the newly disciplined UNLA and the civilian population. 'It is evidently true' the article concluded, 'that the last five years of Obote'
administration have brought in a marked measure of personal security to a large number of Ugandans.\textsuperscript{127} Admittedly \textit{Africa} magazine was almost alone in its assessment, but some western diplomats agreed, as we have seen. How was it that within six months the tables were so dramatically turned?

Certainly the strength of Museveni’s NRA had been underestimated by almost everyone. Their withdrawal from Luwero into the south west seems to have been a well-timed tactical manoeuvre. Certainly too they had acquired a moral authority by the discipline of their troops, in total contrast to the conduct of the UNLA. But Museveni came to power as much, if not more, by reason of the collapse of the Okello regime and splits within the UNLA as by virtue of the NRA’s strength. It then has to be added that Obote’s overthrow and the Okellos’ failure was in large part due to the existence of the NRA and the strains they placed on the regime. The electoral process which brought Obote to power in the first place was at the very least suspect – the Commonwealth Observer Team’s report is studded with accounts of malpractice which cannot be reconciled with its final conclusion that the elections were reasonably free and fair, and this robbed Obote of legitimacy from the outset. The army, on which he was therefore forced to rely, proved to be his undoing, as had happened in his first presidency also. A further reason for Museveni’s victory was that the counter-insurgency operations conducted by the UNLA were disastrous to their cause. The need to win over the civilian population does not seem to have crossed the minds of the military leadership. They relied on terror instead. Obote and the Okellos suffered the disadvantage of having to rule from a capital situated in an area whose population Obote had antagonized irredeemably during his first presidency. Riven by factional rivalries, the UNLA fell apart, and Museveni was able to bide his time and move into the power vacuum. His officers are said to have pressed him to go for a regime for which it had no preparation, and here more than anywhere else they needed to change their leadership. This is not merely tribalism: the ethnic and linguistic differences between the Bantu areas of Uganda came under NRA control, so the improvement in security of the people spread, and the extent of the appalling atrocities committed by the UNLA came to light. The new government’s determination to return Uganda to civilized rule won enormous support from a people sickened and traumatized by all that they had suffered under past regimes. If the outside world was slow to pick up the new mood it was because it had not accepted the truth about what had been happening in Uganda.

Northernners dreaded losing power and feared revenge. The mainly southern NRA forces found themselves operating in hostile territory for the first time. Here more than anywhere they needed to win the hearts and minds of the people, and here more than anywhere the cards were stacked against them when it came to doing so. The NRA advanced northwards by both the eastern route through Mbale, Kumi and Soroti, and by the western route over the Karuma Falls Bridge. Journalists who accompanied the advance filed horrific reports of the looting and massacres which were carried out by the fleeing UNLA troops before they evacuated each town on their way. Lango district suffered terribly as Acholi troops avenged themselves on its population, blaming all Langi indiscriminately for their plight. By the beginning of April the NRA had entered all the major towns in the north, and the Okellos had fled across the border into Sudan with many of their supporters. Others had been captured or had melted away into the countryside. Although the Okellos’ St Thomas group was stockpiled with arms, they had been caught between the hammer and anvil of the well-organized NRA, and were unable to offer effective resistance.

Museveni had the advantage of a much more clearly thought-out programme than Obote. His ten-point plan remains the cornerstone of his government’s policy. At his inauguration Museveni introduced his audience to some of the cardinal points in this plan. First came the restoration of democracy, a popular democracy with its roots in village councils. Second was the security of persons and property. ‘The people of Uganda should only die from natural causes which are beyond our control, but not from fellow human beings.’ Thirdly there was a commitment to the unity of Uganda. Religion and tribalism should no longer be used by politicians to divide the people. Fourthly backwardness should be overcome through planned economic and social development, partly through socialist principles but also through pragmatic commitment to a mixed economy.

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4. Insurgency in the North – Acholi

Once the south and west of Uganda had passed under NRA control, Museveni was faced with the far more difficult task of winning over the north. The cultural divide between the Bantu areas of southern and western Uganda and the non-Bantu northern areas is particularly great, and their outlooks on life are so different that their peoples have great difficulty in understanding each other. This is not merely tribalism: the ethnic and linguistic differences are far more profound. Ever since independence southerners had been ruled by northerners under increasingly repressive regimes.

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However, the detention of suspects continued, and because of the existence of what was virtually a state of civil war, people continued to be held in military barracks, which was also a matter of continuing concern to Amnesty. In late 1986 it was reported by an expatriate observer that the International Committee of the Red Cross had still not been given access to those detained in barracks. Conditions for those held in these barracks by the army were said to be fair: there were no blankets and the diet was poor, but there was none of the systematic ill-treatment or torture that had characterized previous regimes, though occasional cases were reported.

Undoubtedly the NRA’s behaviour in Acholi at this juncture increased support for Basilio Okello’s UPDM. Many people accepted Okello’s story that he had withdrawn himself from Luwero because he did not wish to massacre the Baganda, and other charges of atrocities were disbelieved. Northerners found it very hard to accept that fellow-Acholi had carried out the atrocities of the Luwero Triangle, and they were taken up with the government’s claims that the massacres were the work of the NRA.\textsuperscript{129}
In late 1986 a new phenomenon emerged in Acholi, Alice Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement. She practised a mixture of Catholicism and traditional religion, and persuaded her followers that if they practised certain rituals including smearing their bodies with oil they would be immune to bullets, and she led them into suicidal attacks on the NRA. Because they lacked ammunition, this army was effectively disarmed. The two best known examples are the movement led by the young woman Nongqause among the Xhosa in South Africa in the last century, and Major Maji in Tanganyika at the beginning of the 20th century. Such movements seem to arise out of despair when people are faced with a foe which is technologically so superior that they stand no chance at all without a miracle – and that they come to believe in. Not all Lakwena’s supporters fully believed her claims, but it is surprising that sometimes used press-gang methods. On 18th January 1987 the Lakwena movement suffered a serious defeat at Corner Kilak, the NRA inflicting massive casualties on her almost unarmed rabble. This movement was not finally defeated until it moved south into Bantu territory where it could no longer rely on any sort of support from the population. There in November 1987 they were all but wiped out, and she fled to Kenya.

Within a few months two new movements sprang up in the wake of Lakwena’s Holy Spirit Movement: Lakwena 2 led by Joseph Konyi; and Lubanga Won (God the Father), led by Chirino Lukoya, Lakwena’s father. The Acholi district was plagued by these and what may best be described as gangs. If the NRA’s discipline had lapsed, these gangs paid even less attention to winning the goodwill of the people, and one church leader described them as ‘Antichrist’. The UPDA was a rather more credible force which took advantage of NRA harassment of civilians, but was not above harassing them itself. Many people wanted nothing to do with any of the factions. Some took refuge with the NRA which set up camps to protect them. In May 1988 there were reports that 30,000 people around Kitgum had had their homes looted and burnt by cattle-raiders, rebels and government troops fighting them. Security was no better around Gulu. On 2 August Lakwena 2 attacked the barracks at Minakula south of Gulu, and in the ensuing battle 48 soldiers and 120 rebels were killed. Further NRA victories followed.

5. Other Insurgency – Teso, West Nile and the Ruwenzori

Much of eastern Uganda was also troubled, partly because of the activity of the rebels, but mainly because of cattle-raiding by the Karamojong who have traditionally engaged in this activity. They possess a convenient myth according to which when God created the world, he gave all cattle to the Karamojong. If other people possessed cattle, the Karamojong believed they must have been stolen from them, and they therefore had the right to recover their property. Throughout the colonial era and Obote’s first presidency cattle-raiding continued but on a relatively small scale, and to some extent ritualized. The Teso, who were usually the victims since their land bordered Karamoja, normally managed to recover most of their cattle with the aid of the police. When Amin was overthrown, many of his followers fled eastwards, and sold their weapons to the Karamojong. Since then cattle-raiding has been a far more serious and dangerous affair. During Obote’s second presidency the Teso organized an armed militia to keep the Karamojong at bay. But because the Teso had supported Obote and were thought to be hostile to the NRA, the militia was disarmed by the NRA. The Teso were therefore left with no defence against the Karamojong and suffered an unprecedented spate of attacks in which they lost almost all their cattle and other possessions, as well as many lives. They complained that, having disarmed them, the NRA did little to protect them. There was some truth in this. The NRA was engaged in combating serious insurgency in Acholi and lacked the strength as well as, perhaps, the will to protect the Teso who became somewhat embittered towards the NRA. Not until the last quarter of 1986 was a major operation mounted against the Karamojong, who by that time were raiding not only the Teso but many other peoples of eastern and northern Uganda. Although considerable force was used against the Karamojong, the NRA was able to do little to contain them. They have raided as far as Nebbi in West Nile, destroying homes and causing havoc.

Dissatisfaction in Teso gave the Uganda People’s Front/Army (UPFA), as Otai’s faction is now called, its opportunity. Otai lives in Nairobi where he is tolerated and allowed to operate by Kenya which has reasons of its own for hostility towards Uganda. Otai conducts a vigorous propaganda offensive both in Nairobi and London, and in the middle Moi seems to have given up campaigning wildly though they are: they help to divert attention from his own troubles with Mwakenya, a shadowy movement of Kenyan dissidents who are alleged by Otai to have Ugandan backing, and against whom torture and detention without trial were increasingly used by the Kenyan authorities. In mid-1987 elements of the UPFA violated a safe conduct given to three government ministers who came to discuss peace terms with them, taking two captives – the third escaped. In late July 1988 a major defeat resulting in hundreds of deaths was inflicted on the UPFA by the NRA on the shores of Lake Kyoga.

Two other areas must be mentioned. West Nile is fairly peaceful though trouble erupts from time to time along the Sudan border where ex-UNLA soldiers sometimes harass the people. The over 250,000 refugees in Sudan returned during 1987 and 1988, in part because Sudan became unsafe as the civil war escalated. Their return was helped, where necessary, by the UNHCR – although many returned on their own initiative – and in West Nile aid to the returnees was coordinated by the Lutheran World Federation. By May 1988 it was estimated that they had been joined by 20,000 Sudanese who had fled from the war in their country.

The Bakonjo of the Ruwenzori Mountains have also clashed with the government. Since the 1960s a movement against taxation which has demanded autonomy, but the area has remained so large that this has largely been ignored since Obote failed to suppress it by the use of force during his first presidency. Recently the Bakonjo clashed with the government because they became involved in large-scale coffee-smuggling into Zaire. In Zaire’s eastern province there is an efficient coffee marketing operation which sends round vehicles to collect peasant-grown coffee and pays cash on the nail. The Uganda Coffee Marketing Board is unable to function nearly as efficiently. The Bakonjo therefore embarked on a lucrative coffee-smuggling venture which deprived Uganda of much-needed foreign earnings. There was a harsh clampdown in 1987, and the area was sealed off. This considerably reduced the smuggling.

By late 1988 security was beginning to return to some areas of the north and east. In Lira and Apach something like normal life was reappearing. In Lira some camps still remained where displaced women and children depended on food handouts. People who had flocked into Kumi town earlier to escape from raiding had also largely returned home. Elsewhere in the north and east some schools outside the towns were operating again, and economic life was restarting. Throughout much of this huge area thousands were in need of emergency feeding. The government estimated that up to half a million needed food aid, and many also needed clothes and blankets. But above all people said that they needed peace.

6. The NRA Record

a. Law and the Constitution

The NRA seizure of power and establishment of government saw the first serious attempt in many years to return Uganda to the rule of law. There was a massive improvement in human rights, and a leader in the London Times noted in October 1987: ‘Last month’s report by Amnesty International on the subject of human rights credited only two countries with having significantly improved their record over the past year: the Philippines and Uganda. In the case of Uganda this is a timely piece of recognition for the progress made by President Museveni in restoring order after the years of devastation under the former presidents, Amin and Obote.’ Included in the ten point plan is a provision for the constitution to be rewritten. The independence constitution was replaced in 1967 when the kingdoms were abolished. Apollo Kironde of the Uganda Democratic Alliance has called for the 1962 independence constitution to be reinstated; that is, he wants to see the kingdoms, particularly the Kingdom of Buganda, restored. The 1967 constitution is unsatisfactory (see Part I, Section 7), hence the pledge to rewrite the constitution after nationwide consultation. This process was set in motion in October 1988, but is not expected to be completed before 1991.

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A great deal of work is needed on the law. Idi Amin ruled by issuing edicts and directives. Obote passed a ragbag of laws to serve particular situations, some of which ought to be repealed, and others of which, including his Terrorism Act, are still used. The only complete codification of law dates from the early 1960s, and even that is difficult to obtain. An overview and codification of the law is urgently needed.

In August 1986 a Commission of Enquiry was set up to:

- 'enquire into all aspects of violation of human rights, breaches of the law and excessive abuses of power committed against persons in Uganda by the regime of Mr. Amin.'
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- '...and powers are wider. He can deal with matters concerning corruption, maladministration and abuses of human rights, but in early 1989 was concentrating on corruption. He is appointed directly by the President, and is directly answerable to him. His share in the eviction of the Banyarwanda was said to have improved considerably.'
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police, accountable to local democratic structures, should be the instrument for the enforcement of law. The police structures need national NGOs, particularly African-based NGOs, are welcomed to help Catholic clergy in the Gulu area have had to move to the mission at Gulu itself as the countryside is so insecure. Some clergy speak workers find themselves caught between opposing factions. The government, they feel, has done little to protect them, and they have to shoulder a huge burden of pastoral care for a people who are suffering deeply. If it sounds as though the churches in the north are particularly critical of the NRA it is because they find themselves having to speak on behalf of their people who have no other voice.

d. Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs)

The Ugandan Government has adopted a positive attitude to NGOs, both human rights organizations and aid agencies. This may be seen by its involvement with Amnesty International which has visited Uganda four times since Museveni came to power and with International Alert which has visited three times. However, contacts do not always run smoothly. Although Amnesty International had permission from the government to visit Gulu in January 1989, the local military commander in Gulu turned the Amnesty delegates away. There was an angry initial response to NGO involvement but lobbying by the government openly acknowledges their role in acting with local partners, helping to build local democratic institutions and "vertical" structures of the National Resistance Councils which are undoubtedly benefits, communities and span the country, not only by church-related agencies, but also by secular agencies such as Oxfam and Save the Children Fund, and they are engaged in both emergency relief aid and in long-term development.

The Church of Uganda is the smaller of the two. It is served by far fewer foreign missionaries, and has been through a particularly difficult time. In 1977, in the wake of the murder of its Archbishop, Janani Luwum, by Amin in 1977. In 1983 an outspoken supporter of Obote, Yona Okoth, was elected Archbishop. Between 1977 and the fall of Okoth, the Church of Uganda was unable to make a corporate stand against violence and injustice, though individual leaders, notably Bishops Festo Kivengere and Misaela Kauma, did so. The Roman Catholic Church, which outnumbers the Church of Uganda by about three to two, is led by the immensely respected Cardinal Emmanuel Nsubuga who was appointed in the 1960s and whose many years of leadership give continuity and strength. The Catholic Church has much stronger international links than the Anglican Communion, which have undoubtedly been a benefit, and a stronger tradition of defending human rights. The Church of Uganda comes from an evangelical tradition which tends to quietism and is reluctant to take any action which might be described as political. In 1986 the Catholic bishops issued a long pastoral letter entitled 'With a new heart and a new spirit'. It stated that many of those who had committed crimes under the previous regimes were baptized Christians, and called for a new acceptance of Christian moral responsibility. It dealt with human rights and deplored recent Ugandan history. It insisted that the church must concern itself with politics. Much of what was said has been said repeatedly in other pastoral letters over the years and had the strength of consistency.

At the individual level person after person will tell you that the support of the Christian community has seen them through the terrible years. The churches have found themselves supporting large numbers of widows and orphans. In a society which had fallen apart they provided a community which was both local and worldwide, and a structure of support.

Because local churches are necessarily identified with the people whom they serve, in times of civil conflict they may become suspect. In Acholi and Lango European missionaries as well as local clergy were viewed with suspicion by the NRA. The Catholic hospital at Kalongo was closed down because its policy was to treat anyone who came to them in need, and the first group to come were the rebels. If they were wounded, they were treated. The NRA therefore closed the hospital and marched both staff and patients out of the area. In Ngoma and Church of Uganda hospital was treated almost like a private clinic by the NRA. European missionaries in northern Uganda were, in fact, under orders to remain completely neutral, but this was difficult at times to maintain. African clergy were more vulnerable. Caught between opposing sides in the trouble in the north, six Church of Uganda clergy are reported to have been killed, including the Revd. Y. Ocitti, parish priest of Puranga. Alice Lakwena's movement and the movement of the local church were widely thought to have been attacked because they would not accept Lakwena's teachings. Neither the Roman Catholic nor the Church of Uganda dioecesis in Acholi is able to function properly because of the insecurity. There is virtually no money to pay the clergy. Most of the Roman Catholic clergy in the Gulu area have had to move to the mission at Gulu itself as the countryside is so insecure. Some clergy speak

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The years of turmoil and repression in Uganda has retarded the growth of many organizations including NGOs. International NGOs, particularly public relations oriented NGOs, are welcomed to help Ugandan NGOs become established and to flourish. Seed money and resources are required for the establishment of Ugandan infrastructures that can be sensitive to local needs and span the nation. What is not welcomed is international NGOs 'parachuting in' large numbers of expatriate staff living in relative comfort in Kampala dispensing largess, determined by their own international agenda and their ability to attract funding in the name of the people of Uganda. The government argues that governments must be self-reliant. NGOs must be sensitive to the locally expressed needs of communities and the advice of the democratically elected government.

At the moment there is a great need for NGOs to work in the areas of conflict. NGOs have not been afraid to do so in the past where many have paid tribute to the work of Oxfam, the International Committee of the Red Cross, and the Save the Children Fund amongst others for their work in the Luwero Triangle in the early eighties. At present there are only three out of sixty NGOs working in the critical areas of the north. There are difficulties, ranging from lack of visas and database and it is not obvious how to move from relief work to development initiatives; World Vision had to withdraw at one stage because of the extreme insecurity. However Oxfam has shown what can be done in Kitgum, where their programme has helped to build confidence and self-reliance bringng stability and peace closer. Local NGO partners are not easy to find in the north of Uganda, though if this becomes a priority for international NGOs and resources can be put into helping local partners to establish themselves, a valuable role could be accomplished breaking new ground.

One strength of NGOs is their ability to move quickly into new areas because of their flexibility and the commitment of staff. Their willingness to publicize country situations is yet another strength. NGOs played an important function, often discreetly, in letting the world know about the gross abuses of human rights in Uganda.

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during both Amin's and Obote's second presidency, when governments and UN agencies kept silent. While it remains important for NGOs to be vigilant and to ensure that political and civil rights are upheld and abuses lead to remedial action, NGOs can play a key role in disseminating information on the positive aspects of Uganda today, they can describe the interlinking of civil, political and cultural rights with social and economic rights, and they can give an honest and independent opinion on the prospect and reality of development in Uganda. The severe famine in Gulu and Soroti has received little attention nor have the challenging new development programmes that exist in many parts of the country. NGOs can play a key role in drawing these to the attention of the world community in a constructive manner.

e. The Economy, Debt and Aid

The Ugandan economy grew steadily from independence until 1971, then went into a major decline at the end of President Amin's rule and partially recovered during President Obote's second period of government so that by 1985 it was close to the level of 1971. However, the population had grown from approximately 10 million in the early 1970s to 14.3 million during the same period. The scale of the 'informal sector' - smuggling, corruption and illegal trade - played a part in the recorded fall of GNP. Rebuilding the economy is a mammoth task, though a beginning has been made in rehabilitating the manufacturing sector, repairing the infrastructure, and bringing land back into production. Some experts would argue that too much attention has been paid to manufacturing, that credit is inadequate that they must have a second source of income. The role of major international donors needs investigation. The debt burdens that the people of Uganda have inherited come from President Amin and Obote must be repaid, and that until this is done no lasting peace can be expected. Initial the World Bank had refused either to make new loans available to Uganda for its current development programme or to commute the existing loans incurred under Obote. However in May 1987, as part of a wide-rangiing economic recovery package backed by the IMF and the World Bank, the IMF agreed to provide additional loans of $24m in 1987 and $32m in subsequent years. The World Bank also agreed to release $100m.

By the end of 1987 the GNP was recorded as $260 per capita, the public long-term debt had reached $1116m with the debt service for 1988 scheduled at $757m. The ratio of debt service to exports meant that in 1988 over one third of the value of exports would be required to service debts. The fact that this is similar to Kenya and less burdensome than Sudan is no comfort as the debt burden of all these countries is immensely debilitating on their development. Uganda, still one of the poorest countries in the world, is being crippled by having to make massive interest repayments while the level of aid has not increased substantially.

The role of major international donors needs investigation. The debt burdens that the people of Uganda have inherited come from an oppressive and unstable regime. However the insistence that Uganda should repay this debt has been a crucial factor in the development process of a democratic government and helps to perpetuate instability and conflict. Furthermore donor governments have often resisted reducing aid to countries whose governments abuse human rights, on the grounds that this will deprive innocent civilians of basic needs, without affecting government policies.

7. Relations with Kenya

Uganda has major problems with Kenya and these are serious because of her dependence on Kenya for access to the sea. Attempts to route part of the coffee crop through Tanzania have run into difficulties because of deficiencies in the infrastructure which have left coffee stranded by the roadside or at ports. Kenya reaps considerable profits from transporting Ugandan goods, and profiteering and smuggling by both sides has been rife. Museveni has tried to put a stop to this, and his efforts have made him unpopular. Relations between the two countries deteriorated throughout 1987 as the press on each side attacked the other by printing accusations and unchecked rumours. Relations were patched up after Uganda had suffered an unofficial embargo on goods in transit through Kenya, resulting in severe shortages of imported goods and delays to Ugandan coffee exports. In October Ugandan troops were moved up to the border because of reports that rebels were massing in western Kenya, which drew angry demands from Kenya for their withdrawal. In December there were major shooting incidents on the border when Ugandan troops seem to have followed rebels over the border in hot pursuit. Kenya expelled two Ugandan diplomats, and Uganda retaliated. At the same time Kenya accused Uganda of conspiring with Libya to destabilize Moi's government, a wild statement for which they could produce no evidence at all. In late December the two presidents met at the border and patched up their
differences and what looked like erupting into armed conflict was
averted. Trouble flared again in late June 1988 when Kenya-registered
aircraft carrying arms for the hardcore UPDA landed in northern
Uganda having flown in from Kenya. Kenya denied knowledge of the
airlift, but western diplomatic sources had no doubt that the
planes had flown from Kenya and that their cargoes had originated
there, probably not from the Kenya Government itself, though
possibly with its knowledge.
The *Weekly Review* also referred opaquely to the trouble which
flared in Samia in July 1988, when there were armed clashes
between security forces of the two countries. Peter Okondo,
Kenyan Minister of Labour, accused Kenyans of stirring up this
trouble. The tone of the articles was hostile to Uganda (the Kenyan
press usually is), though the *Weekly Review* seemed to hint that
there was more to the stories than met the eye. In March 1989 the
Kenya Government accused the Ugandan Government of supporting
a cross-border raid by armed Karamojong cattle-ruisers. Uganda
pointed out, in reply, that cross-border cattle-raiding had gone on
for decades, and that the previous month had seen a large-scale
incursion by Kenyan tribesmen which the Uganda army had been
obliged to repel. The Nairobi-based *Daily Nation* referred to the
Karamojong raids in a virulent article directed against what it
called Museveni’s war-mongering, stemming from the abandon-
ment of the Nairobi peace accords. 142

When Museveni first came to power there was concern at the ease
with which Ugandan rebels found shelter in Sudan. Talks between
the two governments were held in September 1986 which resulted in
an agreement that refugees were to be moved well away from the
border. By 1989 there were reports of Sudanese refugees entering
Uganda as a result of escalating conflict in Southern Sudan.

8. The Present Security Situation

On his accession to power Museveni faced a situation which was
virtually a mirror image of that faced by Obote. Obote had to rule
from an area of the country which was hostile to him, and where
insurgency was able to flourish. Museveni rules from an area which
welcomed him as a liberator. Obote’s tribal base was far away. So
is Museveni’s, but Kampala is in a Bantu area and there are
affinities between all the Bantu people of Uganda, and little
understanding between Bantu and non-Bantu. For Museveni
insurgency is confined to the periphery and does not interrupt the
economic heartland of the State. There are other contrasts.
Although the Bantu areas of Uganda which have accepted
Museveni most eagerly occupy only about half the land area of the
country, they contain more than two thirds of the population. He is,
therefore, much more secure. By all accounts the insurgency in
Acholi, although still serious, is being contained.

Museveni’s opponents point out that he has broken the accord
signed in Nairobi. They also claim that the NRA has committed
human rights violations. There is truth in both of these claims.
However the leaders of the insurgent groups represent regimes
already discredited by human rights violations on a massive scale.
One could make out a good case for bringing some of them before
some equivalent of the Nuremberg trials held after World War II
for Nazi war criminals. Amnesty International has said that if the
Ugandan Government were to bring criminal charges against
Basilio Okello it would not oppose an attempt to extradite him.

Among those campaigning against Museveni on human rights
issues are: Peter Otai, a member of Obote’s government throughout,
and therefore, presumably, sharing some measure of responsibility
for what occurred during Obote’s second presidency. Some of these
opposition leaders have even admitted that their reputations are not
unsullied. 143 Astonishingly they are allowed to come and go in
Kenya and the West, and to plot against the Ugandan Government
from there, although refugees must give an undertaking not to
indulge in such activities. They have made wild accusations against
Museveni of Marxism and of using PLO, Cuban, Libyan and
North Korean troops. Alliances have been formed among the
insurgent groups, and splinter groups have developed. Their self-
appointed leaders live outside Uganda, are out of touch with those
on the ground, and are unable to control them. Estimates of their
strength vary greatly, and it is a risky business trying to guess
whether they could eventually cohere sufficiently to cause a
serious threat to Museveni’s rule. Even a low-level but long-
drawn-out conflict will be extremely damaging, and will bring
intense hardship to those living in the areas of conflict.

Amnesties

These dangers are apparent to Museveni and the NRA, and they
have responded in two ways. The most profitable has been the offer of
amnesties and talks aimed at negotiating peace settlements. In
August 1987 an amnesty was offered to ex-soldiers and to rebels, and
by early 1989 it was claimed that 25,000 people had availed
themselves of such offers. The most successful negotiations were
with the UPDA in March 1988. About 1000 insurgents laid down
their arms, but a small group numbering about thirty and led by
Brigadier Justin Odong Latek are alleged to have joined the Holy
Spirit movement in October. Latek is alleged to have committed
atrocities during the Opolo regime, and to have feared for his life.
144 In July 1988 a Ugandan Government delegation led by Dr. Kiiza Besigye, National Political Commissar and
Minister of State in the President’s Office, came to London to meet
any dissident groups willing to talk to them. They hoped that
representatives of six groups would meet with them: in the end four
did so, and the talks were officially described as ‘useful’, but little
seems to have come of them.

One peace initiative went badly wrong. It has been mentioned that
when three government ministers attempted to meet UPDA leaders
in Teso in 1987, a guarantee of safe conduct was broken. Mr.
Robert Ekinu and Mr. Stanley Okurut were taken captive, but the
third, Mr. Aporu Okol, escaped. The UPA moved the captives
from one camp to another for eight months before government
troops stormed the place where they were being held. In the shoot
out Robert Ekinu was killed and Stanley Okurut was seriously
wounded. Peace agreements have led to the release from detention
of substantial numbers of detainees, and rebels who have taken
advantage of them and surrendered with their weapons have been
well treated. But numbers of others remain in detention, and this is
a matter for concern.

The other response to continuing insurgency has been a military
offensive dating from September 1988. As well as members of the
government who are genuinely concerned about human rights,
there are those who urge the need for a quick military solution.
Around Gulu there is evidence that scorched earth policies have
been used, and civilians have suffered the deadly consequences of
this. It needs to be recognized, however, that in such situations
there is no such thing as a quick military solution, attractive though
such an idea may sound. The ‘successful’ counter-insurgency
measures are, the more people are driven into the arms of the
insurgents, alienated by the innocent civilian suffering they
inevitably cause. Moreover it is in the context of this military
offensive that there has been a further breakdown of army
discipline, and the new law which allows an area to be designated as
area of insurgency is operating with inevitable miscarriages of
justice.

In October and November 1988 several incidents occurred in
which villagers in the Gulu area were burnt to death in their huts.
In December even more serious abuses against villagers took place
which were documented by Amnesty International. 145 Other
reports allege that a number of NRA soldiers were punished
for such misconduct. 146 As a result of Amnesty International’s
allegations, Major General Elly Tumwine announced that an
enquiry would be held. The NRA’s scorched earth policies have
resulted in large numbers of internally displaced persons being
camped around Gulu and Soroti for whom a few international relief
agencies are trying to provide assistance. 147

The seriousness of the situation in Gulu has been reported on by
International Alert, Amnesty International and Oxfam with the
help of the Ugandan Government. Famine is widespread and the
situation will become much worse before new crops can be
harvested. The child mortality rate at over 20% in Gulu hospital is
almost unbelievably high; this is no reflection on the calibre of the
staff, but on the lack of equipment and facilities, of starvation among
in-patients when admitted and the inability to provide high
quality nutrition. The figures of infant or child mortality are
available outside the hospital, and indeed there is no information
on what is happening to children when they are discharged from the
hospital. What is clear is that the scorched earth policy and the
devastation caused by the fighting is creating a terrible human
tragedy.
9. Conclusions

A part of the reason for the breakdown of army discipline and change of tactic seems to be over-rapid incorporation into the NRA of units of former armies and the failure to establish a locally acceptable police force. But the NRA cannot afford to let its standards be eroded; thus Northern and eastern Uganda can only be won over if they perceive the NRA as offering them the same protection as other areas of the country. Time is running out for the NRA in this respect. Acholi and Teso were fairly peaceful under the second Obote regime; they can justifiably claim that for them the situation is far worse than it was previously. At the same time, the notable lack of interest in the international media about Uganda since mid-1988 shows the extent to which these areas are marginal, and continued insurgency can only contribute to their further marginalization in both political and economic terms.

There are increasingly numerous reports of harassment in the Kampala area of suspected dissidents, and of torture of suspects held in military detention. These allegations are said to have angered President Museveni. However, Amnesty International's latest report is very carefully balanced (although it was grossly misrepresented in the London Times). The impossibility of overcoming immediately the legacy of so many years of abuse is recognized, as are the government's genuine achievements. The report states:

'It is not true to say, as have some critics and outside observers, that there has been some kind of slide towards gross human rights abuse, that in some sense Uganda is fated to suffer at the hands of bad governments.'

A careful distinction between the role of the army and of the police, the recruitment and training of new police and the strict disciplining of human rights offenders will undoubtedly help.

The most hopeful sign as of early 1989 is the successful holding of elections in February. Resistance councils at all levels were elected, and at the highest level some fourteen government ministers were voted out of office. These elections give Museveni a legitimacy which he has hitherto lacked, and he has redeemed his promise (thus confounding some of his more sceptical critics) to hold elections within four years of his accession to power. It is true that these elections were not fully democratic in the sense that the old political parties were not allowed to take part as such; candidates had to campaign as individuals. Moreover Gulu District was too unsettled to be able to vote. But there was none of the violence or ballot-rigging which characterized the only other election ever held since independence, that of 1980, and this was a triumph. That so many government ministers failed to get themselves re-elected is itself an indication that there was genuine frameword for choice; furthermore some opponents of the government were elected as members of parliament and this gives validation to the electoral process.

Much better relations are developing between the government and NGOs. Nevertheless, there is clearly a need for NGOs to develop a close understanding with the Ugandan Government and vice versa. They both have much to gain through close co-operation with local peoples and communities throughout the country and by establishing a better understanding of each other's history and objectives. NGOs could play an important role in promoting new development initiatives in Uganda.

Uganda no longer attracts worldwide publicity - it is no longer a bad news. It is not following a narrow political path and therefore does not attract the interest of those eager to advance a political ideology. It does not have major natural resources nor does it have a key strategic position between the 'East' and the 'West'. Consequently it is even more important for those agencies who wish to support and encourage good human rights and good development to strengthen their programmes across Uganda.

Following the democratic elections in 1989, Western governments could regain some of their credibility by investing in the future of Uganda and its democratic government. Institutions and governments whichcondoned, aided, armed and gave international credbility to previous Ugandan regimes need to ponder on what they have done and this report may help them in making decisions on what they should do to ameliorate the situation. It is remarkable that the Ugandan people are expected to repay loans made by an undemocratic government grossly abusing human rights. Presidents Amin and Obote simply outwitted those governments that placed 'diplomatic' relations before human dignity and took advantage of the greed of those who wanted short-term political and commercial advantage instead of human rights for the peoples of Uganda. The people of Uganda believe that the West adopts double standards on these issues.

Restoring security to the north and starting these areas on the road to development and democracy will be the acid test for President Museveni's government. The majority of Ugandans are experiencing greater security and respect for their human rights than has been the case for many years. Uganda, like almost all countries in sub-Saharan Africa, is composed of minorities, and in many countries minorities have suffered oppression. The majority can all too easily forget minorities on the periphery of the country, or dismiss them as marginal to the country's interests. We believe that it is not yet too late for Uganda to incorporate the Acholi and Teso, and we urge both the Ugandan Government and the dissident leadership to think again while there is still time.

BRIEF CALENDAR OF EVENTS, 1981-1984

Feb 81 Guerrilla groups begin activities, notably in Buganda.
Mar 81 Obote's Soroti speech warning southerners.
May 81 Oyite-Ojok appointed Chairman of the Coffee Marketing Board.
June 81 Minister of Tourism and Wildlife attacked by UNLA. Massacre at Omambac mission, West Nile. Devaluation of Uganda shilling by 1000%. Nyerei withdraws his remaining 10,000 troops.
Aug 81 First call by church leaders for a round-table conference.
Sep 81 Assassination plot against Obote foiled in Kitgum.
Jan 82 Seven DP MPs from Busoga cross to UPC.
Feb 82 UFM attack on Lubiri barracks, Kampala. Bamaturaki (DP MP) and Okao (National Housing) murdered.
Mar 82 ICRC instructed to leave Uganda; last of resident foreign correspondents deported. CTT begins officer-training programme.
June 82 UNLA 'Operation Bonanza' against NRA.
July 82 Balaki Kinya, UFMP President, abducted from Nairobi. Amnesty International report on human rights violations.
Aug 82 Dual window system for foreign exchange dealings initiated.
Sep 82 UFU guerrillas captured at Mpiji, marking demise of UFU. Chasing of Banyarwanda begins in Ankole.
Dec 82 UNLA's successful Christmas offensive against UNRF.
Jan 83 The first camps are set up in Luwero District.
Mar 83 NRA attacks on coffee trucks and a train. Permanent Secretary of Ministry of Internal Affairs shot dead. Professor Kyesimira (DP) charged with treason.
Apr 83 Uganda Red Cross begins assistance to Luwero camps.
May 83 Kikyusa massacre: 200 killed.
June 83 Civil Service wages raised by 50% in budget.
Sep 83 Government appeals for international aid for displaced persons in Luwero, Mpiji and Mubende.
Nov 83 ICRC returns to Uganda. Army begins to disband Luwero camps. Two Uganda Red Cross workers shot by NRA. UPC wins eight by-election seats.
Dec 83 Death of Oyite-Ojok in helicopter crash. Karamojong begin serious raids on neighbouring districts. Banyarwanda chased out of Rakai district.
Jan 84 Three Swiss and one Briton killed in ambushes; Kazinja (DP MP) subsequently accused. UNLA lay waste to Kangole, Karamoja. ICRC team kidnapped by NRA and later released.
Mar 84 CTT disbanded, to be replaced by British team. Aid agencies banned from Luwero area. UNLA force 20,000 to flee from Namalu, Karamoja.
May 84 UNLA kill 100 at Namugongo. FEDEMU's Ssemakula abducted from Nairobi.
June 84 Abolition of dual window system; wages raised by 30% in budget.
July 84 Government claims 300,000 returnees to West Nile.
July 85 Clashes in Kampala between Acholi and Langi troops resulting in Kampala. Obote flees to Zambia and Tito Okello sworn in as Head of State.
Sep 85 Peace talks between Okello regime and NRA start in Nairobi.
Dec 85 Agreement between government and NRA signed but cannot be implemented as the Okello regime is unable to maintain security.

Jan 86 Kampala falls to NRA troops and Museveni is sworn in as Head of State.

Apr 86 NRA army now holds most of the northern towns in addition to Bantu areas of the south.

July 86 Fighting between insurgents and NRA troops in Acholi; NRA discipline begins to break down, increasing support for insurgents.

Aug 86 Commission of Enquiry into all aspects of human rights violations begins.


Jan 87 Holy Spirit Movement defeated by NRA in decisive battle.

Mar 88 Successful negotiations with UPDA result in surrender of 1000 insurgents.

Sep 88 New NRA military offensive in Gulu district with allegations of violations set up by government.

Feb 89 Peaceful elections to Resistance Councils held in all areas except Gulu District. Fourteen government ministers lose their seats.

FOOTNOTES


2 Guardian, 8/8/84.

3 Le Monde, 20/6/84; English translation Guardian Weekly, 15/7/84.

4 Daily Telegraph, 20/8/84.


6 For example: ‘Massacre blamed on troops’ (The Times, 30/5/84); ‘Terror of army that writes its own rules’ (Sunday Times, 21/8/83); ‘Koboko, a town liberated to death’ (Sunday Times, 10/4/83); and ‘Mystery of thousands who “vanish” from Ugandan camps’ (Guardian, 3/12/83).


12 Karugire, op.cit., p 182.

13 Ibid, p 185.

14 Legal Notice No 5, 12/6/80.

15 Tija Empya, 1/6/80.


17 The 17 unopposed seats broke down as follows:

(i) Arua/Moyo Districts (6 seats). Due to the fighting in West Nile (Ch 7), no register of voters was compiled, as required by electoral law. Then, on 20 November, it was suddenly announced that elections would, after all, be held. The UPC candidates were somehow prepared for this decision; the DP candidates were not. After complaints, the Military Commission agreed to provide a security escort to West Nile for the DP men, and the Electoral Commission agreed, in the unusual circumstances, to waive certain requirements like the production of income tax clearances. But upon the DP candidates’ arrival in Arua, the returning officer rejected their nominations, largely on the grounds that they had no tax clearances. The Moyo candidate was detained by the returning officer rejected their nominations, largely on the grounds that they had no tax clearances. The Moyo candidate was detained by the returning officer rejected their nominations, largely on the grounds that they had no tax clearances. The Moyo candidate was detained by the returning officer rejected their nominations, largely on the grounds that they had no tax clearances. The Moyo candidate was detained by the returning officer rejected their nominations, largely on the grounds that they had no tax clearances.

(ii) Lira/Apac Districts (7 seats). In six of them, DP candidates were prevented by UPC supporters from reaching the nomination centre. The seventh DP man, Obote’s cousin Adoko Nekyon, reached the centre, but his 12 legally-qualified nominees were chased away.

(iii) Kotido North and Soroti Central (2 seats). The local militias of Loteng and Omara, sympathetic to UPC, similarly obstructed the DP nominations.

(iv) Kasese District (2 seats). The DP nominations for all three Kasese seats were originally accepted and gazetted; then, 36 hours before the opening of the polls, they were rejected as having been submitted after the nomination deadline. The COG made a full investigation, and commented: ‘It is quite clear that the nomination papers of all three DP candidates were submitted before 12 noon’, but no attempt was made to rectify the situation. In Kasese North, a UPM candidate did manage to get nominated, and he duly won the seat, after DP supporters switched sides in disgust.

18 The Times, 17/8/84.

19 The COG report does, however, commend both Muwanga’s decision to order the army to barracks on polling day, and his last minute concession that votes be counted at individual polling stations, rather than at district centres. (The DP had by this stage threatened to withdraw from the contest, unless Muwanga kept his promise on the latter point.) It should also be noted that UPC conducted an effective campaign, with ‘catchy political pop songs on the radio, distribution of free Obote T-shirts, and a nationwide campaign using a fleet of brand new Mercedes cars’ (The World Today, May, 1984).

20 Africa Confidential, Vol 22, No 4; see also Guardian, 13/12/80.

21 Africa Confidential, Vol 24, No 12.

22 The Times, 24/8/84.

23 From an interview with ex-President Lule.


27 Africa Confidential, Vol 24, No 22.

28 Observer, 7/11/82.


30 In 1984, a Ugandan intelligence team was admitted to the Southern Sudanese refugee camps – its members conceded that the guerrillas were not operating out of Sudan, but insisted that refugees on the borders were still liable to supply UNRF fighters with food. The Sudanese government responded by preparing to move the self-settled refugees from the Kajo-Kaji area to sites further inland.

31 The Times, 29/11/83. See also Sudanau, May 1984.

32 Sunday Times, 21/8/83 (and also 31/10/83).

33 UNHCR fact sheets for Zaire and Sudan for June 1984, and October 1983 (the start of the repatriation programme).


35 UN General Assembly document on ICARA II: A/CONF. 125/2, Paragraphs 1056, 1071. Shafiaq Arein, the Ugandan High Commissioner in London, put the figure of returning refugees at ‘around 400,000’ (Letter to The Times, 20/8/84).

36 Africa Confidential, Vol 25, No 15.


40 By the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (5/2/82) and the Ministry of Culture and Community Development (11/2/81). See Clay, op.cit., p 35.


42 Clay, op.cit., p 3.

43 ‘DP statement on Operations in Mbarara District Affecting Banyarwanda and Other Thousands of People’, p 20.

44 Clay, op.cit., p 69.


46 Ibid, p 43.

47 ‘Communication from the President to the District Councils of Bushenyi, Kabale, Kabarole, Kasere, Mbarara and Rukungiri, Assmbled in Mbarara Town Hall on 29 October 1982’.

48 Clay, op.cit., p 57.

49 ‘Welcome speech by L R Makatu, Chairman of Mbarara District Council to the same meeting’, 29/10/82.

50 ‘Speech by the Mbarara District Council Chairman to Councillors, County and Sub-County Chiefs, in Kamukuzi Hall, on 4 November 1982’.

51 The Times, 6/1/84.


53 Munans, 22/5/84.


56 ‘Intervention of Hon. Dr James Rwanyarare, Minister of Culture and Community Development and Leader of the Ugandan Delegation to the ICARA II, Geneva, 9-11 July, 1984’.


58 Daily Telegraph, 30/3/81.

59 Uganda Resistance News, Vol 1, No 5.

60 Africa News, September 1983.

61 The People (Kampala), 11/7/83.
The following is a brief extract from the testimony of the former

On at least one recent occasion, the Ugandan High Commission in

William Pike, of South magazine, saw four large camps, including Eduardo Mondlane, with its '1000 people, mainly soldiers' en route to Museveni's HQ in July, 1984. See The Observer, 19/8/84, and The Times, 24/8/84. Eleven prisoners-of-war from Masindi, including two Tanzanian NCOs, were subsequently taken to view one of the alleged dumping grounds for victims of the UNLA, near Bombo. During the visit, a video film was taken, and the shots of mangled bodies have since appeared on TV in several countries.

‘Uganda Briefing’, British Refugee Council, October 1983. I am indebted to Dr Jeff Crisp, the author of the above report, for his help with this, and other sections.

The first such operation took place in Pokot, Western Kenya, during late February. Villagers were interrogated and beaten and their herds rounded up into camps, so that over half died from lack of water and grazing. Helicopter gunships were used to bomb and strafe cattle and villagers, both in Kenya and across the Ugandan border. Casualties were high, but only 170 guns were recovered.

The Tablet, 1/9/84.

UNHCR figures for June 1984 are 195,000 Ugandan refugees in Sudan; 45,000 in Zaire; and 10,000 in Tanzania. Together with non-official refugees, as well as those in Rwanda, Kenya and other countries, the real figure could be nearer 400,000.


UNHCR figures for 1978 put the number of Ugandan refugees in

UNHCR figures for 1978 put the number of Ugandan refugees in

The Observer, 29/5/83.

Daily Telegraph, 17/2/84.


Le Monde, 21/6/84; English version in Guardian Weekly, 22/7/84.

Many of the businesses of returned Asians seem to have profited in this respect, particularly Swala Brothers, who helped finance the UPC election campaign, and who number Obote and - until his death — Oyite-Ojok among their directors. The dual window system seems to have been geared specifically to those, like the Asians, who could bid large capital sums, and raise the 500,000 shillings 'ante'. Asian firms also allegedly assist senior government officials in converting money that has been 'cream off the top' into hard cash in foreign bank accounts.


In a private letter to the editor of The Times, quoted by permission of the writer.

Africa Contemporary Record, 1982, B311.

The Times, 8/9/84; The Guardian, 8/9/84.

Daily Telegraph, 19/8/84.

Daily Telegraph, 19/8/84.

The Times, 15/8/84.

The Times, 26/9/84.

The Observer, 17/7/83.

The Times, 18/8/84.

Sunday Times, 26/8/84.

These include Obote, Rwakassia (overall security chief), Masette-Kuya (Minister of Rehabilitation), Anyoto (Information and Broadcasting), Otai, Rurangaranga and Picho-Owny (all Ministers of State), and possibly Luwuliza-Kirunda (Internal Affairs).

Memorandum of Uganda's Religious Leaders to Obote, August 1981.

Africa Now, November 1983.

Daily Telegraph, 27/8/84.

Africa Confidential, 16/1/85.

Times, 16/11/84; Le Monde, 5/12/84; Africa Confidential, 16/1/85.

NJK Witney replying on behalf of Lord Trefgarne, 14/3/85.

BBC Summary of World Broadcasts, ME/7869/B/2 7.2.85.

Guardian, 19/6/85.

BBC 'The World at One', 19/6/85.

Times, Guardian, Telegraph, 26/5/85; Nabudere in Hansen and Twaddle, pp 302-6. This last contains a damning indictment of the way in which Nabudere believes that Western powers supported and continued with Obote.

Details of the shifting alliances and tortuous bargaining can be found in Nabudere, pp 305-312.


Times, 23/12/85, 27/12/85.


Uganda Radio, 27, 28/4/86.

This inability to accept the truth, and so their own community's 'guilt by association' is of course simply one more manifestation of a common mode of behaviour. When the truth is too appalling to face, both individuals and groups resort to mechanisms of evasion. Post World War II History offers plenty of examples and there is no need to judge the Acholi too harshly.


Independent, 22/8/87; African Concord, 30/8/87; Times, 22/8/88.

The Ugandan Democrat, 31/7/88.
Abbreviations

(a) Administrative bodies
Legco – Legislative Council (colonial era)
UNLF – Uganda National Liberation Front (1979-80), comprising:
NEC – National Executive Council
NCC – National Consultative Committee
(b) 1979 Liberation war
UNLA – Uganda National Liberation Army
FRONASA – Front for National Salvation (Museveni)
KM – Kikosi Malumu (Obote)
TPDF – Tanzanian People’s Defence Force
(c) The political parties
KY – Kabaka Yekka (60s)
UPC – Uganda Peoples Congress
DP – Democratic Party
UPM – Uganda Patriotic Movement
CP – Conservative Party
(d) The guerrilla groups
NRA/NRM – National Resistance Army/Movement
UFA/UFM – Uganda Freedom Army/Movement
UNRF – Uganda National Rescue Front
UNLF-AD – Uganda National Liberation Front – Anti-Dictatorship
FEDEMU – Uganda Federal Democratic Movement
UDRU – Uganda Democratic Redemption Union
(e) Aid organizations and international bodies
SCF – Save the Children Fund
ICRC – International Committee of the Red Cross
UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
COG – Commonwealth Observer Group
CTT – Commonwealth Training Team

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While the abuses of Amin are well known, those under Obote were largely ignored by the international media and governments. This report seeks to fill the gap. It documents with objective clarity: ethnic or other persecution in the West Nile, Luwero Triangle (Buganda) and Karamoja areas; indiscriminate killing and looting by underpaid and undisciplined army troops; the forced creation of thousands of refugees in neighbouring countries and many thousands of displaced persons within Uganda itself; and torture and detention without trial.

Today, after the 1985 overthrow of the Obote government and after a brief interlude the assumption of power by the National Resistance Army of Yoweri Museveni, the situation is much improved. The army has been largely reorganized and disciplined, torture and ill-treatment, although sometimes used, is now condemned and punished; a Human Rights Commission has been established to research past violations and establish good practice for the future. Yet in some areas of the north, insurgency and military operations and repression of the civilian population continue and the Ugandan economy and people are still desperately poor. Peace does not by itself create prosperity.

Uganda, Minority Rights Group report No 66, details and compares the past and present, drawing important lessons for the future. Written by Ed Hooper (Part I) and Louise Pirouet (Part II), it is a timely and instructive report — an essential document for policy makers, aid agencies, the media and all those concerned with the well being of Uganda.

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