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**FROM
OBOTE
TO
OBOTE**

FROM OBOTE TO OBOTE

Akena Adoko

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To Patrick Adoko

12-4-84

PREFACE

DAVID RUBADIRI

When the Village drums beat
An incessant roll,
The Roll that touches the fibres of life;
We know —
That news of terror
News of emergency
Messengers of tragedy
Have come upon us —

We ask —
What is it that threatens?
What is it that has befallen us?
For then we become one,
For then we know our common womb.
Pots on the fire place
Are left to burn,
Hoes in the fields
Are left to stand,
Children playing around the huts
Are firmly strapped in,
Beer pots that had been surrounded
Are left to gather flies;
For the Elders
Those wisemen that keep our integrity
Have caught the worm
That gnaws the tree of life;
Slowly to its final destruction.

Rumourmongers like wildfire
Span the countryside;
It is then that the great
Sharpen the spears of the nation
And without fear or favour
Stand firm to protect us
Against the invader.
But when the invader is from within,
The war cry is one of agony
For it is then,
Only then,
That only the surgeon's knife
Can remove the tumour
That slowly grows and grows
For the final kill.

This Agony —
As Yash Tandon says
— Is as the birth of a child in a mother's womb
— Monarchism pitted against
Nationalism.

But the child must be born
Or else how can we survive?
So it was also with the cry of "The People"
The tumour of this Gorgon
The Gorgon of Hereditary Monarchism
The Serpent of Ethnic Leprosy
The Cancer of Capitalism
The Polio of Imperialism
The Scourge of Indifference
And the Terror of the Privileged.

All living in the World of the bygones
In the World of the dead
Had raised their heads . . .
To swallow their prey
The Common man
For whom the blood of
Freedom Martyrs
And the Valiant Warriors
Had given back to Mother Earth

**Their faith had blood
As a living sacrifice of faith, Echoing:
No dead man has any right
To rule over the living
Directly through his own ghost
Or indirectly through heirs,
All attempts to rule that way,
Are unnatural, ungodly,
Immoral, iniquitous.
The drums had called urgently
To reaffirm this
And once more announce to man
Justice, love of common men,
Rule by representatives
Were the ultimate values
Treasured most by Obote.
Hence Milton and Sir Edward
Could not get along at all.**

**So begins and ends this story
The story of a crisis
That in drums and fire
Saved Common Man. . .
From destruction
Tell it to our children
Because the victory
Is ours and their eternal glory**

**As Argus said
In quoting the 'Rubaiyat'
"The moving Finger writes; and
having writ,
Moves on: nor all
your Piety nor Wit
Shall lure it back to
Cancel half a Line.
Nor all your Tears wash out
A Word of it"
The Drums and Fires . . .
Beat and Lit
Uganda's New Horizons.**

INTRODUCTION

The story of Uganda
After independence
Is one of the most touching
In the annals of Africa.
It is a story
That inflames passions.
It is a story
Of conflicts and of battles
Of monarchies swept away,
Of experimentation in socialism,
Of military tyranny,
Of terror and despair,
Of resistance against desperate odds,
Of two presidents elected over night
By a handful of people
And each of them toppled
Before ruling for twelve months.

These conflicts have now led
To the present Uganda.
Just as we cannot help
To contemplate certain stages
Of the conflicts with interest
And even with national pride
So can we not even help
To contemplate other stages
With a sense of national shame.

A nation would render itself ridiculous

By attempts to gloss over
Its unflavoury past.
The past must be known and studied
Not for the purpose of comparing
And contrasting it to the present
But because it led to the present.

Who can doubt that our character
As a nation has not taken
A tinge from the massacre,
Looting and even raping
Perpetrated by Amin
And his hooligan soldiers?
That is why some of us
Would like to see chronicled
In the pages of commissions of enquiry
The circumstances surrounding
Various flagitious instances
Of perfidy and cruelty
Which disgraced this nation
Under the regime of Amin.

Let the regime be arraigned,
Prosecuted, defended
And if guilty, convicted
Then let it be sentenced
In the face of heaven and earth.

Let the record of the commission
Show how we watched in agony
The gradual suffocation
Of Uganda economy,
The decay of commerce,
Loss of national honour,
And the painful birth
Of contagious
Political immorality.

After the falls of Amin
And of Lule and Binaisa.
One important factor

Worked in Obote's favour.
In a situation
Where two governments
Had already fallen
In a period of about one year
On grounds
Which included inexperience,
He alone,
Had the experience
To govern a nation.

His campaign slogan,
"The pearl of Africa
Shall rise and shine again",
His promise of a firm government
Led by a person with a wealth
Of experience in government,
And of a person dedicated
To the interest of the workers,
Peasants and of youth
Had, tremendous influence
In the minds of the masses.

It soon became clear
That the only hope of triumph
Of the parties opposed
To Obote's U.P.C.
(Uganda People's Congress)
Lay in combining their forces.

Indeed, the leaderships
Of those parties began to talk
Of eventual coalition.
But they continued to fight,
With suicidal energy
Amongst each other.

Political factions produced
Personal malignity
Which helped to rouse the nation
From political torpor.

The minds of men were diverted
From interest which were selfish
To taking cognizance
Of the past
And planning for the future.
Political fanaticism
Is certainly
Like any other forms of fanaticism,
An evil.
But it is not all evil.
It made the followers
Of political parties
To hold a strong belief:
The belief that it's only the leader
Of their political party
Who could save Uganda
From being drowned in the ocean
Of economic and moral chaos
And that nobody else could.

The seriousness of the asseverations
Of U.P.C. election manifesto,
The minuteness of the details
Of the plan for curing
The country of its ills,
The earnestness
With which it was received
By Ugandans and foreigners alike,
The boast that only the U.P.C.
Could and did produce a manifesto
That could not be torn apart
Or laughed out of existence
By opponents,
Filled the U.P.C. members
With fanatical zeal.
Members of the U.P.M.
(Uganda Patriotic Movement)
Regarded the evils
Suffered by Ugandans
As emanating partly
From the tyranny of Amin

And partly from the dictatorship
Of the U.P.C. Party
With the connivance
Of the Democratic Party.

On the other hand
Both U.P.C. and D.P.
Regarded U.P.M.
As consisting of politicians
Who, during the rules of Amin,
Lule and Binaisa
Had done what their former parties
Regarded as inexpiable.
They had been so false
To their former parties
And so virulent
In their criticism
Of their former parties
That they were obliged
Of necessity
To form another party.
They had burnt all bridges
Unifying them
To their former parties
And they had found themselves
With no room for retreat
Except in a new party
Which was bound never to take off.

Anybody conversant
With the emotional impact
And psychological impact
Which the U.P.C. and D.P.
Have made on Ugandans
Was bound to predict that much.

Besides, many were convinced
That the hearty and steady support
That the Government needed
Could not be obtained at all
By starting a third party.

The election
Which was to determine
The popularity of the parties
Was conducted
By the Military Commission
Which took over the government
From Godfrey Binaisa.
Although the Commission
Was composed predominantly
Of members of U.P.C.
Yet it appointed
A coalition cabinet.

Amongst the key Cabinet posts
Which went to U.P.C.
Were the Ministries of Foreign Affairs
Under Otemah Allimadi,
Home Affairs under Sam Tewungwa
And Information and Broadcasting
Under Dr. Anyoti.

On their part, the U.P.C.
Couldn't have asked for anything better
Than the creation
Of this coalition.

On their part, the D.P.
Couldn't have accepted something worse
Than to be a party
To the coalition.

But then, Ugandans have always
Been mad about the title,
And about power and pomp
Of being Ministers.

In Amin's time, the fringe benefit
Of being a minister
Was, indeed, very great.
The prescriptive right

To such benefit
Outlived the Amin era.

By joining the cabinet
Appointed by the Military Commission,
The D.P., the U.P.M.
And the Conservative Party
Cut the grounds away from their feet.

They now had a stake
In that government.
They thus denied themselves
The opportunity
To let off meaningful steam
Against the Military Commission.

During the one year and eight months
Of the rule of Lule,
Binaisa and Paul Muwanga
No commissions of investigations
Into the crimes committed
By the Amin regime
Were ever appointed.

Neither has any been appointed
By Obote's government.
The rulers seemed resolved
Not to rack the past.
Not for the moment anyway.
They do not want the liberation
To be sullied by cruel consequences
Which might follow the exposure
Of Amin's notorious murderers.
They all meant to be clement
And clement they have been.

The question, however,
Is not one of clemency
But of what is right.
The vast Ugandans
Who served or opposed Amin

Would like to know the truth.
We owe ourselves and our children
And the whole world, the truth.

Hitler's atrocities
Have been fully documented.
Those who opposed Iddi Amin
Would like to know
How their relatives
And their friends have disappeared
And who were responsible
For their disappearances.

Even now many Ugandans
Are making individual effort
The way some of the Jews did
At considerable costs to themselves
To find out what had happened
To their loved ones and their friends.

Amin's supporters are saying
The same thing
But the other way round.
They ask: Can any government
Worthy of the name government
Not seek to bring to justice
Persons responsible
For alleged horrible massacres?
Surely, in not taking any action
To ascertain the truth
The Uganda Governments
Have acknowledged
That the alleged savagery
Of Amin was mere fiction
Blown up by Western press
To delude the world
So that the benevolent government
Of the Conquerer
Of the British Empire
May be ousted.
Those calumnies had now served

**The turn
For which they were concocted.
There is thus
No need for the appointment
Of any commission of enquiry
Since there is nothing
To inquire into.
But as this book discloses,
There is a lot to enquire into.**

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—*Akena Adoko*

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IMPERIALISM, FEUDALISM AND NATIONALISM

The Imperialist Forces,
And the Feudalist Forces,
Were united together,
To fight nationalism.
Nineteen hundred sixty-five,
Was the beginning of the fight;
Nineteen hundred sixty-six
Saw the end of the big fight.
The Battlefield was Uganda,
And leaders of all the three groups
Were outstanding Ugandans.
Dr. Milton Obote
Led the nationalist forces;
Mr. Grace Ibingira
Led the imperialist forces;
Mutesa led the feudalists.

The Divine right of Kabakas
Was Mutesa's sole belief.
Commoners like Obote,
Were not fit to be rulers;
And Buganda his Kingdom
Was to precede Uganda.

The Greatest sum of all monies
From Buganda tax payers,
Went to Mutesa's pocket
Without any question asked,

**For Mutesa was the King:
Great Grandson of Mutesa.**

**Like some of his predecessors,
Mutesa valued no life.
One morning in sixty four,
He shot and killed eight people.
All the eight were Banyoro,
And that was their only Crime.**

**In a way Mutesa was
To be pitied than denounced,
His fault lay much less in him
Than in his post of Kingship.
He was much more what he was
Because of ancestral throne.**

**The qualities he exuded
Were the very qualities
Exuded by all those kings
Such as Farouk of Egypt,
And Louis the Sixteenth of France
Who had presided and reigned
Over the dissolution
Of the old order of things,
And had stubbornly refused
To yield to the new order.**

**Like them, Mutesa clung to
Usage and not to the truth.
Like them, Mutesa clung to
The past and not the present
And the future frightened him.
The absolute monarchy
Of the past was uh-la-la!
His main and his cherished dream!
"If the clock of progress could
Be reversed one hundred years"
So dreamed Edward Mutesa,
"Then, and only until then,
Would Uganda find itself**

In its Golden Age that was
And that ought to be again!"

Mutesa, like King Farouk
Could in defence of himself
Therefore sincerely plead thus;
"I have been a King too long
And have now been accustomed
To watching with great pleasure
Subjects prostrating themselves
Like dirty insects and worms
And kneeling down before me.
I am used to take away
The little they may possess
From all those who have nothing.
I am used to a complete
Compliance with all my whims;
And above all, I am used
To that mysterious something
Which miraculously changes—
In the eyes of my subjects;
So at least they do tell me—
Each and everything I do,
Be it good, or be it bad,
Be it evil, or virtuous
Into unblemished rightness
Because of the fact that I
Sir Edward Walugembe,
"King Freddy" of Buganda,
Was the one who had done it.
So you see, oh my people,
I am used and accustomed
To be a king—nothing else.

"Take away people kneeling,
Forbid any prostrations,
Insist on equality
Of all person before law—
Or that the distribution
Of the national income
Be guided by equity

And not by the principle
Of giving the Lion's share
To the king, the Kabaka
Who may then encroach at will
On the share of all others,
Then I am all but quite lost:
A fish out of the water,
A square peg in a round hole,
A mermaid without a tail,
A garden without flowers,
A bird without the feathers.
It follows that on these points
I could not and would never
Bargain, haggle, or reason.

“Changelessness was my great hope
But I was unfortunate
Everyday brought its changes;
Everyday some strange ideas
And even stranger principles
Of dreadful democracy
And monstrous socialism
Were always propagated
By Obote's television
And his radio services.
I saw these as serious threats
To my person and my post.
Oh, how I hated and feared
Those ideas and those persons
Who disseminated them.
I had good cause for the fear:
There were many upstarts then
Even in my own tribesmen
Who believed not in old ways
And would not kneel before me.
They said, that I lacked vision
And that I had no fore-sight:
That I was an obstacle
To Uganda's march forward.
That I behave like a kid—
Over-spoilt by a doting mum—

Who behaves as if his wish
Was the only one around
And that the whole universe
Was created for serving it.
That I listen to no one
But myself, and my echoes
Who are those who flatter me.
And that I surround myself
With none but mediocrities
Who repeat like a parrot:
'Sabasajja, His Highness
None can be greater than him'.
That the heart of my subjects
Were burning like a furnace
With hatred for exclusion
From power and benefit
Which the power ever brings.
They were demanding new men
In the new circumstances
To fulfil their new demands¹
And on this point of principle
They would give no concession
As concession, so they said,
Defeats the very principle.
I directed all my chiefs
To suppress these dangerous youths—
These communist-minded youths.
If the hot-headed rebels
Gave no concession at all
Then it was right and proper
That we surrendered no grounds,
For as a proverb has it—
What e'er is good for the geese
Is also good for the ganders.
We see no reason at all
For giving up tested ways,
The old and time-honoured ways
And for leaping in darkness
In unknown realm of fiction,
Thoughts, and imagination."

¹Dr. A.M. Obote's address to Students.

Mutesa was therefore more
Concerned with his "good chiefs" clique
While we thought of principle:
It follows as night from day
We had no common language
With Mutesa and his clique;
Lunacy and sanity
Cannot make good bedfellows.
This very leap in the darkness
From stagnancy to progress,
From tradition to reform
Which Mutesa could not make
Was his only salvation,
And the only medicine
That counter-acts disaffection
And prevents revolutions.
His insistence on being right
Even when he was all wrong,
His dependence on the might
Of his chiefs as what is right,
His preferring suppression
And ignoring remedies,
His preferring coercion
And overlooking consent,
His failure to yield some ground
When it was necessary,
Plus his failure to retreat
In order to attack later,
And his very snobbishness
In dealing with other men
Were the causes of his fall.

We have learnt one great lesson;
All hereditary rules
Are indeed rule by Corpses.
No dead man has any right
To rule over the living
Directly through his own ghost
Or indirectly through heirs.
All attempts to rule that way,
Are unnatural, ungodly,

Immoral, iniquitous.
Leadership must ever be
Dependent on quality
On strong personality
But not on one's own parents.
Hereditary power
Is therefore another name,
For a gross usurpation;
Hence, the people may at will
Wrench it from any person
Who may be exercising it.

This we Ugandans have done,
To Sir Edward Mutesa
We deprived him of powers
Which he had no right to use
Morally or legally.

He had been a king too long,
And forgot to be a Man!
He mistook kingship for all;
Whereas it is just a job
Like those of lawyers, surgeons,
Of farmers or politicians.

It is the Man who is all
And he fulfils himself best
Not by pride and not by pomp,
But by realizing himself—
All his potentialities,
And serving the Society.

Yes, Mutesa had long ceased
To be a man, a leader,
When he ceased to try to change
The minds of our citizens
And also to change his mind
To pursue those great causes;
When he could not bring himself
To poetize dirty workers;
To elevate the peasantry;
To worship the common man.

From his sensual selfish life
One great lesson emerges:
That in selfishness lies death
Of one's personality;
While in renunciation,
Lies realization of Self;
That badness enfeebles mind,
While goodness ennobles it.

Justice, love of common men
Rule by representatives,
Were the ultimate values
Treasured most by Obote.
Hence Milton and Sir Edward
Could not get along at all.

The cause of Obote's triumph
Over plots against him
May be stated as follows:
He inspired many
With a religious faith and hope.
He represented to them
What was true and great in them.
He told them that they themselves
Were as great as any rulers,
Be they kings, or be they not.
They were in no way mere means
For enriching their rulers
But divine ends in themselves
Whom the State is there to serve.
He preached the infinitude
Of each and every man.
Here then was a ruler
Who was one with those he ruled;
Who wanted participation
Of all in the Government,
And represented causes
For which all, with great honour,
May serve or may die for them.
Wherever and whenever
The History of those days

Is written or discussed
One man will always stand out
Like Goliath among gentiles,
Like a giant amongst dwarfs,
Like a cyclops among men,
Like Elgon or Ruwenzori
In a big sea of ant-hills.

That man is Milton Obote
Who avoided any words
And any action at all
Which would have contributed
To the cause of the Crisis.
His love of stability,
Of tranquillity and peace
Made him hope against hope
That force would be avoided,
And in that hope he was firm.
Many have criticised him
For sticking on peace too long
Even when it was quite clear
That peace was not to be had.
Many strongly criticised him
For what they called, his weakness
Namely procrastination.
They said, he was trying hard
To be Jesus Christ on earth
Running Jesus Government
Which was only fit for Saints;
That he was therefore destined
To meet the fate of Jesus
Namely a crucifixion;
Like many, I too was jarred
By Obote's long delay
In confronting alien stooges,
Ibingira and the group.
Now, after all the events
One may give credit to him
For his hatred of violence;
For acting at the right time.

A word about Ibingira
The Secretary General
Of the then ruling U.P.C.
And next man to Obote,
In the U.P.C. Party.

He adopted the politics
Of anti-communism,
Of imitating the West
And to quote but one pagan,
"He did not realize e'en then:
We were tired of licking
The back of Westerners"

Ugandans were demanding,
That the table should be turned,
That there be revolutions,
That the old order of aping
And imitating Europeans
Were fit only for the slaves.

Independent Uganda
Wanted only iconoclasts
And non-conformist leaders
To destroy the old order
And realize her own Vision
Of the new order of things.

Gone were all those olden days
When Uganda depended
On European Culture,
European diplomacy,
European double-crossings,
And European expertise.

Independence ushered in
The era of expression
Of things purely African:
Our thoughts and our deeds.
We had to be ourselves
Whether for better, for worse.

During the year sixty four,
Ibingira visited
Europe and America
Without Obote's knowledge.
On his return to this Land,
Trouble started all at once.
He saw Commies in all things
Even in his own party.
Imaginary Commies,
Imaginary Comrades
Were expelled from the Party,
Were expelled from various jobs.

Dollarization became
The term used to describe this
Invidious inquisition
Because one million dollars
Were said to have been ear-marked
For that witch-hunting affair.

Unscared by this witch-hunting,
Obote visited Peking,
Moscow, Belgrade, and Tokyo,
And did preach non-alignment
Which he and his Government,
Hold as a right policy.

INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION PLOT

On Obote's return home,
Plans to assassinate him
Were then hatched in real earnest.
Those who disliked Obote
Were recruited in the Army.

The sole task of these recruits
Was to do a bloody job:
Liquidate Dr. Obote.
Headquarters of the Army,
And some battalion officers
Were the anti-Obote's hope.

Opolot's deputy Amin,
And Battalion Chief Okoya
Were the greatest stumbling blocks
To the liquidation plot,
New recruits were not therefore,
To be under Okoya.

They were to be commanded
By a certain Major Ogwang
Who was not to take orders,
Or to be answerable
To anyone but the Headquarters
Of the Uganda Army.

On the ninth of October
Nineteen hundred sixty-five,
At the time of "Uhuru's"
Colourful Celebrations,
The First attempt was to be made
On the life of Obote.

Mutesa was not to attend
The Celebrations at all
Because, according to him,
Obote's harangue
Was a thing he could very well
Afford to miss without loss.

Ibingira also couldn't
Attend that great occasion,
Because, according to him,
There were rumours that he would
Be assassinated then
For supporting Obote!

Brigadier Opolot,
Also made a full report
That there was a plot afoot:
A plot to assassinate him
During the Celebrations;
He might therefore not attend.

On the eighth of October
Nineteen hundred sixty-five,
Majors Kaku, Kanutie,
Katabarwa, Ssenkoto
And some other officers,
Drew ammunitions and arms.
All the way down from Jinja
Officers and new recruits
Came to Kampala City.
At Mbuya Headquarters,
Otika did challenge them:
"Show cause for drawing these arms."

After a bit of scuffling,
Otika ran to the Club—
The famous Uganda Club
To report to Obote
The intrigue that was afoot.
Obote acted at once
Calling a Defence meeting.

It was this very meeting
That frustrated this first plot:
To bamboozle Obote,
Sham enquiries were carried,
Light punishment inflicted
By Commander Opolot.

ARMY TRANSFER PLOT

**In November, sixty-five,
Plotters took another move,
Stumbling blocks personified
In Okoya's Battalion
Had to be transferred away
From Obote's neighbourhood.**

**This was improperly done,
By Commander Opolot.
But no transfer did take place
Thanks to quick intervention
By Apolo Obote
Who declared it null and void.**

ARMS DEAL PLOT

**Disgusted by frustrations
Losing temper and patience,
Mutesa was forced to act
In December of sixty-five—
He ordered many heavy arms
All through Gailey and Roberts.**

THE GOLD ALLEGATION PLOT

(a) Accusations

In January of sixty-six
While still waiting for the arms,
Mutesa urged his servant
The late Daudi Ocheng
To move in Parliament
The Gold Allegation Motion
Against Colonel Amin.

In debating the Motion
Ocheng was to say all things
The dirtiest things he could conceive
Against Dr. Obote,
Onama and then Nekyon.
Ocheng was to accuse them
Of benefiting from loot
In particular gold loot,
Coffee and ivory loot.
And then add that all of them:
Obote, Nekyon, Amin
And Onama were plotting
To overthrow the Constitution.
"Because of this plot and loot,"
Dictated Ocheng's counsel,
"Amin has been assured
He would be the Commander
Of Uganda Armed Forces."

In that way Ocheng would create
Optimum coup conditions.
Mutesa was in for shocks:
Congress parliamentarians
Would not support the Motion.
It was, therefore, doomed to fail.

Mutesa then resorted
To Ibingira and said,
“Let us join forces right now
Obote and Ministers
Loyal to him are all out
You are the Cabinet boss.”

“Let the Cabinet meet now
And reverse that decision
Not to support *my* motion.
This has given me much pains.
You and I can do wonders
Working jointly together.”

On the fourth of February
Nineteen hundred sixty-six,
“Ibingira’s Cabinet”
Reversed the resolution
Of Congress parliamentarians
Not to support the motion.

In the afternoon that day,
Parliament debated it.
Congress parliamentarians,
Shocked by this treacherous change,
Lost in Obote’s absence,
Decided to take one course.

They had only two courses
Of action open to them.
To support or to oppose
Daudi Ocheng’s motion.
To oppose it would expose
The division between the two:

Congress parliamentarians
And their Congress Ministers.
It was on this only ground,
That the parliamentarians
Decided in favour
Of supporting Ocheng's motion.

Ibingira was happy
As happy as Mutesa,
Lumu, Kirya, Magezi,
Obwangor and Ngobi
To see that this little plan
Succeeded marvellously.

They decided "By all means
Let us rush this motion through
Before Obote hears it
And runs back to change it all."
A motion suspending Orders
Was then moved by Obwangor.
That meant that the House would sit,
Without any break at all
Till the motion was resolved,
Till business was completed.
Ibingira had his day,
Mutesa was satisfied.

Greenlight given, the road clear,
Ocheng did not mince his words
Like a bull that saw a red flag
He hit Amin left and right—
Obote and two colleagues,
None escaped his cobra bite.

Poisonous Ocheng's words were
Clear as daylight, his motive.
Many in the Assembly
Were not amused, and mocked him
With sarcastic irony,
And with booes and great hisses.

**“Mr. Speaker,” said Ocheng,
“If I live a hundred years,
Or for hundred hours only
This motion shall always be
My greatest contribution
To my country Uganda.**

**“Mr. Speaker I move that
This House do urge Government
To suspend Colonel Amin
Of the Uganda Army
From all official duty
Pending investigations
By the Uganda Police
Regarding his bank account;
And that any decision
By the Uganda Government
On the recommendation
And on the Police findings
Must, and shall be made public.**

**“Mr. Speaker this motion
Is based on the bank account
Of Colonel Idi Amin
Copy of which I have shown
To this House sometime ago.
It was clear from that account
That Colonel Amin did bank
Shillings three hundred and forty thousand
In a period of twenty four days
In February and in March,
Nineteen hundred sixty-five.**

**“The question now clearly is,
Did Colonel Idi Amin,
Get that money lawfully?
No, I repeat, he did not;
He got it unlawfully
Contrary to Army Laws
And Army Regulations.**

“Another question is this,
Why has this Colonel Amin,
Not been brought to justice yet?
I am told by somebody
That he was told by Amin
That the greatest share of all
The Congolese gold he brought home
Went to Premier Obote,
Who took one million shillings!
Then Minister Onama,
And Minister A. Nekyon
Shared equally the same amount.

“Secondly, Amin is sealed
From the searching eyes of Law
Because Mr. Onama
The Minister of Defence,
On above consideration,
Had promised Colonel Amin,
To become the Commander
Of the Uganda Army.

“Thirdly, this Colonel Amin
Figures predominantly
In a coup plan to topple
The Uganda Constitution
By Government Ministers
Already mentioned above.
He is engaged in training
Seventy youths in the forest,
For this dangerous venture.”

Then the Honourable Oda
Stood to second the motion.
He confessed his ignorance
At disclosures by Ocheng
That Obote, Onama,
And Nekyon were main figures
In the gold allegation.
“It now appears to me,”
Commented Gesparo Oda,

**“That Amin is a scapegoat;
A mere tool for bigger guns
Whom this motion must embrace.”**

**Abu Mayanja, M.P.
Pointed out that not Amin,
Or Amin’s reputation
That was then really at stake.
Those were superseded
By much more important questions
Concerning public affairs:
Such as the good name of rulers,
Their complete integrity
In carrying our public trusts
In running the Government.**

**“I call for an enquiry,
A judicial enquiry
Into the very conduct
Of Uganda Prime Minister
And of two of his Ministers.
They will be found innocent
But our people, Ugandans,
Would have had the proof they need
That the Uganda Government
Is quite honest and decent.”**

**Mayanja was once described
By Binaisa Q.C.
“A clever man who never grew.”
A very apt description,
For all of a sudden then
He plunged on a grave attack
On his country Uganda
For the faults of Moise Tshombe.
He spoke as if that Traitor
Was his very bosom friend.
Said he, “Never have we been
Satisfied with the reason
Given for Tshombe’s bombing—
If at all he really bombed—**

This Country, this Uganda.
Many people did say then
That the Congo planes and troops
Were engaged in "hot pursuits"—
Chasing Uganda soldiers
Who had stolen Congo gold,
And Ivory and coffee.

"It was these activities
Of one man, Colonel Amin,
That were then responsible
For the bombing of this land.
Our blood, the precious blood,
Was shed because of this man
And fellow conspirators
So that they may get some gold."

Mayanja who never grew up,
All of a sudden changed course:
He contradicted his thesis
And said, there was no bombing,
There was not any fighting,
All were dirty inventions
To explain army losses:
Such as army vehicles,
Army weapons and such things
Given to the Congolese
In exchange for precious gold.

Kirya, with his little sense
And little education
Spoke and proved to all people
That the greatest of dangers
Is offspring of little knowledge.
Said he, "Onama has said,
Ocheng has spoken rubbish.
I now say the same to him;
'What you said were all rubbish.
I was, like you, elected
To represent the people.
I am no-one's rubber stamp.'

The Commission of Inquiry
Should investigate many,
Including all Ministers.
The Commission of Enquiry
Must not be Police one
What would you expect from them?"

He spoke in broken English
Which not many understood.
On many past occasions
He was usually laughed at
For the blunders that he made
And he would reply simply
"English, is not my mother tongue."
True and how very true it was,
It was more than mother's tongue;
(Much as we would resent it;)
It was, an official Language.
How could he represent us
In a language he knew not!

Minister Ibingira
Spoke at length on the rule of Law
And its full implications:
That none is above the law:
None inside the Government,
None outside the Government,
Should consider that himself
Was above the Country's law.
"Supremacy of the law,
And the long arms of the law
Are the principles at stake.
In accepting this motion
We approve and endorse both."

Mr. Grace Ibingira
As Secretary General
Of that great and famous party;
The Uganda People's Congress,
Came second to Obote
President of that party.

Historically, his post
Was inherently evil:
Many big foreign powers
Bamboozled its occupant
With many tempting offers
Such as becoming Top Man
In our Land Uganda,
In the interest of aliens.
At the time of that motion,
Rumours reached its very peak
That Ibingira did fall
For all those wild temptations.
Ibingira's speech that day
Did very little indeed
To discredit and discount
The substance of these rumours.

Had he dealt with principles
And theories of our law
And stopped there, as seen above,
All would have been very well.
Instead, he denied all things
He formerly held serious,
And clutched on allegations —
Unfounded allegations,
As a drowning man clings to a straw.

“Allegations of gold loot.”
Said Ibingira that day—
“We do not treat seriously.
We are all tired of them.
But the other allegations
Of a plot to overthrow
Uganda's Constitution
Is indeed very serious;
Its truth or its falsity
I am not sure of either.
It is therefore only right
That an investigation
To expose their falsity
Or to establish their truth,
Be carried out, into them.”

Our Minister of Health,
Dr. Emmanuel Lumu,
Said he had no grudge at all
Against Colonel Amin,
But he was very concerned
About Army discipline.

“African armies are now”
Continued Dr. Lumu,
“Infected by some disease,
Which affects their discipline.
This disease may now spread here.
Because of Amin’s Conduct.

“Many members of this House,
Asked us to resign quickly
From the Uganda Cabinet,
“Why?” I asked them,
“Why should we resign?
What is wrong with this motion?
It has not censored the Premier,
It has not censored the Cabinet,
It gives none of you a cause
To call for the resignations
Of some of your Ministers
Who resolved to accept it.

“Amin is no Minister,
And he is not the Premier,
He is an Army Officer
And subject to discipline
Like his colleagues in the Army
Or like any of us here.

“Sometime ago this Ocheng,
Who moved this very Motion,
Moved yet another motion,
Against two Ministers:
Mr. Ngobi and I.
What were the consequences?
Premier Obote kept us

**Under virtual house-arrest
Till enquiry was finished,
Till both names were really cleared.
This is what we now demand
That Amin's name should be cleared."**

THE GOLD ALLEGATIONS

(b) Defences

Then the Minister of Defence,
Felix Onama, M.P.
Made the Government's stand clear;
"These allegations were made
Sometime ago by Ocheng,
We accepted then forthwith,
Investigations of them.
The progress of this enquiry
Was reported to you here.

"Rubbish talk, pit-latrine talk
Is Ocheng's dirty habit.
I challenge him to repeat
These charges outside this House
Where libel is a subject
Of Court action and damage.

"Yet, we do accept this motion,
And ask Daudi Ocheng
To give more information
To the proper authority
For necessary action.

"In my mind, I am certain
Ocheng needs a psychiatrist
To give him thorough treatment,
For he suffers seriously
From a disease of the mind

In which he mistakes for truth,
Imaginations and Dreams.

“I am willing to resign
From the Ministerial post
On one condition alone,
That Ocheng, or one of you,
Repeats the accusations
Anywhere outside the House.”

Martin Aroma, M.P.
Caused much laughter when he said:—
“Would a sensible person,
A reasonable person,
Train in the bush many persons
To come and overthrow him?”

“It is against nature,
To train your own enemies
To enable them kill you.
If the Premier is tired
Of leading the Government,
Why should he not just resign?”

“Mr. Speaker, I am pleased,
Very pleased by this Motion:
It has showed us those of us
Who are foxes in sheep skins.”

Foreign Affairs Minister,
Honourable Sam Odaka
On whom strong and contrary views
Are held by many people
Spoke on the Ocheng's motion.
His speech was as is usual
Punctuated with laughter
Which tended to soften its sting.
He began his speech that day
By saying Odaka's creed:—

“I believe in Government,

And in its being quite decent,
Condoning no corruption,
Condoning no criminal acts,
Carrying out its full duties,
And responsibilities,
Collectively and justly.
I believe that Ministers
Who find the Cabinet motto:
"ONE FOR ALL AND ALL FOR ONE"
Unacceptable to them,
Must resign at once from it."

Thus having hit Ministers;
Kiryia, Lumu, Ngobi,
Ibingira, Magezi,
Whom he thought were treacherous
To Cabinet principles
Of one, and all Ministers
Being jointly responsible
For Cabinet decisions,
Odaka then turned to Ocheng.
"Ocheng has accused so far,"
Said Honourable Odaka,
"Seven outstanding persons
Of the crime of corruption.
These are Minister Lumu,
And Minister Ngobi,
Mr. Roger Mukasa,
Chairman of the Coffee Board,
And Kalangi Ntende
Chairman of the Lint Marketing,
And today the Prime Minister
And two of his Ministers.

"All these charges are not backed
By any written complaints
Nor by any affidavits.
Corruption exposures now
Is Ocheng's speciality.
I do not grudge him the job,
But I would like to ensure

That he does that good job well
By following simple rules
And elementary steps
Of reporting any crimes.
The machinery is there,
Why then does he not use it?
Is he afraid of libel?
Afraid that a libel case
Would be brought against him?

“Chairman Roger Mukasa
And Kalangi Ntende
Had challenged Mr. Ocheng
To repeat outside this House,
His charges against them.
These challenges he dared not
Dream even of accepting!
He prefers parliamentary
Freedom and immunities
To protect him from his trade—
Trade of assassinating
Characters and good names.

“Go ahead Mr. Ocheng,
Ply well this tough trade of yours,
Your target is now in sight.
Charge a few more Ministers
Of corruption and bribery
And most Ministers would be
Corrupt according to you.
That would be the very time
To change Government at once.
The public hear accusations
But not its motivations.”

Then John Kakonge rose up
And spoke very well that day.
Said he, “clarity of mind,
Is what we need most right now.
Though the Motion charged Amin
Of alleged grave misconduct

**Yet the Mover charged the Premier
And two of his Ministers
Of corruption and of plots
To overthrow by violence
The Uganda Constitution.
What does this really entail?
Might acceptance of Motion
Not imply that this very House
Has accepted accusations
Against our Premier
And two of his Ministers?**

**“Clarity is of essence:
Much more so for sound reasons:
Abnormal behaviours here;
Unusual practice followed;
And the strange things going around
Are causes of some concern.
Thus for the first time this House,
Has seen Ministers clash here.
It has seen Ministers talk
And reveal what they should not.
Judging by the trend of these
Unusual occurrences
We are going to the dogs,
We are heading for trouble.**

**“Punishing Colonel Amin
Will not solve any trouble.
I have heard other versions
Of what is to bring trouble;
It is not Colonel Amin,
But Brigadier Opolot
Commander of the Army.**

**“It is said that one big group
Of Uganda Ministers
Are supporting Opolot
To topple the Government,
And that they regard Amin
As a stumbling block to them**

And hence all this big out-cry
For his removal forthwith.

“Mr. Speaker this debate
Is of the lowest standard:
Rumours, hearsay, and falsehood
Are being aired from this very House.
I have taken up the cue
And have said all that I heard.

“I can see with my mind’s eyes:
Troubles knocking at the door,
And tragedies threatening
To swallow all of us up.
Implementing this Motion
Is no solution at all.
Only one thing can save us:
‘Firm and very firm action
By Uganda Government’
To whom I now say this much,
‘Stop these plots and counter-plots.’

“Mark my words about these plots,
They are not of native birth
But born and bred by aliens,
Executed by some of us
Who rather unwittingly
Got involved with those aliens.
It might yet not be too late,
For them to defy aliens.
To those involved with aliens,
I dare yet ask them one thing:
Consider repercussions
Of these plots and counter-plots.
It will sober you a bit:
If we have disturbances,
We have a civil war,
All of us will be involved;
None might escape its consequences,

Any life which may be lost,
Any property destroyed
Might be yours, or might be mine.
Nothing should therefore stop us
From working as a unit,
For our preservation;
For safety of property
And the welfare of this Dear Land.”

John Kakonge was quite right:
The sum total of lessons
Distilled from human history
Is that consequences of plots,
More so plots involving force,
Seldom coincide with both
Intended consequences
And the plotters expectations.

“Must we wash dirty linen”
Continued John Kakonge,
“Publicly, outrageously?
Must we shout all our sins
From a roof-top to roof-top?
Can't we sit round a table
And discuss things responsibly?
Do you members think at all:
Do you think before you speak?
Can you weigh the great damage
That has been done to this Land
By your thoughtless utterances
Of corruption and a Coup
By our Prime Minister?
Do you know the motivation
For Ocheng's accusations
Against our Premier?
We will have no unity
When we do not show respect
Due to national leaders
To our national leaders.

**“Ocheng has made no effort
To substantiate these charges
Which were not worth repeating
Before this honourable House.
I doubt if Ocheng himself,
Believed in any of them.**

**“These allegations have now
Made the situation much worse.
Some of us cannot see it.
They take it as victory.
True it is a victory,
But a pyrrhic victory:
For one more such victory
And Uganda will be lost.
It’s a pyrrhic victory
Which teaches us one lesson:
We swim or sink together.**

**“Mr. Speaker I do beg
To oppose the motion.”**

**Inspite of many things said
Opposing that “gold” motion,
Ocheng yet had his own way:
Parliament passed the Motion
Suspending Amin forthwith
And directing an enquiry
Into Amin’s Bank Account.**

ONAMA ACTS

On the fifth of February,
Minister Onama tried
To suspend Colonel Amin,
As resolved by Parliament,
But found this against the law
And gave Amin a short leave.

Onama, an aggressive man,
Had challenged Mr. Ocheng:
"Repeat outside those falsehoods"
Ocheng dared not repeat them.
But the little he did say
Was judged to be libellous.

ASSIGNMENT: MURDER

The Lango have a proverb:
"When the chickens are away
White ants can afford to play."
This was true of Ibingira
And his political clique
When Obote was away.

They wished him for ever gone
That they might do what they liked;
Yet, he was all full of life
And kicking that very hard.
"Headquarters please come and help,
What do we do with this man?"

So it came about on seventh,
Of February sixty-six,
Headquarters sent officers
And soldiers to Obote,
Who was in Northern Region,
Seemingly to take letters
But really for other things..

Mary, an Army Secretary,
Heard the nature of the mission
And told her brother Okello
Who drove fast to Obote
"Murder is the assignment"
Was Okello's short report.

So, when the Army mission
Came for their bloody mission
They found to their great surprise,
Persons armed to their very teeth.
They were forced to disarm fast,
And give their "cover" message.

The message was very brief:
Opolot called Obote
To return to Kampala
And summon a Defence Meeting
To hear allegation that
Amin wanted to kill him.

Obote gave a reply:
His safari would go on.
The Defence Meeting would be held
At Arua in West Nile.
This did not please Opolot,
Who refused to come to it.

WRONG UNITS

**On the eighth of February,
Headquarters called new recruits
To proceed to Kampala
And protect that Great City
But to its disappointment
Okoya sent other Units.**

**This matter was reported
To Mutesa that same day
"The Uganda Army is bad
It supports Obote.
If you want to bring changes
You may try other armies."**

FOREIGN MILITARY AID

So, on the eighth of February
Mutesa called two persons:
The British High Commissioner
To give military aid;
And Uganda's Chief Justice
To advise on firing premier.

As ceremonial President,
Mutesa had no power
To do those things he did do:
To make himself Prime Minister!
When Obote learnt of them
He was greatly annoyed.

On the ninth of February,
"Ibingira's Cabinet"
Disturbed by the wrong units,
Disturbed by U.K.'s caution
Summoned Opolot forthwith;
And asked for official report.

"Precautionary measures
Have now been taken by us
By deploying troops around."
So Opolot did tell them.
He missed saying, "Okoya,
Sent to us the wrong units."

**That bit had to be left out
For had it been recorded
The game would have been all up,
And made Obote nasty
Asking questions such as this:
“Which ones are the right units?”**

“GIVE AWAY THE GOVERNMENT”

On the eleventh February

Obote met delegates.

“Things in Kampala are bad”

They told him, and then went on,

“We have come to advise you

Give away the Government

To Colonel Okoya

When things improve in future,

He will give it back to you.”

Obote was quite surprised

By this rather strange demand.

Obote asked them questions

Stunning questions were they all:

“What powers have I to give

Government to Okoya?”

After giving Government

To the army as you want,

What Government would it be?

Where would its power come from?

“Lady and you gentlemen,

Our army has been good:

They gave us military

And their full moral support.

They need political guidance.

I for one will give it them

**And advise you to do so.
Come to Kampala with me.
Together with the army,
Politicians and Soldiers—
We will overcome all things.
To say that one must give up,
Be one statesman or soldier,
Is to surrender some fronts
And to fight only on one.
That would give a victory
To those who are fighting us.”**

“CLEAN HANDS AND A CLEAN HEART”

On the twelfth of February
Obote returned as planned
To Entebbe, Kampala.
He told a Press Conference
“I want to tell you, and all,
I have led this country well.
With clean hands, and a clean heart
I have led this dear Country.
I deny entirely
The allegations by Ocheng.
I am sure Ocheng himself
Believes not in any of them.
This was a dirty frame-up
To let Ocheng and his friends
To get what they could not get
Through political appeal.
This was an evil frame-up
To make me appear dirty.”

Now the chicken had come back
The white ants started to run.
Many came to Obote—
They said they knew all about it;
They never believed in it,
They knew who was behind it:
“Mutesa, Ibingira
And their tool Mr. Ocheng,
All are power-crazy men,

All have hallucinations,
All will stop short at nothing,
All want a short-cut to power.”

On thirteenth of February,
Obote told Mutesa:
“Let us meet for a briefing.”
Mutesa had a great fear:
“To meet on a *Thirteenth* day
Portends many evil things.”

On fourteenth of February,
Obote called the Cabinet
And instructed Ministers
Who believed the allegations
To resign from the Cabinet.

He was greeted by murmurs
From Ibingira’s quarters,
Clearly stating that they didn’t
Believe in any such lies.
None of them was prepared
To resign his Cabinet seat.
Obote made proposals
That a Judicial Commission
Be appointed to enquire
Into the allegations.
This was unanimously
Adopted by Cabinet.

Sixteenth day of February,
Obote and Cabinet
Met the Press and gave good news
“A top Judicial Commission”,
He told admiring press-men,
“Is appointed to enquire
Into the allegations.
Members of the Commission
Will be gazetted shortly.
Meanwhile it is essential
That the author of the charges,

**Mr. Daudi Ocheng,
Give the police statements of fact.”
These press statements were reported,
In various screaming headlines,
And with them the things began
To take a different course
From that planned by the plotters.**

BATTALION TRAINING: A PLOT

**Seventeenth of February,
Obote left Uganda
To attend Authority Meeting
Which was held in Nairobi.
He returned to Kampala
On nineteenth of February.**

**At his Lodge in Kampala,
Obote did learn two things.
First Ocheng had made a statement
On the nineteenth February,
Admitting he knew nothing
Concerning allegations.**

**Ocheng's statement did run thus:—
"I saw Amin's Bank Statement
Showing that in three weeks' time
Seventeen thousand pounds were
Credited to his account.
That is all that I do know."**

**Second thing Obote learnt
On that nineteenth February,
Was that a further attempt
To overthrow the Government
By using the new recruits,
Had been made in his absence.**

Let Obote tell the facts:—
“Opolot all by himself,
Without telling Onama,
Or me as Prime Minister
And Chairman: Defence Council,
Arranged Battalion Training.

“First Battalion, for two weeks,
Was to be in Bunyoro
Without any arms at all.
Other Battalions also
Were to go in the bushes
With dud weapons as their arms.
Training movements were to start
On Twenty-first of February.
Kampala and Entebbe
Were to be heavily guarded
By notorious new recruits,
Who had arms and ammunitions.”

To Apolo Obote,
The Rubicon had been crossed.
He decided on two things:
To cancel training that night,
And cause investigations
To be made into the whole thing.

Then, on Monday twenty-first
A police officer did
Report straight to Obote;
“I went to see Mutesa”.
He asked me, “Do you know son,
That something will happen on
Twenty-second February?”
And when I denied knowledge,
He told me not to worry.
Saying it was all rumours:
Kampala was full of them.
I felt, Sir, you must know it.”

Enquiries confirmed fully

That training plan was a plot.
Now the officer's statement
Tallied with the known fact that
Twenty-second February
Was to be the day for a coup.

At midnight on the twenty-first
Obote thought hard in bed:
Mutesa, Ibingira,
Opolot and their colleagues
By hook or crook were to fight
For power at any cost.

The Premier was sure of that much
He had to make up his mind
What to do about it all.
Was he to wait for the worst
Or do something to stop it?
He decided to stop it.

Long after all these events
He told Parliament about it.
"Political treachery,
Did not worry me at all.
But the threat of an army coup
And of chaos and bloodshed,
Those I could not bring myself
To stomach any bit of it.
I felt myself duty bound
To save my Country from them."

On that twenty-second day,
Just before the cock crowed thrice
The Premier called a meeting
Attended by Police Chief
Erinayo Oryema,
Secretary for Defence
Wilson Lutara,
Permanent Secretary,
Home Affairs Mr. Olwoch
Head of Protocol Akena;

Lakidi and Ojera
Happened also to be in:
The meeting was for civil,
Not political servants.

In a rather sombre mood,
And to everyone's surprise,
Premier said the time had come
To defend our nation
From machinations of both
Mutesa—Ibingira.

Ibingira, Ngobi
Magezi, Lumu, Kirya,
Were all to be arrested;
None of them was to escape.
The best place to find them all
Was the Cabinet Meeting-Hall.
"Go and work out full details."
He told the Inspector General,
"Leave no room for picadilloes,
Excuses or oversight.
All I want is that the five
Must be in at noon today,
Without any failure at all."

At the Cabinet meeting,
Ibingira was given
A telegram from Munabi,
Newly qualified Lawyer,
Reading, "House on fire now,
Please save us, save our souls."
Ibingira then walked out.

Obote and Lakidi,
Obote and Ojera,
Were amazed and bewildered,
And could not believe their eyes.
They thought there was a leakage
And the plan would go astray.

What a relief they felt
When Ibingira returned soon!
There was no cause for worry;
Munabi was asking for
A residential house;
Ibingira arranged it.

At the end of the meeting
Many policemen ran in.
Startled Cabinet Ministers
Froze as they saw their colleagues
Hand-cuffed and taken away.
One overzealous policeman
Arrested a wrong person,
And had to be corrected:
“Not that one, but this one here.”
Quickly all the five of them
Were rushed to police transports,
Driven to prison and served
With deportation warrants.
“Fate is a double crosser”,
Commented Ibingira,
“I was the very person
Who saved from being repealed:
The Deportation Ordinance.”

The arrest of the Big Five
Enlightened many persons;
Obote may be gentle
And may be that moderate,
But something deep down inside him,
Is much harder than a rock.

A Weekly paper called “The People”
Commented on this at length.
“There is no individual
Or group of individuals
Who constitute the power
Behind Dr. Obote.
Power behind Obote
Is his full dedication

To the cause of our Land.
That is why in Lango Land
The people have nick-named him
Milton "Ojalokome".

"Ojalokome" does mean,
Sacrifice of the body,
Sacrifice of all the things,
In order to serve the mass.
(The origin of this long name
Can be given here briefly.
The first person to earn it
Was Okabo who offered
To stop inter-clannish war
By sacrificing himself
To be killed by another clan,
Whose member his clan had killed.)

CONSTITUTION SUSPENDED

Two days after the arrest,
On February twenty-fourth
At about 7.00 p.m.
Obote called in the press,
Suspended the Constitution,
And had this to tell the world:
“Recently attempts were made
To remove my Government
By the use of foreign troops,
By persons who hold high posts
Under the Constitution:
These requests were illegal
But continue to be made.
To safeguard our sovereignty,
We must take counter measures:
Suspending the Constitution,
And hence posts of President
And that of Vice-President.”

Mutesa was disappointed.
He had calculated wrong:
He thought Obote dared not
Confront him so openly.
Vice-President Nadiope
Was not very much distressed:
He had expected much worse.

They knew not what had transpired:

They knew not how Obote
Suffered and was tormented
When he found to his sorrow
That there was no other course
To suspending the Constitution,
Which he treasured very much.
For his lawyer, Binaisa,
Had assured him, "Legally,
Mutesa could only be
Dismissed by suspension
Of Uganda's Constitution."
Obote revered that law:
'Twas a visible witness
Of his perseverance
In carrying out negotiations.
For it was a compromise
Amongst contending groups:
Uganda nationalists,
British colonial power,
Kingdom representatives,
District representatives,
Parties' representatives,
Asian representatives,
All demanding various ends
Which were contradictory.

Obote talked to one and all
Hammered out a compromise
Which formed the very basis
For gaining independence.
Said Obote at one time,
"I cannot and I shall not
Condone any attempt at all
To overthrow the Constitution
For which I have worked so hard."
That, in a nutshell, was his
Thought on the Constitution
He was advised, to suspend.

"You know not what you demand,"
He told Godfrey Binaisa,

**“This Book is my very child.
I cannot be its killer.”
“You do not need to kill it,”
Was Binaisa’s reply,
“It’s as dead as a door-nail.
Killed by Edward Mutesa:
When he demanded those arms
From the British Government
Unconstitutionally,
And in that way he killed it.”**

**“All you have to do right now”
Laughed Godfrey Binaisa,
“Is to bury your dead child
As decently as possible.
These things do happen you know;
We must learn to accept them.”**

COMMISSION TO ENQUIRE INTO GOLD ALLEGATION

Twenty-seventh February
Mr. Bataringaya,
Minister for Home Affairs,
Appointed the Commission
Consisting of Justice L'Estang,
A well-known Appeal Court Judge,
Who was to be its Chairman.

Other Commissioners were
Mr. Justice Saidi
Of the Tanzania High Court,
And Justice Henry Miller
Of the High Court of Kenya.
All the three were impartial.

Bataringaya announced
That on seventh day of March
Nineteen sixty-six A.D.
The enquiry would commence.
Four days before commencement
Ugandans were terribly shocked.
They read in Kenya papers
That Ocheng flew from Nairobi,
On his way to Great Britain,
And the papers added that
It was clear to one and all,
Ocheng was running away.

On the fifth of March that year
"The People" expressed anxiety
At the conduct of Ocheng:
Stating clearly in big print
"IT IS NOW UP TO OCHENG".
It pointed out bitterly
That if Ocheng wanted
To make a contribution great
To our country Uganda
He must give his evidence
To the coming Commission.

On March seventh, sixty-six
The Commission started its work.
Opening speeches sharply
Attacked Daudi Ocheng
"For" Binasisa put it,
"An absence of convenience."

"When you come to write your report,"
Pointed out Mr. Rankin,
Lawyer for the Commission,
"The fact that Ocheng saw fit
Not to appear is rather telling."
"It's extraordinary,"
Commented Mr. Wilmers,
Dr. Obote's Counsel,
"To raise any allegation,
Under the cloak of privilege
And then not to appear
At enquiry into it."
Ocheng was informed of this
And he did not like it much.

"He behaved just like a dog,"
Commented Mpambara,
"Which barks loud but runs away
When it meets tough opponents."
Ocheng could not bear all this
So, he flew to Uganda.

At the Commission's hearing,
Not a bit of evidence
Of any loot was given;
Not a whit of evidence
Of money distributed
To Obote, or colleagues.

Testimony was given
About Amin's Bank account
And Amin had this to say:
"The Account produced by Ocheng
In March, nineteen sixty-five,
And in February, sixty-six
Was indeed my Bank Account.
On the seventeenth of March
The year nineteen sixty-five,
I made this admission to
My Minister Onama;
And on twenty-fifth of March
The year nineteen sixty-five
In a letter to Opolot
Commander of the Army
I admitted that Nyati
A revolutionary
In the neighbouring Congo
Gave me twenty four thousand pounds
To be used for their Revolution.

"I had the authority
To assist G'benye moves
Against Mr. Tshombe
Who is Africa's Traitor."
The source of this authority
Was disclosed to Commission.

Summing up the evidence,
The Commission's lawyer Rankin
Said, "Amin never denied
The receipt of the money.
It was manifestly clear
From what Mr. Nyati said,

That Amin discharged his trust
To the full satisfaction
Of those who reposed that trust
In Amin and Uganda.
"There was no doubt on that point."
Chairman de L'Estang agreed:
"You would be flogging a dead horse
With regard to the bank account,
It is already quite clear."
That was the end of it all:
It was a fuss, not a fact.

Obote and his Ministers
Did not get Congo money;
Amin did get some money
Which was perhaps the proceeds
From the sale of gold and tusks
But he used it for the Congo.
Never did he in person
Benefit from the money.
The accused were not guilty.
The accuser, Mr. Ocheng
Did not have any evidence
To substantiate his charges.

Allegations about plots
To overthrow the Constitution
Was held to be ridiculous
Because it was based on lies
And because no Government
Would plot against itself.

Ocheng said he learnt of plots
To overthrow the Constitution
From Makerere College
Extra-Mural Seminar.
One Communist, in a speech
Said, openly, in the presence
Of a police officer
And many dignitaries
And hundreds of other people,

That they were conspiring
To overthrow the Constitution!
Ocheng claimed, he recorded
This particular speech then
But he could not produce it
Before the Commissioners
And when asked to repeat it
Outside the Enquiry,
He refused completely!
Commented Mr. Wilmers:
"This conduct is very wrong."

The other allegation,
About toppling the Constitution
Rested on what Oryem said
To Mr. Daudi Ocheng.
Oryem was Ocheng's hireling,
An unmitigated liar,
A great misfortune for one
To meet in the course of life.

Shortly after Ocheng's speech
On the fourth of February,
Oryem wrote to Obote
And accused Ocheng of lies.
He said that he knew nothing
About any bush training.
All he knew was, that a plot
Involving thirteen pistols
Was being perpetrated
By a group led by Ocheng.

Said Mr. Wilmers Q.C.,
"Oryem, the greatest liar,
Was in Ocheng's employment.
And his lies, for certain ends,
Were given wide publicity
By his employer Ocheng."
Their Lordships were satisfied,
That the strange allegations
Of the plots to overthrow

**The Uganda Constitution,
Like allegations of loot,
Were completely unfounded
And were utterly groundless.**

1966 CONSTITUTION

Loathing dictatorial rule,
Loathing all rule by decree,
Obote, and Cabinet
Worked all day and worked all night
On a new Constitution
Meant to bring to Uganda
Unitary Government,
And abolish for ever
Federal relationship.

No more conflict were key words
In the New Constitution.
Federalism produced
Clashes between governments
At the centre and regions
And held back developments.

The new Constitution would
Merge the two important posts
Of the Chief Executive,
And Constitutional Head
Of the State of Uganda
And avoid a clash between them.

On the fifteenth of April
Nineteen hundred sixty-six,
Obote made history:
He introduced in the House
A Constitution which many
Had not read or even heard of.

**“We Ugandans do resolve,
And it is hereby resolved,
To abolish the '62
Uganda Constitution.
It is hereby abolished.
“Now, a new Constitution,
Is laid down before us here.
Let it be adopted now;
It is hereby adopted
On this fifteenth April day
Nineteen sixty-six A.D.
This is now provisional
Uganda Constitution
Till another enactment.
Fellow citizens if you”,
Added Milton Obote,
“Go down to your pigeon holes
You will find your own copies
Of the new Constitution
Whose content I now disclose.”**

**In that unusual fashion,
In that un-Obote way
An Interim Constitution
Was enacted there and then.
There were fifty five votes for,
And four votes against it.**

**Not many changes were there,
Only a few which progressives,
Patriots and Nationalists
Welcomed with all their hearts.**

RESOLUTION FOR REBELLION

Abolition of federal form
Of governing the country,
And democratization
Of public institutions,
Were opposed by feudalist
And royalist Baganda.

Six of twenty-one members
Representing Buganda
In Uganda's Parliament
Refused to take oath under
Our new Constitution
Enacted by Parliament.

Leading them was ex-Minister,
Feudalist Amos Sempa
Anxious to "fall into things"
—To become "Katikiro"—
By playing sycophancy
To Sir Edward Mutesa.

Mutesa's trusted chief
Did propose on wrong advice
A motion in Buganda
Local Council: "Lukiiko"
"That Buganda do secede
From the State of Uganda".

**The Speaker of the Lukiiko
Ruled that the motion could not
Be legally debated.
Undaunted by this ruling
Chief Lutaya adopted
Subterranean strategies.**

**On the eighteenth day of May,
Lutaya and his colleagues
Made it known that a meeting
Of the Lukiiko would take place
On the twentieth day of May,
At exactly 10.00 a.m.**

**The procedure for summoning
Lukiiko was not followed
On that very occasion:
Ministers of Buganda
Were not consulted at all
And learnt of it from radio.**

**On that fateful twentieth day
Of May, nineteen sixty six
At exactly 10.00 a.m.
The Lukiiko met secretly,
And Kagwa read draft motion
Which contained no secession.**

**Then there was an open meeting
Of the Lukiiko that day.
The Gallery was fully packed
With hooligans, city rogues,
Questionable characters
Of all descriptions and forms.**

**It was quite clear that those who had
Plotted to call the meeting
Had the foresight to ensure
That none dared to oppose them.
Experience and precedents
Of disastrous consequences**

Flowing from the opposition,
To the Lukiiko mob were known.
None could brave the mob's assault,
None dare brave the mob's insults.
This same mob had recently
With their fists and with their legs,
Hurling stones and yelling abuse,
Forced Kintu and his ministers
To resign from Government.
Now they crowded the gallery
To force Mayanja-Nkangi
And his ministers to resign.

Opening the Lukiiko
Mr. Speaker sadly said
Undesirable changes
Had taken place in the land.
Then he called Amos Sempa
To comment on those changes.

Sempa who is no orator
Challenged the legality,
Constitutionality,
And appropriateness of the
Interim Constitution.

"Mr. Speaker," Said Sempa,
"We were never directly
Elected to Parliament
But Indirectly elected
By the Buganda Lukiiko.
Our stay in Parliament
Was therefore conditional
On carrying out all orders
Given by the Lukiiko.
Membership of Parliament
Has never been dependent
As some are now advancing
On the conscience of members.
If that was ever the case,
Members elected for a cause,

Would with great impunity
Work for different causes,
Which defeat that very end.”

Thus Sovereignty of conscience
Which had been the guiding rule
For Members of Parliament
Was for reason known to him
Disowned by Amos Sempa.
From then onward all members
Of Uganda Parliament
From that Region Buganda
Were to treat themselves as the:
“Lukiiko Ambassadors”
And not representatives.

“I who am very cultured,
And very educated,
And in whom you all confide”
Boasted ambitious Sempa,
“Must report all things to you
For your directive and brief.
If I fail to do that much,
I am nothing but a cheat.”

Then rather of a sudden,
He dropped his boasting tactics
And adopted new tactics:
Of appealing to tribal
Feeling and identity.

“Other tribes bear us a grudge.
This is a fact which we know.
They think we were more favoured
By British Colonial rule:
We had much greater freedom
Than all the other regions.
Now they want to pay it back
By suppressing Buganda.
How wrong could they really be?
The contrary is the case:

Baganda suffered much more
Than other tribes put together:
Most of those put in prison
Including the Kabaka
By Colonial Government
Were mainly our people.

“If we were treated better
In many other respects,
It was due to who we were
And if we are more civilized
It is due to who we are.”
He was warmly applauded.

One member then quickly moved
A motion congratulating
All Members of Parliament
Who refused to swear an oath
Under the Constitution
In accordance with the orders
Given by the Lukiiko.

Then Antoni Tamale
Member of the Lukiiko
Seconded the motion,
And read out the very oath
Which Members of Parliament
From the Buganda Region
Swore before the Lukiiko.
He read it thus to members:—
“I Luyimbazi-Zake
(This was greeted by laughter)
Lukiiko elected me
To go and represent it
In National Assembly.
I therefore swear before God
And before ‘Namulondo’
That I will obey quite well
‘Sabasajja’ Mutesa
And obey his ancestors:
And I will well represent

**Buganda in Parliament
With truthfulness according
To our law and customs.
I will also obey both
The Buganda Constitution,
And Uganda Constitution.”
There was applause and clapping
And the motion was then passed.**

**Then Kagwa moved his motion,
“That this Lukiiko resolves
Not to recognise at all
The Uganda Government
Whose Headquarters must be moved
Away from Buganda soil.”
Explaining this strange motion,
Kagwa quoted history:
“When the Englishmen came here,
We Baganda were advanced:
Able to rule Africa.
During the Colonial period,
The basis of ruling us
Was Buganda Agreement
Which the English and Baganda
Strictly abode by it.**

**“On the ninth of October,
Nineteen hundred and sixty two,
Independence was granted
To the whole of Uganda,
And the basis of our rule
Was founded in an agreement:
The Uganda Constitution
Which Obote suspended
And later abrogated.**

**“The act of abrogation
Rendered the abrogator
Unconstitutional Head
Of the Uganda Government.**

Hence, Obote's Government
Must leave our Buganda.

"We gave Obote a mandate
To rule us in Uganda.
We, the same people, can now
Take away that same mandate
Since he who gives may also
Take away that which he gave
If conditions for giving
Have been cruelly violated
Rendering contract null and void.
We accepted Obote
In those days now long gone by.
This is our way of life
We are ever flexible
Thus we accepted Asians,
Europeans and Acholi,
Nubians and other tribesmen
To be representatives
Of this land of Buganda.
Which other tribe can do that?

"Not Basoga, Bakiga,
Acholi, Lango, Teso
None of them ever does it.
Thus if we ask Obote
And his Government to go,
It is not because of tribes
But because of what they did.
Let them go and go quickly
Outside our Buganda."
He was warmly applauded.

Chief Lutaya seconded
That motion of secession:
"The Uganda Constitution,"
Said Mutesa's trusted Chief,
"Was like a rope binding us.
In cutting loose the vital link,
Obote has set us free.

To put it in other words,
In cutting the binding cords
Obote set himself free.
He's no longer one of us.
"He is just like Ian Smith.
The cords which Obote cut,
Served as if they were pillars—
The three very strong pillars
Which supported Buganda
In the House of Uganda.
They were respect for Kingship,
Federal Powers for Buganda,
And the Lukiiko's Powers
To control all its members
Of the Central Assembly.
All these three pillars were cut.
By the new Constitution
Which we will never accept.
We, therefore, tell Obote
Take it outside Buganda.

"Even the 'Sabasajja,'
Kabaka Mutesa II
Has protested to U Thant
The Secretary-General
Of the United Nations
Against the abrogation
Of our Constitution.
In that letter he stated,
'The Uganda Constitution
—Nineteen hundred sixty two—
Provides that each and all laws
Which contravenes provision
Of our Constitution
Are null and void and useless.
If amendments are needed
To the legal Constitution
There are provisions for them
In that very Constitution.
Amongst these provisions
Was one dealing with matters

Known as 'Entrenched Provisions'
Such as the Kabakaship
And the Federal Relations
Which could not be amended
Without the majority votes
Of two third of the members
Of our Great Lukiiko
And the House of Parliament.
It did not provide short cuts
For effecting amendments
Such as that which was taken
By A. Milton Obote.

"Obote, a man of thought,"
Continued Mutesa's Chief,
"Must be taken seriously:
You remember on that day,
Ninth October, '65
He had this to tell the world:
"No Honourable 'Bwanas'
Are allowed interference
In the Uganda Government."
Now whom do you think he meant?
Surely not persons like us.
He meant those of royal blood,
Especially the Kabaka.
So you see that even then,
Obote's plan was worked out.
He had in his own mind then
The dismissal from our presidency,
Of the beloved Kabaka.

"But, we have really been fools:
For Obote also did
Talk about every person
As being equal before him,
Equal before the law."

Then Nyanja of Buddu spoke:
Said he heard Obote move
A motion abrogating

The "legal" Constitution
Of the State of Uganda
And a motion adopting
The brand new Constitution
For the State of Uganda.
The reaction of members
Of Parliament startled him:
"They were all clapping warmly,
And all laughing happily
At all that Obote said,
When indeed the sum total
Of what he said was just this,
'You are nothing; I am all'
I could not clap for that speech;
It could never make me laugh.
Confront me face to face now
With Obote and watch hard—
If I smile, leave alone laugh.

"I have made deep enquiries
Into the cause of laughter:
One member of Parliament
Told me that it was, 'money':
The Parliamentary stipend
Which he did not like to miss.
I told him, what about me?
I have never in my life
Received any allowance
For Parliamentary Service
Am I not, like you, living?

"Gentlemen the time has come,
To carry out our plans.
That is why we called you here
To pass this vital Motion,
The essence of this Motion,
May analogically
Be explained in terms of ants.

"Red ants live in their ant-hill
And are divided in two:—

The Queen who is only one,
And many, many soldiers
Whose main task is to see that
None touches the Queen at all.
Should any try to do so,
The alarm is raised, war begins,
And the soldiers fight to death
Before the Queen can be harmed.
Thus Obote's Constitution,
Is a move to harm the 'Queen,
Kabaka Mutesa II'.

"We have now raised an alarm
By calling this Lukiiko
Let the fight begin at once,
Let all die to save the 'Queen'.

"I have spoken my own mind
It is good that I speak it.
Time may come when we will not
Be allowed to speak at all.
(That will be when the action starts)
But e'en then we may yet have
Mountains speaking for us all.
For the Bible clearly states,
Does it not?, That the mountains
Speak for those whose mouths are shut".

Many a member then spoke,
Supporting Kagwa's motion,
All of them were encouraged
To attack the Government
By the audience's alarm,
Hullabalooing, laughter,
And, above all, wild applause.
Those who opposed the motion,
Like Mayanja-Nkangi,
Were all shouted down with booes,
And with scurrilous insults.
The motion passed easily.

**When President Obote
Studied that resolution,
He made clear his opinion:
“This is an act of rebellion.
Government will study it
And deal with all those involved.”**

**Necessary enquiries
Were then made by Government,
And according to that source,
Mutesa and feudal chiefs
And some of their dependents
Were championing secession.**

REBELLION

On the twenty-third of May,
Nineteen hundred and sixty-six,
Three of the big feudal chiefs,
Namely Sebanakita,
Lutaya and Matovu,
Were arrested and detained.

Soon after they were arrested,
Buganda sounded war drums,
And embarked on lawlessness.
The Uganda Government
Was compelled to take action
Under the Emergency Law.

On the morning of that day,
The Secretary for Defence
Mr. Wilson Lutara,
Army Chief of Staff Amin,
And the Author of this Book
Went to the President's Lodge
Makindye, near Kampala
To watch an Army Unit
Receive various provisions.

I had hardly reached the Lodge,
When the rebels blocked the road
Leading to it with big logs,
And when Amin sent soldiers
To clear away the road-blocks,

Rebels threw Molotov bombs
And fired bullets at them.

I telephoned the Premier
At Colonel Amin's request,
And narrated the incident.
He listened without comments
Then he asked to talk to Amin
Whom he gave firm directives:

"Evacuate civilians
And as soon as possible
Clear away all those road-blocks
Without using too much force;
Only proportional force
If at all necessary."

Some lawless perpetrators
Who were detained by the Police,
Made confession stating that
Arms and orders were given
To wage the illegal war
From Mutesa's own Palace.

On that twenty-third of May,
Nineteen hundred sixty-six,
Cabinet gave a directive
To President Obote:
"You are to go the whole hog
In stamping out lawlessness."
The phrase used was Binaisa's.
So, that very evening,
Obote ordered Amin
To make enquiries into
An alleged illegal big store
Of arms and ammunition
In the Kabaka's Palace.

On the twenty-fourth of May,
Nineteen hundred sixty-six,
One tiny Army Unit

**Went to Mutesa's Palace
To make investigations
Of illegal possession
Of arms and ammunition.**

**Mutesa's ill-assorted,
Poorly-trained, ragged soldiers,
Fired on the Army Unit
Which had to defend itself.
Some of Mutesa's soldiers
Turned their back to run away.
But they did not get very far;
As their Comrade mowed them down
Till Mutesa too ran for his life,
And with Mutesa's escape
The Lubiri battle ended:
His soldiers who feared him much,
Were happy to surrender.**

**Mutesa and bodyguards
Sought refuge in Rubaga,
But the Mission would not dream
Of sheltering Mutesa
Who was very well known
For anti-Catholicism.
Commented the Reverend Father,
"Mutesa's visit to us
Was treated by all of us
As an abomination."
Everywhere in the country
The same story repeated:
Not a single hiding place,
No foot-hold for another war.
Only one alternative
Was open to Mutesa.
He had to flee the country
And seek asylum elsewhere.**

**On the thirty-first of May,
Nineteen hundred sixty-six,
Milton Obote explained**

**What happened to the Nation:
"Police stations at Kyagwe,
Bulemezi, Kayunga,
Buddu, Ssinga, and Luwero
Were attacked by rebel gangs,
And there was some loss of lives
And damage to property.
The Army Unit, Makindye,
And Army Unit, Masaka,
Were also attacked by gangs,
And there were some casualties.
Civilians were cheap victims
Of those merciless rebels.**

**"These were unjustifiable acts
To terrorise Government
Into releasing rebels
And granting all their demands.**

**"They will not succeed that way.
Rule of law will prevail here:
None will be above the law:
Chief or no chief though he be."**

**The Lango have a proverb
"Gwata atek mac apuku,"
Meaning "A hard calabash
Is reduced to shape by fire."
Thus the reign of lawlessness
Ceased as soon as lawful force
Proved, by far, its capacity
To deal with the law breakers
As fire, the calabash.**

1967 CONSTITUTION

Normality thus restored,
It was time to think afresh
Of a sacred, lasting law:
A National Constitution:
A Constitution whose content
Would be known ahead of time,
And debated by the Nation
Before formal adoption.
A Constitution which provides
For National unity,
Equality of all men,
Republican Government,
And wipes out feudalism,
And Hereditary kingship
From the face of Uganda.

In nineteen sixty-seven,
Government therefore published
Constitutional proposals
For our Country Uganda.
All Uganda debated
These Proposals everywhere:
Parliament debated them
For many and many weeks.
Constructive criticisms
Were noted by Government—
Which then went a step further
To amend the Proposals
In accordance with the wish

Of members of Parliament,
Of Uganda Citizens,
And of academicians.
When they were then put to vote,
Overwhelming were the votes
Cast for it by the Members
Of Constituent Assembly.

The Uganda Constitution
Of the year '67
Is clearly noteworthy,
For both what it did retain,
And for those things it did change.
Said President Obote,
To members of Parliament
"The Provisions of Constitutions
'62 and '66
Have not, unless essential,
Been altered in any way."

Alterations were effected,
For two important reasons:
The democratization
Of various institutions,
And the centralization
Of Governmental powers
To bring about unity,
And oneness in Uganda.

Now readers, a word to you.
Do not forget just one point:
The '67 Constitution
Made Uganda a REPUBLIC,
And prohibits anyone
From ruling because of his birth.

THE CREATION OF GENERAL SERVICE DEPARTMENT

On Thursday, July the 2nd
Nineteen Hundred Sixty-four,
Mr Felix Onama,
The Minister for Internal Affairs
Disclosed to Parliament
That a nucleus of staff
Had been trained in Israel
For a counter-spy organization
Which was made necessary
By the number of spies
In the country.

The announcement came
At the end of the debate
On Nineteen Sixty-four/Sixty-five
Estimates for his Ministry.
During the debate, Hon. Oda
Had listed the reasons
Why the country's internal problems
Were not being solved.
There were amongst those reasons,
Too much political talk
And too many untrained informers
Giving the Government
False information.

In reply, Onama informed the House
That he would be
Introducing legislation
For a security service.
The Government, he said,
Would train some people
To counter-spy against the spies.
There was no doubt, he added,
That there were spies in the country
And it was the duty
Of the Government to set up
A counter spy organization.
Every country
Had such an organization.
He then denied
That the officers trained in Israel,
The so called "Israeli Boys"
Were spying on Civil Servants.¹

On July, 3rd of the same year
The Uganda Argus welcomed
In its editorial
The training of spy-catchers.
"If there is a trained body
Of people available
To take on the task
Of countering foreign activity
That is against Uganda's interest,
It will presumably reduce
The field for rumour and speculation."²

It was, of course, true
That the General Service
Like any other Government department,
Initially attracted to itself,
Certain persons influenced
By no conscientious principles.
The first group of about thirty people

¹ *Uganda Argus*, Friday, July 3, 1964.

² *Ibid.*

Who formed the nucleus of the service
Were recruited
On the recommendations of politicians
And trained in Israel.
Many of them were ill educated,
Unemployed and greedy
For just any type of job.

The ground for employing some of them
Seemed to have been
Their unworthy compliances
With the wishes of the politicians
Who had recommended them.
However, exalted
In personal qualities
They might have been,
It was clear that they were
Neither fit to be the leaders
Of a security organization,
Nor to form any part of it.

Their leader Seppy Mpambara
Had fantastic ideas
About the secrecy
That should surround
A security organization.
He talked to his officers in whisper
And met them in secret places
To pay their salaries.
They soon became notorious
And were called "Israeli Boys".

On the recommendation
Of the Minister of State
In the Prime Minister's Office,
Mr George Magezi,
I was appointed
To head this group of spy-catchers.
My title was to be
Head of Protocol
And my main task at that stage

**Was to investigate
Complaints and grievances
Forwarded to the Prime Minister.**

**Magezi explained: "We hold
That you are singularly
Suitable to the post.
First, you have ascended
The High hierarchy of the party.
You were our Secretary
For Foreign Relations.
Your loyalty is not in doubt.
Secondly, your training as
A lawyer and your experience
As a private practising advocate
And as a Resident Magistrate
And your impartial nature
Single you out
As the man for the enterprise."**

**The General Service Department
Came into existence
When at 8.30 a.m.
On or about the 1st day of April,
Nineteen Hundred Sixty-four
I sat on a chair
Of the Head of Protocol
In the office
Of the Prime Minister
At Entebbe.**

**Towards the end of the year
I had recommended
To the Prime Minister
Three courses of action.**

**My recommendations
To the Prime Minister were:
First, that the whole, save one or two,
"Israeli Boys" be dismissed.
Secondly, that we be allowed**

To recruit and train
New security officers
Of widely different descriptions
Who united the qualities
Of deep learning
To the highest quality
Of apostles:
Men who were neither hypocritical
Nor avaricious, nor fearful
But dedicated
To the demolition of idols
And the purification of sanctity.
Men of sincerity,
Disinterestedness
And adventurous courage
Who would dare to defend right
When right was miscalled wrong.
And that was to be the mission
Of the General Service Department.

Thirdly, that the Security Service
Be kept very small
Since it was in the first place
The quality not the quantity
Of the people in it
That determined its effectiveness.
And in the second place,
The security services,
By their nature, are nonproductive
And hence a burden to the nation.
It was not necessary
To have a very big staff,
As it is in other country,
To cover all the public places.
It was not necessary
To convert government officers
And to convert businessmen
Into security officers.

The U.P.C. as it was then
Was so strong

**That it could safely afford
To place its security
In the hands of the populace.
All that the Government
Had to do was merely
To open a security office
Which was not to be secret
And whose officers were
Completely exposed to the public
Who were thus free to report
Any plots against the Government
To those officers.**

**On Obote's return
From his historical tour
Which took him to West Africa,
Europe, China and to Hongkong
Where he made the "Blunder"
Of urging the inhabitants
To demand the Independence
That they said they did not want,
I was informed
By the Permanent Secretary
To the Prime Minister
Mr Frank Kalimuzo
That the plan had been accepted
In all its entirety.**

**When certain person were protecting
And promoting wretches
Distinguished only
By their sycophancy,
When they were blind to perceive merit
Or practised the meanest art
For the purpose of depressing it,
The General Service Department
Went all the way out to recruit,
And to employ the best brains
In our country, Uganda.**

**The result, which is ever a source
Of considerable personal satisfaction**

**To me
Was miraculous.
In about five years
Of its existence,
General Service Officers
Had occupied almost all
The top posts in the nation.**

**As the Bible puts it:
You cannot hide the light
Of the lamp under a table.
General Service Officers continued
To occupy top positions
Under the Government of Amin,
Lule, Binaisa, Muwanga
And now under Obote.**

**Amin's Minister of Education,
Edward Rugumayo
Worked in the Research Section
Of the President's Office
Which was a branch
Of the General Service
As Senior Assistant Secretary.**

**Minister Masette Kuuya
And former Deputy Minister
Dr Rugunda
While students at Makerere
Were always employed
By the General Service
In the same Research Section.**

**Ministers Peter Otai,
Picho Owinyi and Chris Rwakasisi
Were also employed
In the same Research Section.**

**General Service Officers
Who were well trained in the army**

**Constituted the backbone
Of the officers corp
That fought in the liberation war.**

**Captain James Odongo
And Major John Upor
Were, for instance,
Two such officers.**

**Throughout the Lule and Binaisa,
Muwanga and Obote's time,
The security department
Has been headed by officers
Trained in General Service
Such as Mutesasira Musoke,
Amos Bazira, Benson Ogwang
And now Mr Ddumba.
Mr Ben Dramadri
The Principal Private Secretary
To Binaisa and to Obote
Is a former General Service Officer.
So was Binaisa's Chief Press Officer
Jesse James Namakajjo.**

**Uganda Patriotic Movement
Was headed by
Two General Service Officers.
Its Ag. President General
Mr Yoweri Museveni
Was our Research Officer
And its Deputy President General
Mr Jeremiah Opira
Was Deputy Chief General Service Officer.**

**Three of the secretaries trained
In General Service Department
Are now confidential secretaries
In the office of the President,
And many others
Are personal secretaries to ministers.**

**Atekere Ejalu
And I are managing directors
Of two big parastatal bodies.**

**Sometimes we employed persons
Who preferred further studies
To working in the Department.
In a few years a number
Of our recruits
Were in various universities.
Many of them are now doctors
And some of them engineers.
We still delight in the fact
That we were able
To change their lives for the better.**

**It was my pleasure
To encourage these young men
Not only to propound
The political questions
Of the day, but to do so
With much study and mental toil.**

**I encouraged them to penetrate
Beneath the surface of questions
And to arrive by reading,
Study, meditation and discussion
At an accurate knowledge
To serve as the basis
Of their opinions.
Many a time I repeated to them,
With my addition, the Bacon's saying
That reading makes a full man,
Talking a ready man,
And writing an exact man.**

**My addition was that we had
Many ready men, a few full men
And even fewer exact men.
That, we had quite a number
Of politicians**

Who talked effectively
Without taking trouble
To read or write much on the subject.
Unfortunately, on analysis
Of the substance of their peroration
Which seem to have gone so well
With the assemblies
Before whom they were made,
It is found to have been made
Of flimsy materials.
Divorced of the graces
Of the utterances,
Of the gestures of the speakers,
And of the fluent delivery
By reducing the peroration
Into writing,
Then the inferiority
Of the substance
And even its utter nonsense
Is exposed to all.

That moment, that is to say,
That we examine the propositions
Of vast sweep
Conveyed
In attractive speeches
Full of obscure dignity
And edification,
And test them by running over
A few particulars included in them,
We find them to be false.
Yet such falsity deceive many.

Amin's lies for instance,
Were swallowed wholesale
By people who knew nothing
About Uganda but dared
Write books
Claiming to be authorities
On Uganda history.
Amongst such authors

Are Mr Joseph Kamau
And Mr Andrew Cameron.
In their book 'Lust to Kill'
(A Gorgi Book)
They e'en called me a communist
And added "Akena's police network
Was too preoccupied
With political intrigue
To enforce the law"!!
When did I ever have
A Police network?

Law was enforced by the police
Under Erinayo Oryema,
The Inspector General of Police.
The General Service did watch
The machinations
Of the foreign spies and their agents.

I personally had
Much sympathy for persons
Accused of offences
Of purely political nature.
And I have hated
Political assassination
With a special loathing.
Ever since my childhood,
I never succeeded
To bring myself
To slay even a chicken.
Nor could I dissect a lizard
In our science classes.

I regarded any person
Who engaged himself
In cruel confederacies
To slay an unsuspecting fellow creature
As a beast.
That was what I did explain
To Mayanja Nkangi
On discovering his letters

Addressed to two women
Who were persuading Amin
To assassinate President Obote.
The two women were arrested
By the police on Amin's report.
I told Mayanja Nkangi
That I was shocked
To find myself leagued
With a would be murderer
And that our meetings with him
Had to come to an end.

It is not surprising
That I was possibly
The only government officer
Who found time to pay visits
To persons in prison.

Abu Mayanja once described
My visit to him in prison
As an experience
Which had fully proved
That a voluntary liberality
Of an individual,
Especially in times of crisis,
Is a manifestation
Of a divine spark in man.

"You know" he went on,
"You are the only Ugandan
Who believes
That people behind these bars
Are still citizens of the Republic!
Others seem to think
That our citizenship
Is divested from us
As soon as we step in here.
The Minister of Internal Affairs,
His permanent secretary,
His principal assistant secretary,
His assistant secretaries

Or even his clerical officers
Have never dreamed of visiting us”.

We talked for sometime
Before I stood up to leave.
Then, as an afterthought,
He said pensively,
“I read your book, ‘The Uganda Crisis.’
What you said about me
Was not flattering at all:
“A clever man who never grew.”
But it is true; I never grew.
I have well over twenty children.
Different mothers of course.
But my own wife hasn’t got a child.
Now I am here and she is there
Battling against many odds
To feed a horde of children!

Dan Nabudere maintained
That amongst detainees
Accused of plotting to topple
The Obote government,
He was the sole leftist.
He claimed that it was the first duty
Of any sensible leftist
At a crisis as the sixty-six crisis
To strengthen the hands
Of the progressive government.
And that was what he had done.
Why then was he arrested?
For thwarting conservative policies
Formerly pursued by the government
Before the country was
In danger from bourgeoisie?

I also met Chief Magistrate Mpungu
Who held that his detention •
Was brought about
By a perpetually malicious report
From one police officer
Who did not like him.

I reported what happened in prison
To the Government.
As a result of it
The Minister of Internal Affairs
Visited and talked to the detainees
And shortly afterwards
Many of the detainees were released.
Abu Mayanja, Mpungu
And Dan Nabudere
Were amongst those released.
Before his release, Mayanja
Had received an offer
From Uganda President
To be appointed Legal Secretary
To the East African Community.

Let us turn to
The accusation of communism.
When I was given
The American visas in Kampala,
One senior officer
Talked to me casually,
“We have a dossier on you.
You always seemed to have had
A leftist leanings.
But your associates
Have always been rightists.
“Why?” he asked and I answered
“I don’t know”.
Then I thought aloud
“Have they always been rightists?”

“Oh, yes,” he said,
“Let us begin
With the University of Khartoum.
There were, so to speak,
Two parties in the University.
The Communists and the Muslim Brotherhood.
You are not a muslim
But yet you were very close
To the Muslim Brotherhood.
“Why were you so close to them?”

“I liked them. They were decent people.
Up to now
I think of some of them
Like Mohamed Ibrahim Elshoush
As brothers, real brothers.”

“And the Communists” he asked
“What did you think about them?”
“I didn’t like them much.
They talked like parrots.
Their conversation consisted
Of recitation of Marx
And of Lenin.
I didn’t think
They understood it much.
Besides, I hate propaganda.
When conversations consists
Of proletariats, bourgeoisie,
Running dogs, peace loving people
And so on, I get bored.”

“You were in Presidency College.
Calcutta University,
Especially the Presidency College
Was a hotch potch breeding place
Of communism.
Yet, you were in no way associated
With any known communists.
Why” he asked pensively.

“Same reason” I replied
“Why I did not associate
With them in Khartoum.”

I was impressed
By the thoroughness
Of his organization.
He knew even the street
On which I lived in India.

Accustomed to viewing
Socialism solely
From the point of view
Of the government,
From the point of view
Of the people
Committed to bring about
Its realization,
I was a little bit shocked
After the coup d'etat
To hear the other side of it.

According to some of those people,
Socialism was the cause
Of hell in Africa.
Before the advent of socialists
Every thing had flourished.
Insurance companies
Netted several millions
And compensated only clients
With bona fide claims;
And manufacturing industries
Example: for sugar,
Cloth, beer and saucepans
Worked and produced enough goods
For the inhabitants.

Then came the socialist
Innovators and experimenters
Who were too much taken up
To have regard to the realities
Of their countries.
They were full of volatile spirits
Acquired from the study
Of Marxism-Leninism
And preached the doctrine
Of replacing status quo
With speculative schemes
And of organizing
Society solely
On the basis
Of Marxism-Leninism.

In accordance with the proviso
Of the new doctrine
For organizing society,
The ownership and management
Of some productive bodies
And distributive bodies
Were taken over
From the hands of individuals
And vested into the hands
Of the general public.

It was claimed that the transfer
Of ownership from one to all
Would bring about favourable
Psychological and material changes
For the benefits of all.

As long, however,
As the theory remained a theory,
It was sweet.
It was vote catching.
The problem began
With its implementation:
The expected goods derivable
From the schemes were never realized.
On the contrary,
The schemes seemed to be bringing
The countries on the verge of ruins!!

What about the innovators
And experimenters?
Driven by their great hope
And the grumblings of the masses
They prosecute the scheme
With still greater determination.
And the consequences?
The state insurance corporation
Nets only a few million shillings profits
And pays money for compensation
Not to bona fide claimants
But to those whose claims have been
Engineered from the management.

The standard
Of services in the hotels
Have fallen to zero
And you have to beg the waiter
In order to receive
Whatever poor service he can give.
The butcheries are generally
Without any meat in them
And the manufacturing industries
Grind themselves to a halt
On some petty excuses.

The failure is blamed
On the conservatives,
The capitalists,
The enemies of the people.

The only persons not blamed
Are the innovators
And the experimenters
Who are thus free to start
More fresh experiments
In other flourishing
Aspects of the economy
With further promises
Of tremendous successes
And with an equally assured
Signal disappointment
At the end of it all.
These are possibly
Over exaggerations.

Nevertheless
The peculation and venality
By which certain persons entrusted
To run some public bodies
Extorted from those bodies
Monies to enrich themselves
Was quite insupportable
And have excited in the public mind
A feeling

That is gradually
Vetting itself
Namely, that the nation
Would have been well off
If those public bodies
Were left as private enterprises.

Now and then punishment
Overtakes
Some of the more greedy
And audacious managers.
Now and then public opinion
Explodes against one or two
Such General managers
And they are dismissed from their posts.

But these offending managers
Are not without excuses.
Within the last ten years
The cost of living has increased
By over a hundred per cent.
Due to Amin's fiscal policies
Of printing lots of paper money,
Inflation has wallowed great.
It may well be doubted
Whether any evils
Which have been suffered
By the people of Uganda
Apart from the presidency of Amin
Have caused as much miseries
In any single year, as inflation.

The miseries caused by inflation
Has been felt every single day
By almost every class.
No class escapes being pillaged
By black marketeers
Whose demands for more
And more profits
Grow more and more rapidly.

Yet, in spite of the inflation
Salaries have remained fairly stagnant.
It is hardly possible
For any officer
To live on his salary.
It was not thus all that strange
That men who have access
To the public wealth
And who have no means,
For the purchase of mere necessities
Should be driven by want
To plunder the public.

The watch dogs,
The Anti-Corruption Squads
Were established
To track down these corrupt officials.
But the whole administrations
Were in such a state
That it was hardly possible
To track down one offender
Without unearthing two others.
No wonder that the watch dogs themselves
Ended in the same soup
As those they were to watch.

The frightful prevalence
Of corruption became the subject
Of discussion everywhere.
Now and then the authority
Is forced to act and it acts
With fury dismissing
A few persons suspected
Of having been corrupted.

The sensibility
Of the masses
Eminently patriotic
Has naturally been galled
By this state of affairs.
They ask whether there is no law,

And no justice to redress
These foul wrongs to the nation.
If these organizations
Cannot be managed by the Government
Without some corruption,
Why not let them be managed
By private individuals?

Surely where there is irresponsibility
In the parastatal bodies
There should be double responsibility
In the elected Government.

In the late sixties,
There were earnest supplications
From the business circles
Entreating the Government
To drop its socialist policies.
Many of my friends
Especially Professor Mazrui
Demonstrated to me
In the plainest manner
The impossibility
Of establishing
A socialist ascendancy
In a country which has hardly
Progressed
Beyond peasant economy.

The Western papers pointed out
That the socialist policies
Were received, with exultation
By workers
Who had hardly any notion
As to what they were about
Or as to their effects
On the national economy.

The papers further pointed out
That the policies were received
With deep afflictions

**By those who had invested
Anywhere in Uganda.**

**The Financial Times pointed out
That Obote must not be allowed
To get away with nationalization
Of foreign enterprises.
Scapegoats were looked for
And Obote was advised
To change his counsel and counsellors.**

**E'en within the government circle,
Onama and other ministers
Began to murmur audibly
That Obote would do well
If he could bring himself
To make large concessions
On his socialist policy.**

**It is certainly true
That nothing had inflamed
The Western powers
And the capitalists within Uganda
Against the U.P.C. Government
Of Dr Obote in the sixties
As the nationalization
Coupled with the expulsion of Israelis
From the Uganda Army
That furnished Western powers
With a plausible pretext
To cause Major General Amin
To break the oath of allegiance
To his President Obote.**

**Although the prevailing circumstances
Have dictated a change of policy
In the economic field
Yet Obote's detractors
Still bark "Wolf. Wolf"
At the scarecrow of socialism.
Concocted stories about**

The U.P.C. brand of socialism
Continues to be written.

Though some books contained some falsehood,
Yet those falsehood were not comparable
To those that some papers
In Binaisa days contained.
They contained the most awful record
Of depravity
That is difficult to find
Anywhere in this wide world.

The hatred of those who read them
Automatically turned away
From their victims
To their authors.

How can any paper,
However base it is,
And so it was asked,
Impute villainy without
Any iota of facts
To substantiate it?

How could any person
Who was so blinded
By prejudices and bigotry
Call himself a journalist?
How can a cabal of journalists
So deeply imbued
With the poison of lies
That they persecute
Out of the figments of their minds
Pretend and claim to convert people
For the party they support?

It was quite certain
That even if there was
A tiny element of truth
In their paper
That element

**Would be buried in a sea of falsehood
That no human skill could separate it.**

**The resolute and adventurous men
Who were meddling in politics then
Were playing for so deep a stake
That they became reckless to achieve it.
They did not hesitate
To run down their rivals
And their opponents
In order to succeed by hook or crook.
In their factious hearts,
All regard for truth was buried.**

**But, men who are eagerly
Pressing forward in pursuit of truth
Are grateful
For what Obote's government did
And what the General Service did.
Let us recall some instances
Of the General Service work.**

**Shaban Nkutu was ever
Full of baseless stories
About Nadiope's plots.
Mpambara and Museveni
Insisted on sheer imaginations
That Minister Basil Bataringaya
Was the most deadly member
Of the Democratic party
In the U.P.C. clothing.
Had the General Service
Not been based on the principle
Of securing the innocent,
All such malicious reports
Would have been heaped on the table
Of the Special Branch of police
For further investigations.
But they were all turned down.**

I accompanied on two occasions
The wife of Dr Sembeguya
Together with her sister
To see President Obote
And I joined them in pleading
For the release of Dr Sembeguya.

I did the same
With the American wife
Of Neogy, Editor of Transition.
Although Transition was financed
With C.I.A. money,
Yet it was doing a good service
And I pleaded with all concerned
That it should continue
To be printed from Kampala.

Part of the reason
For the smear campaign
Against the U.P.C. personalities
Was to divide that party.
It was a most frantic
And vulgar political tactics.
It did not succeed.

But the tactics was not
As hopeless as it now appears.
If it had succeeded
To keep the U.P.C. leader
Out of the country as was its goal,
There might have been no remedy,
But another crisis
Not unlike that of sixty-six.
All the same it contributed
In bringing about a crisis
That toppled Binaisa
From the Presidency of Uganda.
As it later transpired,
Some of the articles
Were actually written
From the State House itself
Under Binaisa's supervision.

I am a rigorous judge of myself.
I can say without boasting
That I am a man of qualities
And that I have rendered
Some great service to my motherland.
But this is not to say
That I have no shortcomings.

In making a judgement
On a public servant,
His successes and his failures
Ought to be set side by side
And fairly weighed.

Many who dealt with me closely
Either as my bosses
Or as my juniors
Have done this and their verdict
Has been one of approbation.

The severity
And malevolence
To which Amin's Commission
On General Service Department
Subjected my public life,
A scrutiny hitherto unsurpassed
In the history of Africa,
And yet nothing blameworthy
Did come out of it
Anticipates the verdict of history.

Throughout my life I have believed
That a man of ability
Could not fail in any undertaking
To which he brings
The whole power of his mind.
That is why I could study
Economics in Calcutta University,
Law at the London Inns of Court,
And Anthropology
In Washington University.

That is why I could succeed in my work
As a Permanent Secretary
And yet become such a successful
Private practising advocate
That I became the envy of many.
Even some in authority
Talked of people without anything
Starting a legal practice
And becoming rich overnight.

To revert to the subject,
The duty
Of the Chief General Service Officer
Required it to be headed
By a man with a quick eye
For the redeeming parts
Of a character,
A man able to see
Every extenuating circumstances
That could be urged in favour
Of a person against whom
A complaint had been made,
A man averse to the invasion
Of individual liberty.

Ours was a service of honour;
The kind of work which in spite
Of misrepresentations
Against its holder
Was yet tailored to bring about
A great and imperishable name.

We had seen so many nations
Enslaved through the machinations
Of its security service
That we decided
That we operate
Not a secret service
But an open service,
Not as an organization
With power to deprive any

Of his liberty
But to protect the liberty
Of he who was under suspicion.

What we planned, we effected.
The General Service Department
Had no power of arrest.
It had even no power
For interrogation.
I never acted in the dark.
My speeches speak for themselves.

The speeches were commentaries
On what were then happening
And suggestions
As to what should happen
If the interest of all
Was to be catered for.

Although I pleaded publicly
For the interest of all
I kept myself completely
In the background.
I did not, as most people do,
Try to project myself
Through my various speeches.
I was content to be
A mere commentator.
Though the foreground was left
To the policies I advocated,
Yet I had to use
My personal experiences
To illustrate them.

As a practising lawyer
In Northern Region
I very much enjoyed
The professional etiquette
Of having to listen
To all that could be said
About my submission

By the Counsel for the other party
And by the judge himself.

My mind began to adopt
The attitude that an opinion
Not yet subjected to open criticism
Of persons holding differing opinions,
Opinion not collated
With those of other persons
Must not be assumed,
At least for the purpose of action,
To be a true opinion.

I therefore started
The Gulu Discussion Group
To enable me and other residents
Of Gulu town
To hear
What can be said about subjects
Of national concern
By persons of every
Variety of opinion.
Dr Okot P'Bitek
Was an active member
And Professor Taban Loliyong
Then a rather young man
Was a keen participant in discussion.

When I joined the Government
In Nineteen Sixty-four
I was already firmly convinced
That the opinions
On which any action
Of a public nature
Is to be based
Must be tested
By a standing invitation
To the whole world
To prove them fallacious.

It is only
After the public attack,
After hearing
What can be said
On the other side,
After there had been
A complete liberty
Of contradicting,
After listening
And after taking note
Of what had been said
To the contrary
That there is justification
In assuming the truth
Of the opinions.

In Nineteen Sixty-six,
Uganda had a crisis.
There was an atmosphere
Of uncertainty in Kampala
Which threatened to interfere
With freedom of discussion.

I was keen to ensure
That the valuable freedom
Was maintained inviolate.

So was the Government.
I therefore started the famous
Topic for Discussion
For the purpose of stirring up
The minds of the people
To discuss openly
Important controversial subjects
Concerning the crisis
And other national matters.

The discussions kindled
Much enthusiasm
And not only preserved
Freedom of discussion
During the crisis

But raised even persons
Of the most average intellect
To the height of thinking
Seriously about the crisis.

The discussion took place
On Uganda Television
At 8.15 p.m.
To 9.00 p.m. every Thursday.

Apart from me who was the Chairman,
There were four panelists.
Invariably two of the panelists
Would be staunch leftists
More concerned with changing
The existing institutions
For the general good
And the other two were rightists
More concerned
With preserving the good
In existing institutions.

The favourites panelists
Were outspoken rightists
Such as Professor Mazrui,
Advocate John Kazzora
And Minister Felix Onama.
Amongst the leftists panelists
Were Professor Yash Tandon,
Lawyer Ali Picho,
And the Director of Television
Mr Aggrey Awori.
Panelists included
People from all walks of life:
Hoteliers, clergies, farmers,
Lecturers, doctors, engineers
Lawyers, students et cetera.

I felt it natural
To impart to others
The thoughts that filled my heart,

To warn those who had too much
About the need for equity
And urge those who have not
To make use of the opportunities
Being provided by the government
To obtain what was necessary
For the realization
Of the best in them.

This impulse to devpte oneself
In the case of all
Became a strong passion
And I went about pleading
For the good of all persons
As if pleading for my life.

The content of my rude submissions;
For I have never really
Been a public speaker,
Seemed to produce some effect.
They aroused much interest
In the listeners
For even up to now
Many of the listeners
Still remember and talk about them.
They have been adequately quoted
In the many works
Of Professor Ali Mazrui.
Whatever their faults were
It was clear to the hearers
That they were the product
Of earnest desire
To improve the conditions
Of fellow citizens
And the product of an author
Whose blood boiled
At the sight of injustice.

Apart from references
To the various ideologies
And historical facts,

The effective weapons
With which inequitable distribution
Of wealth was assailed,
Were the ethical
And dogmatic parts
Of the Bible especially the Gospel.

While a pupil
In the Missionary Schools,
I studied the Bible
For twelve years and became as conversant
With the content of the Bible
Especially the New Testament
As with the palm of my hands.

Being seized with zeal
For the public good
I resolved to elevate
The sentiments of my countrymen
And to impart to them
The duties and rights of citizens
As I conceived them then.

The speeches belonged
To the period immediately
After the Uganda Crisis
Of Nineteen Sixty-six
And immediately before
The Uganda Coup D'etat
Of Nineteen Seventy-one.
Their strengths and their weaknesses
Belong to the period.
They are said to err in that
They advocated a form
Of socialism
Which was, in view
Of Uganda's development,
Rather on the far left.
That fault, if it be a fault,
Belongs more to the period
Than otherwise.

These inestimable memoirs
Have preserved the vivid picture
Of the type of Uganda
For which we had dedicated
Our lives to build.

I think, if I may repeat,
That it can be properly
Said of me
That I have never been guilty
Of those mean art
Which little men resort to
In order to appear great;
The art of elbowing
And of pushing others
Or of appearing close
To a leader
In public functions.

Though as a lawyer
Or as a writer
I was able to achieve some renown,
Yet I laboured unknown
To promote the causes
In which I believed.
When others clamoured
For positions on the top
Of the hierarchy,
I was content to be
Useful in any position.
And the position
I chose was to record
In dazzling and burning sentences
The critical moments
In our history
By way of speeches,
And of discussions
And by anonymous articles.

This kind of work is dangerous.
Other forms of work

May not call forth
Any opinions on subjects
Which inflame and agitate
The minds of millions.
But a contemporary commentator
On historical events
Whose writings inculcate
Strong feelings
Which are bound
To move the feeling
Of other people
On momentous questions
Must expect his award
Not to be divorced
From the prejudices
Of those who suffer
From the stings and arrows
Of his writings.

If others suffer
From the stings and arrows
Of my writing,
It is probably only fair for me
To expect to suffer
From the stings and arrows
Of their writings too.

It was therefore not unexpected
That some of the rage of persons
Opposed to the government,
Persons irritated
By the sting of their failure
In politics,
Or by the nationalization
Of their properties,
Was also directed against me
As one of the loud protagonist
Of the Government policy
Who effectively exposed
The weaknesses of their case.

**There is no question
That I was the only Government official
Who wrote books
Touching upon controversial
Political subjects
Of the post independence
And the pre Amin Coup.**

**It is not easy
To separate the literary work
Of certain authors
From their personal characters.
I seldom wrote without some reference
To my personal experience.
I wrote about the things
Which set my heart on fire.
My character is displayed
In each page that I write.
The writing thus has the unique flavour
Of the mind from which it sprung.
My work then was calculated
To perform the task
Of both Moses and Joshua:
To open the house of slavery
And to enter the promised land.**

**I ensured that the work
Was based on fact narrated
With sufficient imagination
To make the narrative picturesque
Without casting the facts
In the mould of hypothesis.**

**I preached about the vicissitudes
And about inconstancies
Of fortune in this vale of tears
And urged the rulers
To exercise moderation
So that when their fortune change,
They do not become victims
Of their own policies.**

The language was always sober,
Eloquent and weighty
And worthy of the matter.
It glossed over nothing
And exaggerated nothing.
This, however, was not
The language of the 'Economy'
And its sister paper.

During the Binaisa times,
These papers specialized
In absurd and rancorous invectives
Against so many individuals
That hardly any man of sense
Would credit any imputation
Which they might throw on any person.

In one case it alleges
That a leader was dying
Of cancer and then goes on
To attribute the cause of death
To be alcoholic poisoning
And yet on the following day
The leader alleged to be on his death bed
Would be addressing a public rally.

The Economy labelled my return
To Uganda
As bad news
Because a shop in which its boss wanted
Had been allocated to me!!

It cannot be doubted
That some papers have before
Invented and reported
Fictitious and treasonable plots
For the purpose of destroying
Their political opponents.

But such execrable libels
Became the fashion

**Of the Economy
And its sister paper Mulengera
And it continued to be
The fashion
Till the very end
Of Binaisa's rule.**

**It was said that such wickedness
Was encouraged and sometimes concocted
By certain persons close
To President Binaisa.**

**The monstrous libels were well timed.
The election
Was about to take place.
Standing for the presidency
Was Godfrey Binaisa alone.
He had made common cause
With all the other would be contestants
Save one, Milton Obote.
Hence Milton Obote
Had to be ruined by libel.**

**In the process, persons said
To be close to Obote
Were to be ruined by libel too.
Better to kill two birds
With one stone if you can.
That was how my name
Found its way into the paper.**

**According to those who knew them,
Those reporters of calumnies
Were always busting
With self importance,
Puffing with haste
Reviling all politicians
Who supported U.P.C.
And were ever chattering
About the regional cause
They were then busy expounding.**

Those who heard them
Advocating regionalism
Instead of nationalism
Stood aghast at the exhibition
Of such narrow mindedness
In this fourth quarter
Of the twentieth Century.

The conscientious men
Who read their papers
Treated their despicable writing
With the contempt it deserved.
But the authors themselves
Were rather amused
By the savage malignity
And the monkeylike mischief
Which their writings displayed.

The Economy judged characters
By names and badges
And on the basis of passion
And party spirit.

Its self appointed task
Was to whitewash
Those in one political party
And to blacken those
In another political party.

Its conclusions were not
A result of reasons
But a result of fancies.
The opinions expressed in it
Were not offsprings of induction
But of overflowing
Fervid imaginations.

In the labyrinth of its falsehoods
No part of our history
Has been more misrepresented
Than the history

**Of the U.P.C. Government
From Nineteen sixty-two
To nineteen seventy.**

**It is rather unfortunate
That knaves too, do use words.
Nay, misuse words and misconstrue them.
Socrates and Jesus Christ
Who lived blameless lives
Were charged, and convicted
And indeed executed
On the words of knaves.**

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON U.P.C.-K.Y. DIVORCE

**In one sense it may be said
That the divorce
Between U.P.C. and K.Y.
Was a natural phenomenon.
During a war
In which two or more parties
Are agreed about the purpose
And the necessity of the war,
It is the practice
For the parties so agreeing
To postpone all other differences
For the sole object of victory.**

**Since the differences
Are postponed, not solved,
They re-emerge after victory
And bring about
A dissolution of the alliance.**

**The coalition
Between U.P.C. and K.Y.
Was effected
During a war for power
In which U.P.C. and K.Y.
Were agreed about the necessity
Of keeping the D.P. out of power.**

The crossing of the Floor
By D.P. members of Parliament
Who joined the U.P.C. ensured
That D.P. in its weakened form
Would not be able
To form a government.
Victory in a war against D.P.
Having thus been attained,
The hitherto submerged differences
Between K.Y. and U.P.C.
Re-emerged and brought about
The dissolution of the alliance.

None expected the Lloyd George
Or the Churchill coalition
To survive the victory.
How could anyone
Expect the contrary
When the *raison d'être*
Of the Conservative party
Is to cater for the have
And the *raison d'être*
Of the Labour Party
Is to cater for the working-class?

In the same way
The dissolution of the alliance
Between K.Y. and U.P.C.
Was bound to take place
Since the *raison d'être*
Of Kabaka Yekka
Was to cater for hereditary monarchy
And for feudal chiefs
Whereas the *raison d'être*
Of Uganda People's Congress
Was to cater for peasants
And for the working-class.

A U.P.C. victory
Over Kabaka Yekka
Thus implied introduction

Of measures to satisfy
Economic discontent
Of the U.P.C. followers.
It implied the infliction
Of a deathblow
To the institution
Of feudalism
And the introduction
Of the republican form of government.

On the other hand,
It may truly be said
That there never was a divorce
Between U.P.C. and K.Y.

The merger had merely
Succeeded beyond the dreams
Of the parties to it.
It was meant
To bring about a coalition.
It brought about unity instead.

Throughout the British colonial rule
And throughout the D.P. fleeting rule
The Kabaka of Buganda
And the Government of Buganda
Working through the Lukiiko
Have been "the major
If not the only authoritative spokesmen
Of the Buganda's interests and position."

¹In Nineteen sixty two, however,
Buganda Government
Through the Lukiiko
Nominated twenty-one persons
To become the spokesmen
Of Buganda in Parliament.
In so doing,

¹Professor Apolo Nsibambi: Some observations on
J.M. Lee's Articles: Journal of Commonwealth
Political Studies 19, p. 65.

Whether it knew it or not,
Buganda Government
With the consent of the Lukiiko
Had abdicated its role
To make political deals
For the Kingdom of Buganda.

When the majority
Of the representatives
Of Buganda in Parliament
Opted to join the ruling party
And to become members
Of the Uganda People's Congress,
The coalition became a unity.
There was thus no divorce.
There was never any need
To sever an alliance
Which was no longer there.

All that was necessary
Was a declaration
By the U.P.C. stating
That the conversions
Of the former K.Y. members of Parliament
To the Uganda People's Congress
Had changed the nature
Of the alliance
Between U.P.C. and K.Y.
In the National Assembly
From coalition to a union.
If the blame for this change
Is to be heaped on some scapegoat,
Then let Buganda Government
Bear it for its failure,
"To maintain a firm grip
On Kabaka Yekka
And the consequent defection
Of many of its members
To the governing party, U.P.C."

¹Professor Apolo Nsibambi: some observations on J.M. Lee's
Article: *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies* 19—p.65.

According to Professor
Apolo Nsibambi,
Kabaka Yekka had
Already outlived its purpose
And ought to have disbanded
And joined either the governing party
Or the opposition party.

Apart from the Buganda Government,
Another spokesman of Buganda
Through the Great Lukiiko
Was the Kabaka.
Shielded "by the influence
Of the Lukiiko"
And "armed with aura
Of royal mystique"
He was politically invulnerable.¹

Tempted however
By the exalted office
Of president of Uganda
And the privileges, prestige
And pomp which go with it,
He leapt to the post of president
And thus lost
His greatest political asset
Of invulnerability.

Said President Obote,
"The moment the Kabaka
Held the Bible and took the Oath
To be the president of Uganda,
I knew he was in.
But, he never realized it."²

The Kabaka realized it later.
He was subsequently
To find out that the plea

¹ Professor Gingyera Pinyehwa: *East Africa Journal*, November 1967, p. 14.

² *Uganda Argus*, March 6, 1967, p. 2.

**Of the throne and of Lukiiko
Which he had successfully advanced
In the past to justify
His defiance of the Central Government
Were inapplicable in sixty-six.**

THE FALL OF OBOTE

1. **The normal expectation**
Is that one reaps what one sows:
That as sun gives birth to day,
Goodness will produce goodness;
Justice will produce Justice;
Or as the Bible puts it,
“No good tree does bear bad fruit,
Nor a bad tree bear good fruit.
Figs from thorns are not gathered,
Nor grapes from the bramble bush.”¹
2. **But to this rule of nature**
There are many exceptions
Restricted to relations
Of man and his fellow men.
Greed has become cancerous
To the relation of men
Causing breach of all known laws;
Obeying only itself.
3. **Greed rewards virtue with vice**
And justice with injustice.
Nothing can be put past it.
It never distinguishes
Between virtues and vices,
Or between goodness and sin.
It respects only one thing
Which is its only sole guide,

¹Luke: Chap. 6 verses 43-44.

Its only law of all laws,
Namely, its own self-interest.

4. Let the truth therefore be told
That some people rise by sin
While some by virtue do fall;
That virtue in some cases
Is rewarded by evil
And evil in some cases
Is rewarded by success
In this mortal world of ours.

5. Many a leader such as
Osagyefo Nkrumah,
Dr. Milton Obote
And even the Son of God—
Jesus Christ our Lord Himself—
Fell because of their goodness.

6. “Undone by goodness! Strange unusual
blood,
When Man’s worst sin is he does
too much good!
Who then dares to be half so kind again?
For bounty. that makes gods,
does still mar men.”

7. It is difficult to foretell
The fortune of any man
However good he might be
Since it depends not wholly
On himself but does depend
On his stars as much as on him.
Fortune is like a painting
Of the wise man who cannot
See or speak or hear evil
Because he is a blind, deaf - mute.
It is blind and thus sees not
That it sometimes bull-dozes

¹Shakespeare: *Timon of Athens*: Act 4 Scene 1.

An innocent, virtuous man;
It is deaf and thus hears not
The repute of its victims;
It is dumb and admits not
That it sometimes grossly errs.

8. Fortune is a paradox:
Both a clawless leopardess
And a fangless lioness
Meet more preys than those with claws.
To every one who has
Much more is ever given
But from the one who has not,
Even the little he has
Is taken away from him.¹
A poor man has sound stomach,
With no food to go in it;
A rich man with lots of food
Has a chronic stomachache!
9. That, in brief, is the story
Of the fall of Obote,
Of that Cradle of the Nile,
Of that Pearl of Africa,
Of that Land of the Martyrs
Of that lovely Uganda
Which has been called Fairyland²
Because of her wonderous beauty.

¹ Luke: Chapter 18 verse 26.

² Winston Churchill: *African Journeys*.

THE RISE OF AMIN

Amin was like a tiger
Born and brought up in a zoo
And accustomed to-submit
To the keeper who gives it food.
Set free such an animal
In a game reserve
With a boundless prospect
Of killing almost just any animal
Which crosses its path
Then you will see it kill
For the sake of vindictiveness,
For the sake of showing its might
And for the sake of killing.

Amin was just like that.
He had been tamed
And, so to speak,
Caged by the British Colonial Government
And by Obote's government.
Generally speaking,
He obediently submitted
To both those governments.
Here and there he committed
Various acts of disobedience
But they were done so stealthily
That at the times
That the act were committed
There were mere suspicions
But hardly any evidence

Associating him with them.
Even those suspicions
Tended to melt away
When put side by side
With Amin's known characteristic traits
Of meekness and obedience.
It was not till after the coup
Which set him free
That the world began to learn
That he was at heart
The most despotic,
The most vindictive,
The most murderous
And the most haughtiest of men.

It was not till then
That the world learnt
That he had always been
A mask within several masks.
Amin the mask, you would see
In one form or another
But Amin the man
You would hardly see.

While the masses were still in the dark
About General Iddi Amin,
The highest place
Like the tops of the mountains,
Were the first to catch and reflect
The dawn about General Amin.

But soon the light which had hitherto
Ended on the mountain tops
Began to descend
And to illuminate
The deep valleys of the masses.

The knowledge hitherto confined
To a small minority
Was opened to a big majority.
As facts against him accumulated,

Doubts about his leadership arose.
It was soon said that he was
A man of no honour.
That his intellect was deluded
By the gibberish
Of his fortune tellers.
That he was employing perjuries,
Witchcraft, corruption, doublings,
Forgery, evasions and fictions
To compass his evil ends;
That he would give his promise
Without any hesitation
And break it without blushing;
That he would welcome you
With a sparkling smile
And he would order your murder
With a fit of laughter.
That he has always pleaded
What suited his immediate purpose
Without caring in the least
About whether it's true or not.
That what a sting is to a wasp,
What a paw is to a lioness,
What a quill is to a porcupine,
What a claw is to an eagle,
Cruelty was to Iddi Amin.
That he mistook cruelty
To be a form of virtue
That he nursed cruelty
And he sometimes paraded it
With pharisaical ostentation.

His reason, never too powerful,
Became a slave of his feelings
And when his imagination was excited
It hurried him to cruelties.
In anger
He saw no redeeming merit,
Made no allowances
For honest difference of opinion
And would hear no mitigations.

An observer much less discerning
Would easily perceive that Amin
Represented the past
With its obsolete ways of thinking.

In terms of savagery,
Lies, cowardice, meanness,
Sensuality, poltroonery
No parallel to Amin can be found.
His consummate depravity
Which is the proper object
Of universal disgust
Vies only
With that of fictitious characters
Such as that of Mr Hyde.

Compared with him Papa Doc
Is a gentleman
And Bokassa's atrocities
Were provoked by some trifling cause.

Papa Doc and Bokassa
Were undoubtedly bad men.
But they were not completely void
Of a streak
Of the milk of human kindness.
But Amin, had not even
A mere semblance of virtue.
All his blood was as gall.
His hobby was the infliction
Of miseries on his subjects.
He was as dangerous
As a dog madden by rabies.
But, it is not true at all
That before he became president
He was originally
Of barbarian disposition.
He appeared then to have been
Constitutionally prone to sensual
pleasures,
And went all the way out to show

Compassion and even friendship
To persons of all walks of life.

His sudden elevation
To be Uganda head of state
Seemed to have been destructive
To his moral qualities.

His moral rectitude
Appeared like the ivy creeper
Which was leaning on an oak
The oak being President Obote
And that prop was suddenly removed
Causing it to fall to the ground
In total helplessness.

At first, Amin fell under
The influence of Israeli
As well as of the British.
He dined and wined with the Queen
As well as the Prime Minister
Of the Republic of Israel.
During the honeymoon
With these foreign influences,
He spoke the language of moderation
And the language of humanity.

After the honeymoon
Which ended in a divorce,
Amin found himself surrounded
By the Anya Nya and Nubians
From the Republic of Sudan
And by Gadaafi agents
Who talked the language of fire
And the language of split blood.
And so Amin tasted blood.
He did not dislike the taste.
From thence henceforth
He surrounded himself
With those who exulted in the work
Of darkness and of death.

Death became a pleasure,
A passion and a madness.

The world was appalled
By his senseless murders
But the murderer had passed
The stage of giving a hoot
To the opinion of the world
He was already
Irrevocably depraved.

But his irrevocable depravity
Did not completely extinguish
The memory of his past show
Of a touching gentleness.
There thus remains two sides to Amin.
Or rather, Amin became two persons.

When he was a soldier,
The Jekyll aspect of him
Was much more predominant.
The Hyde aspect of him
Was completely submerged
And appeared as if by stealth.
When he became a president,
The position was reversed.
Lady Listowel describes
Amin the soldier well:
"He was very quiet,
Well mannered and loyal".¹

He was
And possibly still is,
An enigma.
He exuded a grotesque assemblage
Of contradictory qualities
Of Jekyll and of Hyde.
He seemed
To have two dissimilar characters.

¹ *Amin* by Listowel, p. 22-24.

He was ever cruel
Yet at times exuded benevolence:
Ever extreme
Yet at times exuded moderation:
Ever crafty
Yet at times exuded simplicity.

He was a villain
Who at times played the role
Of a hero.
In one minute he is raging
And screaming with anger
But in another minute
His speech has become courteous,
His face unruffled
And his manner polite.

The horrors of President Amin,
Were soon let loose on the people.
A quarter of a million Ugandans
Were mercilessly massacred.
Myriads of the most peaceful
And industrious Ugandans
Fled the country
Preferring famine, and fever
To certain torture and death.

The foreign powers which had
Assisted Iddi Amin
Just folded their hands and watched
The consequences of their plot.
They watched the forced exodus
Of citizens of Asian origin
And watched some Asian wives
Violated and then robbed.
They watched agriculture,
The main-stay of Uganda economy
Decline and commerce languish.
They watched sycophants
Whom they had recently mistaken

To be strong members of Congress
Change side and pander for Amin,
Forge for him, and tell lies for him.
They watched place hunters
And watched place holders
Bring forth false accusations
Against the fallen government
To better their dim prospects
With the new Government.

Professor Ali Mazrui
Very correctly pointed out
That Amin brought
To refined diplomatic banquet
Of the middle and upper classes
Of the twentieth Century
The rustic embarrassment
Of inadequate inhibition!¹

Amin visited West Germany
Without being invited
And with the "Casualness
Of one peasant knocking on the door
Of his rural friend."

He exposed himself to the ridicule
Of international photographers
By wearing nothing
But a swimming costume
While giving interview
To world press on state matters.
He sent telegrams
After telegrams
Filled with rustic coarse humour
To different dignitaries.

His peculiar style of rhetoric,
Though deformed,
Was not altogether

¹ *Soldiers and Kinsmen*, p. 46-47.

**Without peculiar liveliness.
It went down very well
In a meeting of his supporters
Especially after liquor.**

**But it had one defect
It was not fit
For a head of state.
It was neither guarded
Nor calm nor courteous
Nor was it calculated
To inspire confidence.
It was more
Like the rants of a madman
And the scurrility of a shrew.**

**Amin was a great liar.
He was never e'en ashamed
Of telling lies about an event
Witnessed by several persons.
Nor did he even hesitate
To give a version of an event
Which completely contradict
The one he had already given.
Naturally none expected him
To give any truer account
Of what he did in the dark.**

**That a deluge has passed o'er Uganda
During the Amin's rule
Is beyond any question.
The bodies of men were imprisoned,
Their souls driven away by bullets,
Their minds were fettered,
Their houses ransacked,
Their property plundered,
Their factories and businesses
Were taken away from them,
Their estates were laid to waste,
Their sorrows were laughed at,
Their land and houses were overrun**

**Their constitution changed by decrees,
Their persons forced to bow down
Before the Yahoo ruler,
The powers of their courts usurped
By military tribunals
Presided over by foul dregs
Who have risen to the top
By the power
Not of intellect
But the power of the gun.**

**The deluge of savagery came.
It obliterated all landmarks
And swept away patriotism.
A new culture characterized
By the need to get rich quickly
Sprung up and flourished.**

**Dissimulation and falsehood
Became tools
For getting rich quickly
Many involved schemes
For getting rich quickly.
Were hatched in many homes.**

**Were these not foreseen?
Could Obote not have saved
Uganda from Amin's rule?**

**In developing countries
It is in the nature
Of the army
To grab power now and then.
Was it not thus probable
That a faction
Of the Uganda Army
Would become
What so many armies
In developing countries
Had become,
An instrument of a coup?**

Was it not thus probable
That our armies would follow
The footsteps of the armies
In the Congo, Burundi,
The Sudan, Egypt, Ghana,
Central African Republic,
Pakistan, Indonesia
Nigeria and Somali
And South American countries?

To impeach Obote,
For Iddi Amin's coup
Is therefore to impeach
Lumumba, and Bhutto,
Nkrumah, Balewa,
And Sukarno for the coups
Which took place in their countries.

Whenever a coup occurs
One inevitable
Historical question
Is always posed:
"Were there no ominous omens
Indicating the imminent fall?"
The historical answer:
"There indeed were"
Is equally inevitable.
For history begins to be reread
With one objective in mind
To reinterpret the events
Which at the time that they took place
Might have been quite innocuous
But which after the coup
Portend of tragedies.

Take the case of Julius Caesar.
Well, there was
The soothsayer's warning.
There was Cleopatra's dream.
Then there was the ram's heart.
The signs were indeed there.

Who then is to blame
For ignoring the signs?
If you believe
In predestination
Then you blame fate of course.
But, if you do not,
Then you blame the leader.
In the case of Obote,
Ominous signs were also found
To have been in abundance.

It was found that Iddi Amin
Had begun, before the coup,
To disassociate himself
From Uganda Muslim association
Which sided with the U.P.C.
Instead Amin had begun
To identify himself
With the Uganda Muslim Commur
Of Prince Badru Kakungulu,
Which supported K.Y.

Nor was that all.
Amin had been reported
To have addressed a congregation
Of Uganda Muslim Community
In a language highly political
And rather incongruous
In a place like the Mosque.
He stated amongst other things,
"I fear no one but God."
Then question asked was thus:
"To whom was he referring?"

Furthermore a conversation
Between Amin
And an Anyanya guerilla
To the following effect
Had also been reported:
"We are ready to move now"
Said an unknown Anyanya.

**“I gave the President my word,
We will not start anything.
Let them start.”
Replied Amin.**

**In the morning of 25th January,
Nineteen Hundred Seventy-one
At Entebbe Airport
Some 22 miles
Away from Kampala,
A solemn Father Gerard Gurts
Of the Canadian Order
Of the White Fathers of Africa
Was bidding adieu
To three colleagues
Who were his brothers in Christ,
When the rattlings of machine guns
Announcing the eruption of a coup
Broke the calm of the morning
And bullets killed two of his colleagues.
The bodies of the white priests
Were thrown to the crocodiles
From the banks of Lake Victoria
At the order of a warrant officer.¹
That was a sign of things to come.**

**The conspiracy
That had resulted in a coup
Had been detected
Immediately that it took place.
Indeed, it is doubtful
Whether any plot that involved
More than three persons
Could have taken place at all
Without the knowledge
Of General Service Department.
The credit does not belong
To the General Service Department
Rather it is a national discredit.**

¹ *Lust to Kill*, A Gorgi Book, p. 8.

We seldom keep secret.
Our secret is like children's secrets.
It is what you tell others
With the rider that they should not
Tell it to any body else!!

In the case of a plot
Against the government,
An element of self-love comes in.
Plots seldom succeed as planned.
Why not thus escape
The consequences of discovery
And possibly benefit a little
In the process by tipping
The omniscient government?

It was thus
That one of the five people
Intimately, engaged
In planning the coup
Kept the General Service informed
About the details of the plot
To kill President Obote
On his arriving
At the Entebbe Airport
From attending
The Commonwealth Conference
Which took place in Singapore.

The General Service informed
Both, Vice President John Babiha
And the Minister of Internal Affairs,
Mr Basil Bataringaya.
Having thus been forewarned
It would have been expected
That the nation
Ought to have been forearmed.

The evil that was to bring
Our country Uganda to ruin
Ought to have been averted

By a timely precaution.
But this was not to be.
The Government did very little
To avert the dangers
And that little was done
Neither at the right time
Nor in the right way.
Permanent Secretary
Of the Ministry of Internal Affairs
Mr Chris Ntende
Was dispatched
To take the details
Of the coup plot to Obote
Who was then in Singapore
And to ask for directions!!

The coup was imminent
And Obote was far away.
The Lango have a saying
That *Lut i kana bor pe neko twol*
(A faraway stick
Does not kill a snake)

While Ntende was on his way
To see Dr Obote,
Top army officers
(Excluding Amin and his gang)
And top police officers
Met under the Chairmanship
Of Basil Bataringaya
To consider other measures
To defeat the coup plot
While the Singapore directives
Were yet being awaited.

The police sent panic notices
Alerting all police stations
Of a likely coup attempt!
Amin learnt about the notices
From a policeman named Dusman
And decided to advance the date
Of staging the bloody coup.

It was no longer necessary
To await till Obote arrived
But to act on the night
Of twenty fourth January,
Nineteen Hundred Seventy-one.

Meanwhile the meeting
Of security officer
Continued during the night
Of that twenty fourth January.
It received a telephone call
From Obote in Singapore
Asking to know
The security measures
Which had already been taken.

None had been taken so far
Apart from alerting loyal army officers
“Oh dear!! Oh dear” commented Dr Obote,
“You are too late.
You are too late.”
The prophesy was soon fulfilled.
In less than two hours time
Amin’s gang began to surround
The Parliamentary Buildings
Where the meeting was taking place
And destroyed the cars of those meeting
Which were parked in the parking place
In front of the Building.

The people meeting telephoned Jinja
And also telephoned Mbarara
And asked for troops to be sent urgently.
Jinja sent a few troops:
Ill-equipped and ill-commanded.
They failed to make contact
With the senior officers
Who were attending the meeting.

Masaka sent troops too
But they returned to Masaka

**When the Amin's troops at the road-block
Said that the trouble in Kampala
Had already been settled.**

**Such were the natural fruits
Which had to be reaped
When persons placed
In high political positions
Necessitating the taking of decisions
For bad or for worse
Are unable to do so.**

**The Vice President had been placed
In a position to take decisions
Which he could not take.
He was by his very nature
A trimmer.
The following morning
It was clear
That Uganda was all but lost.
The loss was not to be blamed
On Obote's administration
As Amin's coup declaration blamed it.
Obote's administration
Was by any standard
One of the most successful
In the continent of Africa.**

**It was not even to be blamed
On officers carrying out
Presidential functions
During Obote's absence.
The truth is that the coup
Presented difficulties
Which his lieutenants
With all their ingenuity
Were ill-qualified to cope with.**

**What was wanted
Was not what John Babiiha
Or Basil Bataringaya**

Had in quite large measures:
Amplitude of comprehension,
Largeness of mind,
Kindness of heart,
But what they had not, namely:
Prompt decision
And stubborn resolution.

The coup Declaration,
A masterpiece
Of Amin's brother-in-law
Mr Wanume Kibedi
Assisted by Onama,
Was not a manifesto
Based on truth
Such as ought to be put forth
By a leader
Justifying his action
In turning the guns
Meant to protect the Public
Against the Government.
It consists mainly of lies
Of which the whole disgrace
Fall on those who made them.

The disgraceful manifesto
Was framed for the purpose
Of covering up the true reasons
For the coup d'etat
Namely to save Iddi Amin
From the consequences
Of his theft of public money
And involvement in the murder
Of Brigadier Okoya
Which offences were still
Under police investigations.
Indeed during their investigations
There had been some warning
That the storm might burst.
How very true are the dying words
Of Madam Roland.
"O Liberty!

How many crimes
Are committed in thy name!!¹

Dennis Hills,
The author of the *White Pumpkin*
Was in Kampala
At the time of the coup.
He states:
Though the military coup
Was officially described
As a bloodless coup
It was extremely bloody.

He had seen deaths in the battle field:
“In these deaths of fighting men
There was logic and a sort of honour;
And there were organizations
That took care of their remains
And of their memory.”

“But the victims
Of the Amin’s bloodless revolution
Were rubbish, embarrassing offal,
Men to whom the placation
Of their ancestral spirits was denied.
There they lay,
A small sample of them,
The sun-roasted water-soaked corpses
Of twenty-six well-built men
Heaped in grotesque pictures
On the lake’s edge near Entebbe;
Three piles of them
Tipped out of army trucks,
Kneeling, praying, prostrate:
Lumps of abandoned flesh
Turning piebald and ivory,
The eyes blue,
Intestines bursting like sausages
Through bullet holes.”²

¹ Macaulay: *Lays of Rome*, p. 81. .

² *The Pumpkin*, pp. 118-119.

He found it ominous
That the British Information officer,
When he casually asked Dennis Hills
How the students taught by Hills
Had reacted to the take-over,
Should have shown surprise and unbelief
When Hills said, "Many students
Are confused and scared,
For you must know that among them
Obote's policies
Had a large following.
The Baganda are cheering, of course.
But others
Have gone into a corner
And are keeping quiet."

Whereas the ascent
Of a leader to the presidency
Of any nation
Is associated with public veneration,
Political popularity,
And/or with genius and virtue,
The fall from the presidency
Is not associated
With anything most endearing
In social or domestic life.
It is, on the contrary
Associated with whatever is darkest
In human destiny and life.

It is associated
With inconstancy of the masses,
The ingratitude of friends,
And the blighted fame of the fallen
Caused mainly by mud slinging.

It was therefore not surprising
That immediately after the coup,
Certain people
Whose sublime phrases had resounded
For nearly ten years

In praise of the U.P.C.,
People who had
Gradiloquently boasted
Of their unchangeable loyalty
To the U.P.C. Party,
People who had looked upon Amin
With contemptuous pity
As a dull person
Only fit to discuss military matters
And scarcely qualified to discuss
Any large question of politics;
People who had reserved
Their sharpest taunts
For political opponents
Of Uganda People's Congress
Found that their loyalty had changed
With the change of fortune.

Although Amin sometimes did so,
Yet none of them wanted
To be reminded
That their conduct
Had become inconsistent
With their former professions.
They were in a quandary.
They daren't make
An open recantation
That in supporting the U.P.C.
They had been in the wrong.
Nor dare they admit
That their old opinion was sound
But that they daren't manfully
Cast in their lot with the fallen.

So, they sought to get away with it
By blaming a third party.
They started finding faults
Where U.P.C. was alleged
To have gone wrong
And they disassociated themselves
From those faults only.

They were neither prepared to earn
The respect due to a person
Who frankly confesses an error
Nor the respect due to a person
Who courageously suffers for an error.
They earned instead, the disrespect
Due to a person who affirms
That he still adheres
To his former principles
While earning his salary
From a government
Which manifests only hatred
Of those principles.
Principle was thus sacrificed
To material interests.

The dictates of conscience
Couldn't overpower
The dictates of fear
Of having to go forth into the world,
Like the birds of the air,
Without knowing where to find
A roof or a meal,
At least, for the young ones.
I was thus forced
To write to my former socialist friend
Professor Yash Tandon
A letter that reads as follows:

“There were two things about dogs
Which I very much disliked.
One of these was their chorus
Of barking or of howling.

“A dog at Katama's house
Would bark because someone
Has beaten it or had come
To Katama's house.

“Then for no apparent cause
It would be joined in barking

By all dogs in Kololo.
Dogs from all the various homes
Of Obote, Mugerwa
Nsibirwa and Goudie
Would all join the big chorus
Of barking or of howling
Ignorant and unmindful
Of what it was all about!!

“That was how those dogs behaved.
But then, they were only dogs,
Irrational, four-legged,
Carnivorous animals.
That was my consolation.
Until after Amin’s coup.

“I have begun revising,
Without any bitterness,
My opinion on that point
As the rational mammal
Called men are apparently,
Not very different from dogs
On that particular point!!

“They also join the chorus
Of barking without knowing
What the barking is about!!
Thus when Amin staged the coup,
He said Obote was good
Though he had bad advisers.
You then joined that chorus
Until Amin changed the tune
To sing that Obote was bad.
You have now joined that song
And the chorus can be heard
Sung loudly in a part of Uganda
But hummed by some outside it.

“You have joined to load a man
Stooping from an overweight!!
You have joined to kick a man

Who is already right down!!
You have become Jackells
Who show their almighty strength
In finishing off a man
Who cannot e'en bite back!!

“Do not mistake this letter
As a complaint, a quarrel.
I cannot change the nature
Of men, and will not try it:
It takes all to make a world.
All I say is simply this,
If we must have some Jackells,
Let them be given their names.
Let a spade be called a spade.

“Another point I observed
About dogs at Kololo
Was their tendency to fawn
On persons who gave them food.
When the food from he who gave it
Was absolutely finished
Fawning too ceased abruptly.

“In this respect too dogs seem
To be good illustration
Of human nature as well:
For I have observed quite well
That for as long as greatness
Is married to rich fortune
Then many men appreciate that greatness.

“The problem seem to arise
When greatness and dear fortune
Are divorced and are parted
Then at that very instant
Greatness tends to depreciate,
In the eyes of many men,
And lose appreciation!

**“It may seem a great pity
That man should be more attached
To fortune, not to greatness.
But this behaviour of his,
When sympathetically
Looked at, it can be understood:
For though rational, man is,
Like a dog, an animal!!**

**“Yet, though a dog deserts him
Who has no more food to give
It deserts not its owner.
Ninety-nine per cent of dogs
Keep loyal to their owners
Regardless of the hardship.**

**“One would expect man to be
Like dogs in that respect too.
Personal friends should never
Desert each other because
Of the change in their fortune.**

**“If friends be fortune’s creature
Why need men have friends at all?”¹
For with fortune e’en strangers
And e’en mere acquaintances
Behave towards him with it
As the very best of friends.**

**“Friendship must be distinguished
On one and only one ground,
The ground of permanency:
In good time and in bad time.
Whether it rains or it shines,
Be it winter or summer,
During the ups and the downs
Of this mortal, valeful life,
Friendship must flourish, subsist,
It must endure and survive.”**

¹Shakespeare

Many of Iddi Amin's
First set of ministers,
Were members of U.P.C.
Or were U.P.C. sympathizers.
Much later on they claimed
That they swore their loyalty
To Iddi Amin
With lots of doubt
And with much misgivings;
That they did not swear obedience
To Amin with the heartiness
With which they had formerly
Plighted their faith to Obote;
And that they didn't mean to promise
That they wouldn't support the U.P.C.
Whenever parties were allowed
To operate in Uganda again.

What they say isn't important.
The important thing is
That the swearing was done.
Most of Milton Obote's
Permanent Secretaries
Had publicly and solemnly
Sworn to support Iddi Amin.
Whatever their motive
Might have been at the time
And whatever their understanding
Of the oath was at the time
The fact remains that they had
Publicly denied themselves
Of any intention
To work against the Amin regime.

The British papers
Rightly pointed out
That the Amin government
Consisted of Obote's men.
Amin was Milton Obote's
Commander of the Army
Oryema was Milton Obote's

Commander of the police
Okware was Milton Obote's
Commissioner of prison.
Wakweya was Milton Obote's
Permanent Secretary.
So were Oboth Ofumbi,
Byagagaire and Kyemba
Zikusoka, Lutara,
Ovonji and Dr Gesa.

Having all accepted
To become Amin's ministers,
How could they without forfeiting
The respect of the public
Attack — except most timidly,
Indirectly and cautiously,
The Iddi Amin regime
Whom they had publicly vowed to serve?

Together with Iddi Amin
These ministers ruled Uganda,
And together with Iddi Amin
They saw the days of ignominy come:
The days that none can recall
Without the feeling of shame;
The days when one man's dreams
And the caresses of his mistresses
And the jests of buffoons
Dictated the policy
Of the state of Uganda;
The days when dwarfish talents
Married to gigantic vices
Ruled Uganda like the Colossus.

The days when the rulers
Indulged in sensuality
Without any feeling of love,
In bigotry without belief,
In massacre without cause.

The days when our Uganda
Became a paradise
Of the dead in hearts,
The narrow in minds,
The wooden in heads
And the iron in fists.

The days that witnessed
The final stages
Of human depravity
When the ruling caste relishes
The cruelties it inflicted
On fellow men
For cruelties' sake.

The days that were the golden age
For the leaders
Who were attended
By a crowd
Of servile camp followers
And numerous heartless rabble
Who prowled around Iddi Amin
And picked up enough wealth
Under his protection
And then deserted him
When they felt that their time
For the picking was running out.

Many a minister of Amin
Who ran into exile
Told one and the same story:
"He was about to kill me."
None can blame them
For not choosing to die.

The blame is that while the lives
Of others were being taken away,
They lifted no finger to protest.
Neither did they run away
To broadcast the massacres
Of other people to the world.
They waited till it was their turn.

This much can be said of many
Who have served Iddi Amin
In various high positions
And then deserted him
After more than two years service.

They cannot be counted
Amongst the happy beings
On the face of the earth!
The remembrances
Of what they had to stomach
In order to remain at their post
Cannot but embitter their temper
And make them try to avoid those
Who know about their connivance
And about their condonation.

The consciousness
That they have disgraced themselves
By serving Amin for so long
After his true colour had been known
Make them quick to take offence
If any person is blamed
Of being an accessory
Either before or after the facts
Of Amin's regime massacres.

The civil scorn
Of the African heads of state
Into which Iddi Amin
Had just intruded himself
Was marked in significant ways.

Nyerere of Tanzania
Refused to acknowledge Amin
As the President of Uganda.
Kenyatta of Kenya
Looked down on President Amin
As if Amin was some creature
Just from the mummery
Being made a head of state!!

**Gadaafi of Libya
Exacted from Iddi Amin
In return for recognition
A large sacrifice namely
That Amin must expel from Uganda
The Jews who had helped Amin
To seize power in Uganda
And then break diplomatic ties
With the Republic of Israel.
The O.A.U. in Addis Ababa
Refused to seat Amin's delegation
And subsequently cancelled
The O.A.U. summit conference
Due to take place in Kampala
In Nineteen Seventy-one.**

**Under Amin the standard
Of political morality
Was to fall to its lowest ebb.
Amin chose many hooligans
To carry out the worst system
Of misgovernment in Uganda
Which no modern nation has
Ever been cursed to have.**

**Neither President Bokassa's
Central Africa Empire
Nor President Ngwano's
Equatorial Africa
Ever reached Iddi Amin's
Rock bottom of misgovernment.**

**Iddi Amin selected
As his top civilian advisers
Certain individuals well known
For utter want
Of political principles
And he further selected
As his top army officers
Some people
With the deepest share**

**In his heinous criminal deeds.
Persons like Smuts Guwedeko,
Maliamungu and Toweli.**

**He promoted to the top
Of army hierarchy
Persons skilled in only one field
The extirpation of Ugandans
By shooting them, and drowning them,
By striking them with swords
And by hitting their skulls.**

**He selected those persons
Who transported Ugandans
In the boots of motorcars.
Persons who made Ugandans
Kneel on floors and sat on them
While they discussed leisurely
The most apt forms of the death
Which should be administered
To their beasts of burden.**

**The mountain of infamy
Became the ground for promotion;
Treachery to the nation
Became the ground
For conferring state honours
By President Amin.
Wealth and status were given
In payment for the shame caused
To those whom Iddi Amin
Had seduced their wives.
Identification
With swarms of Amin's mistresses
Or with mimics who amuse Amin
Became a ground for receiving
Various presidential favours.**

**The state had become a prey
To rulers who did believe
That every person had his price.**

Corruption ate the very heart
Of public morality.

The Anyanya guerillas
From the Southern Sudan
And the alien Nubians
Who constituted the military might
Of the Iddi Amin regime
Were, in the main, responsible
For the moral corruption.

Nubians were brought into Uganda
In sizeable number
By Çaptain, later, Lord Lugard
In the year Eighteen Ninety.
Lugard was worried about
The outcome of the war between
Buganda which he supported
And Bunyoro which he opposed.
The Nubians of the Sudan
Had the reputation
Of being brave fighters.
Both Baker and Emin Pasha
Under whom they had fought
Had so testified.
Hence the decision of Lugard
To enlist some of them.

Initially, he recruited
Two thousand five hundred fighters
But these were later joined
By some more Nubian families
Bringing their total number
To about eight thousand.

After they had assisted Britain
To conquer a number of tribes
In various parts of Uganda,
The Khedive of Egypt
Disowned them
And ostrichized them.

The British were thus obliged
To settle them in small colonies
Throughout Uganda Protectorate.

They became small time traders,
Butchers, bicycle repairers,
And doers of all sorts of jobs
In and around the towns
Which jobs did not require
Much education and trained skill.
They disliked manual labour.
Their way of life seemed to have
Been a great hindrance
To their acquisition
Of even mere primary education.
As Dennis Pain puts it,
“They remain a by word
For low education!!”¹

Many of them settled in Bombo
Near Kampala City,
In Arua in West Nile,
And quite a number in Gulu
With only a sprinkling
In other towns of Uganda.

They continued to live
As their fathers
And fathers' fathers
Had lived during the advent
Of Britain in Uganda.
The army continued to be
Their main ambition.

They had formed the basis
Of the Uganda Rifles
In eighteen ninety-five
When it was constituted.
But to their great dismay

¹ *Expulsion of a Minority*, p. 184.

**London War Office
Started a policy
Of their steady replacement
With Ugandan soldiery.**

**After Iddi Amin's coup
The Nubians flocked into Uganda
From the Sudan, Kenya and Zaire.
They were, once more, recruited
Into the Uganda Army
And vested with much powers
Above any Ugandan.
They received top appointments
In government services.
And after the Asians
Were expelled from Uganda,
They took over Asian businesses.**

**They started claiming falsely
That during the British days
They were the rulers
Of our country, Uganda
But, that Obote's government
Systematically deprived them
Of their exalted status.**

**Iddi Amin's regime, they said,
Merely gave them back
What was formerly theirs.
They started to behave
As their grandfathers did
For even, as far back,
As towards the close
Of the nineteenth century,
The Nubians were noticeable
For their beastialities.**

**Johnson, the Special Commissioner
Of Uganda stated then
"Their ravages, robberies,
And rapes were more terrible**

**Even than the misdeeds
Of the Kabarega's warriors."**

**Add to their inane propensities
The Amin's exhortation
Of, "How can you want
When your gun which is your father
And also your mother
Is with you all the time"
Then you're sure to have an army
That is debased and enarvated.**

**It is therefore no wonder
That Amin's army was incapable
Of opposing a steadfast resistance
To a disciplined troops.
In spite of their training
And of their weaponry
They were farther
From being soldiers
Than on the day
In which they were recruited.
They remained a mere mob
Of baby butchers,
And women rapers,
And cowstealers.**

**Amin's love of military pomp
Was, however, a mania.
The bulk of the national income
Was squandered to pay
For military equipments
As well as the salaries
Of his indisciplined soldiers.**

**Iddi Amin's ambition
Was to have the best trained army
Armed with the latest weapon
Which Uganda could afford.
The extravagance was absurd
For Uganda foreign exchange**

Was too scanty to buy
The much needed necessities
Such as educational requirements
And agricultural implements.

Although his aim was to have
A great military force
Armed with the latest weapons
And although his main pride
Was the display
Of his military might,
Yet, his feelings about the army
Was that of a prodigal.
He enjoyed to get rid
Of his soldiers as much as
He enjoyed recruiting them.

By constant exercises
In the use of arms and armament,
And in fighting mock battles
And by constant drilling
And constant reviewing
Amin's soldiers had been taught
To perform the mechanical part
Of military calling
With some noticeable skill.

But, no trouble was taken
To inculcate in them
The feelings so necessary
In the best of the armies.
The patriotic ardour
Which inflamed the Mozambiquan
To drive away the Portuguese
Was manifestly lacking.
The devotion to a great leader
Which rallied the Cubans
Behind Fidel Castro
To drive away the lackies
Of the capitalist exploiters
Was definitely not there.

Since promotion in Amin's army
Was not based on merit,
The thirst for military glory
Which would have inspired
Ambitious soldiers and officers
Were signally lacking.
Within the rank and file of the army
There was no political enthusiasts
Prepared to fight and to die
To maintain the Amin's type
Of political system.

☆ ☆ ☆

His troops were indeed no soldiers.
They were merely bandits.

Apart from the bandits,
Amin's regime was supported
By a number of ambitious persons
Like his brother-in-law Kibedi.
Kibedi belonged to the class
Of Amin's confidantes
Which filled the world
With their praise of Aminism.
He had been one of the staunchest
Of Amin's supporters
Who ruled Uganda
With absolute power.

Though possibly
Not the most powerful,
Yet, at the beginning
Of the Iddi Amin regime,
He was undoubtedly
The most conspicuous minister
In Iddi Amin's cabinet.
His name was thus a household word
In New Delhi, in Bangkok,
London, Paris and Moscow.
But his name was dreaded
In Gulu, Lira and Kampala.

He was the Acting Attorney General
When Chief Justice Kiwanuka
Was savagely murdered.
It was said of him
That what he spoke was decreed.
Chief Justice Kiwanuka
Told Justice Lutta
Of the East Africa Court of Appeal
Immediately before his death
That Kibedi had summoned him
About three times in circumstances
That made him fear for his life.

Kibedi did not seem to know
That every action
Has its reaction
And every excess generates
Its very opposite.
A pendulum swings
As far in one direction
As it does in the opposite.
A politician worthy of his name
Will not strike a blow at all
Without calculating
The effect of its rebound.

Nor would he remain year after year
Part of the government
Whose sole policy seemed
To be the letting out
Of blood and of more blood.
The more blood that was let,
The more Kibedi became
A mask within a mask.

In the years that he acted
As Amin's right hand man
His various masks of affectations
Were removed yet the real man
Was never visible.

He over-acted all the parts.
When he advocated capitalism
He out-Churchilled Churchill himself
And when he advocated socialism
He out-Lenined Lenin himself.

Like the love of a fribble
His love of socialism was strong
When there was no occasion for it
And disappeared
When there was an occasion for it.

Although he was made a minister
Of Foreign Affairs
Because he undertook to persuade
The socialist world
To recognize Amin,
Yet he soon became the darling
Of the Western powers
Which began to refer to him
As a "brilliant young man".

With this change of love,
He became a fanatical capitalist.
To those who knew him not,
His extravagant warning
Against a 'move to the left'
Was taken seriously.

In truth, he was a man of cant.
He repeated the phraseology
Of other people
And the phraseology of others
Which came from his mouth
Lost all their meanings.
It was repeated by rote.

When the 'brilliant young man'
Was over-engrossed
In the dark conspiracies
To expel the Asians
From our country Uganda

So that their wealth may be used
To buy political support
For Amin's infamous regime,
He ceased, to the Westerners
To be a 'brilliant young man'.

This irritated him much
And he stooped to making
A personal attack on Wilson
Prime Minister of Britain
Whom he called dirty names.

To the Africans, however,
Kibedi was always a play boy.
When Amin appointed him
The Ambassador of Death
To discuss with Malecela
Tanzanian Foreign Affairs Minister
The return from Tanzania
Of the Uganda exiles
The play boy started dancing
In Addis Ababa.

Said Lucky Lamek,
"Human life is a trifle
To this silly play boy
And trifles are to him
The most serious state matters."

Dancing and womanizing,
Show and pomp were to him
The gravest state employment.

According to him,
A colleague of his, a lawyer,
Had given to him a list
Of people to be liquidated.
That was at the beginning
Of Iddi Amin's rule.
The politics to which he took
The strongest interest
Was one of double crossing.

Unfortunately,
His brother-in-law Amin
Also took the strongest interest
In the same type of politics.
The time thus came when he began
Watching Amin like a cat
For an opportunity to do mischief.

He soon discovered that Amin
Was equally watching him
Like a dog, a bloodhound,
For the same kind of mischief.
As usual,
To lull Amin's suspicion
He would affect a foolish hatred
Of former President Obote.

His colleague, Henry Kyemba,
Also adopted the same tactics
Of talking ill of Obote.

Hence Henry Kyemba,
Formerly Principal Private Secretary
To President Obote
Became Amin's favourite minister
And closest companion.

This may seem a bit strange
On account of the strong opposition
Between their characters.
Kyemba is a man of quiet nature
And a very timid soul.
Whereas many persons
Are reduced to tears
By sad spectacles,
Kyemba was easily
Reduced to tears
By his impotent rage.
A couple of barks
From a person in authority
And Kyemba would burst into tears.

Amin was, on the contrary,
Loud and bull-doing.
Whereas Kyemba cackled,
Amin always crowed.
Indeed the explanation
Of their companionship
Lies in the mere fact
That the person of Kyemba
Somehow amused Iddi Amin.
When Amin was in good mood
He enjoyed the flattering tongue
And watching the caressing manner
Of Mr Henry Kyemba.
When Amin was in bad mood,
And wanted to vent his spleen,
Kyemba was an excellent butt.

Amin never outgrew his taste
For unpalatable practical jokes.
When things became bad
Some hitherto loyal ministers
Of president Amin
Began to explain away
Their oath of loyalty to Amin.
Some said
That they had sworn loyalty
To Amin in a sense
Altogether different
From the loyalty they sworn
To President Obote.

To President Obote
They had
Unconditionally plighted
The loyalty due to a president
But to President Amin
Their loyalty was conditional
Dependent on their being
Within the jurisdiction
Where Amin could shoot them
Or order them to be hanged.

In short, that they did not mean
The oath of loyalty.
That the oath was a lie!
If that was true
Then Amin had
Employed as Ministers
Persons who would not hesitate
To betray him.
How were these treacherous ministers
To be exposed to Amin?

Kyemba had the answer
Let each and every minister
Abjure Milton Obote
In every public address.
This order was strictly observed
For about two months
And then was allowed to drop.

Surely, so it was argued,
The mere fact that a minister
Had sworn allegiance to Amin
Must mean, by necessary implication,
That he had abjured Obote.

If a minister who had
Taken an oath of loyalty
To Amin's government
Equivocates
About such necessary implication
Then he's either
A man without conscience
Or a person whose conscience
Can easily be appeased
By immoral quibblings.
In either case abjuration
Becomes meaningless.

Indeed, how can abjuration
Be meaningful at all
When the oath is meaningless?

A man without conscience
Would swear without scruple
And abjure without scruple.

A man whose conscience
Can easily be appeased
Will swear
With a mental reservation
And abjure
With a mental reservation

But abjuring Obote
Did not help many ministers.
Each and every person
Who had been close to Amin
Either perished in Amin's hand
Or ran into exile claiming
That condition in Uganda
Had become impossible.

Amin's Minister of Foreign Affairs
Mr Wanume Kibedi
Said that he left the country
Because of "Adverse
And retrogressive developments
Over which I had no control."

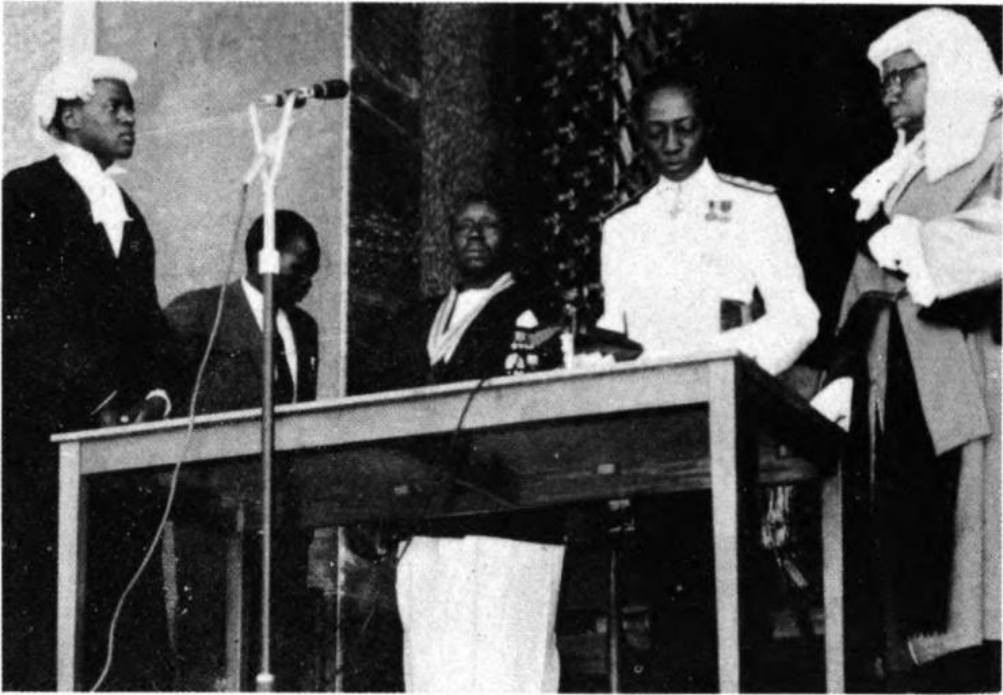
These developments
He subsequently defined
To have been murders by Amin.
"I could go on page after page
Quoting denunciations
By you (Amin)
Of specific individuals
Who were shortly afterwards murdered.
Not in one single case
Did you produce a shred of evidence
To support your allegations
Against the victims.
You simply made denunciations,
Which then amounted
To the death sentence without trial."

He knew his boss well.
Yet, he served him for many years.
The layman call such conduct
As wilful blindness.
The lawyer calls it connivance.

Amin Finance Minister
Mr Emmanuel Wakhweya
Fled to exile from Tanzania
Where he was attending
The East African Legislative Assembly.
His reason for seeking refuge:
"To live in Uganda is hell.
The country is facing
Economic catastrophe.
I cannot imagine
How the ordinary people
Are able to carry on
Because of the shortages
Of simplest essentials for life
And the soaring cost of living."

The volcano of Amin's tyranny
Has not yet spent itself.
His supporters in exile
Invaded Uganda recently.
E'en now, they are still planning
On great eruptions.
The landmarks
Which his tyranny swept away
Are all around us.
The deluge of tears
Shed to mourn its victims
Still flow freely.
The ruined edifices and roads
Are yet to be repaired.
Those tainted with the vices
Which Amin's tyranny engendered
Are still in government positions
And control the commercial sectors.
It is difficult to believe

**That this country of the saints,
The country of the martyrs
Of the Bataringayas,
Of the Luwums and Kiwanukas
The country that is famous
For her hospitality
For being the source of the Nile,
The country surrounded
On three sides by Mount Elgon,
Mount Ruwenzori, Lake Victoria
And open only in the North
To give river Nile
A free access to Egypt;
This Pearl of Africa
Has inhumanly suffered
In this second half
Of the twentieth Century
As the Jews did
In the first half
Of the twentieth Century
And that the cause of its sufferance
Was a Jew Colonel Bar-Lev:
The coup power behind Amin.**



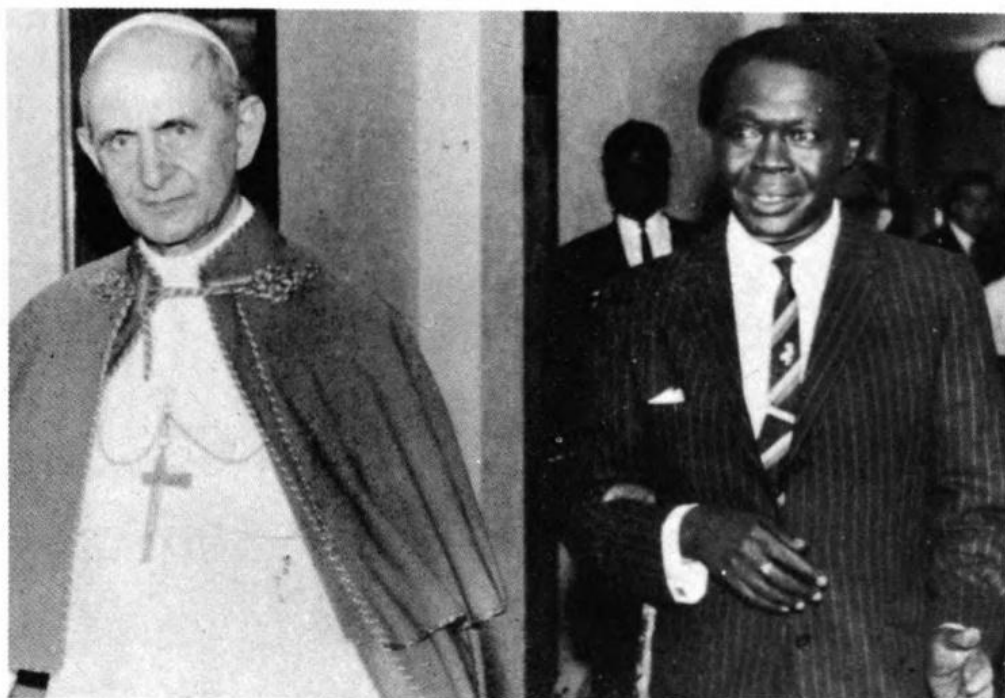
*Sir Edward Mutesa Being Sworn as
President*

“We are inclined to think
That without Sir Edward,
The Uganda Crisis of Sixty Six
Would still have taken place.
His presence merely outran
The crisis in the direction
It was already following.
The greatest contribution
That his presence made
As far as his subjects were concerned
Is that it snatched the issues
Which were the causes of the crisis
Away from an examining frame of mind.
To a believing frame of mind.”



*Obote's First Cabinet Being A
Coalition Between U.P.C. and K.Y.*

“The Coalition
Between U.P.C. and K.Y.
Was effected
During a war for power
In which the U.P.C. and K.Y.
Were agreed about the necessity
Of keeping D.P. out of power.”



Pope Paul VI with President Obote

“Let the truth therefore be told
That some people do rise by sin
While some by virtue do fall;
That virtue in some cases
Is rewarded by evil
And evil in some cases
Is rewarded by success
In this mortal world of ours.”



The Return of Obote

**“In May Nineteen Eighty
It had become common knowledge
That the presidency of Uganda
Was in danger of falling
Under the despotism of small men
Raised up and pulled down
Now and again and now and again.**

**To deliver the nation
From the rule of small men
Had, therefore, become
The object of many patriots
Regardless of their party affiliation.”**



Amin and His Friend Gadafi

“President Gadafi of Libya
Gave President Nyerere
Of the Republic of Tanzania
An ultimatum to pull out
All Tanzanian Forces
From our Country Uganda
Or confront Libya troops.
But the blood of Tanzanians
Was up and remained boiling.
The enthusiasm of the citizens
Knew no limit.
They would not disgrace themselves
By abandoning the war.
Not on Gadafi’s threats.”



Amin Addresses Military Tribunal

“Amin was like a tiger
Born and brought up in a Zoo
And accustomed to submit
To the keeper who gives it food.
Set free such an animal
In a Game Reserve
With a boundless prospect
Of killing almost just any animal
Which crosses its path
Then you will see it kill
For the sake of vindictiveness,
For the sake of showing its might
And for the sake of killing.”



Lule Sworn as President

“The maze of intrigues
Which possessed
A handful of academics
And the well-to-do exiles
To elect Yusuf Lule
As their token symbol
To rule Uganda
While they themselves
Carry out their devices
To rule Uganda
In the name of Lule
Were, at that time,
Not yet known to many Ugandans.
All they knew was
That Lule had returned
Under dubious circumstances.”



Lule Signs Resignation Document

**“Tales abound about devils
Who could be raised easily
But couldn’t be laid easily.
As long as the magician
Who called them up kept them busy,
That long would they heed his biddings.
But, if he left them in repose
Then they would tear him in pieces.
Lule was soon to find out
That the N.C.C. he raised
Was not to be so easily laid.”**

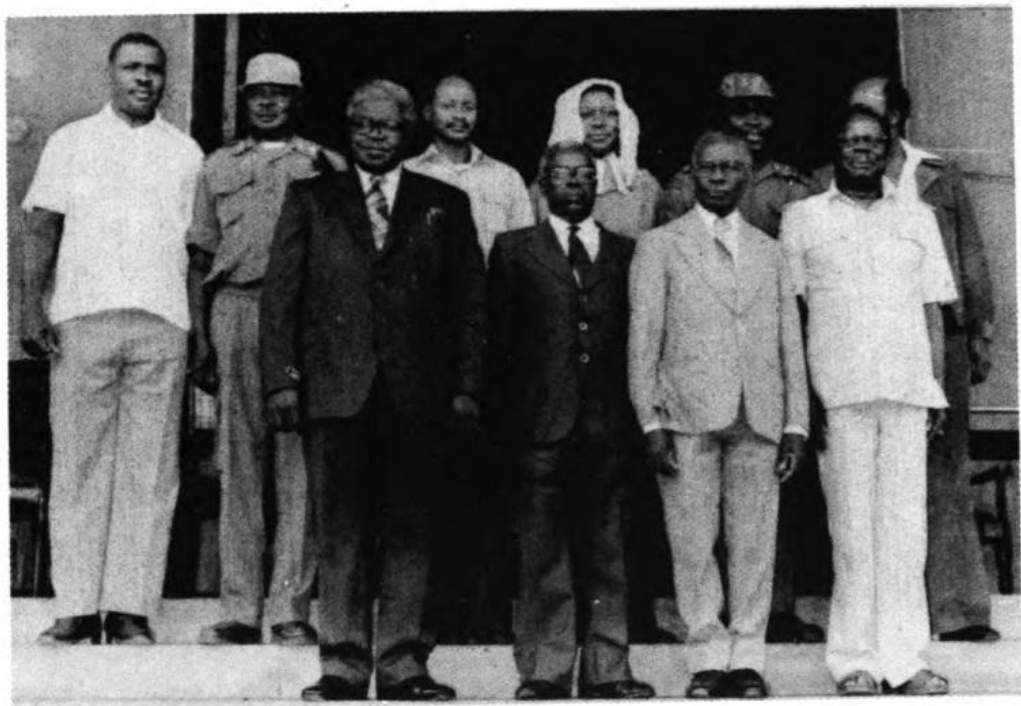


Obote Releases Binaisa from House Arrest

**“The malady of desertion
And of switching sides
Continued to afflict Binaisa
Even when he became President.”**



**Paulo Muwanga—
former Chairman
of the Military
Commission and
now Vice President
of Uganda.**



*Presidential Commissioners and
Members of the Military Commission*



**Ambassador Otema
Allimadi—Prime
Minister of
Uganda.**



Yoweri Museveni

**“He practised the art
Of sneering at everybody
So much that it obtained for him
The reputation
Of being a great judge
Of character
From those people who are
impressed
By such an art.”**



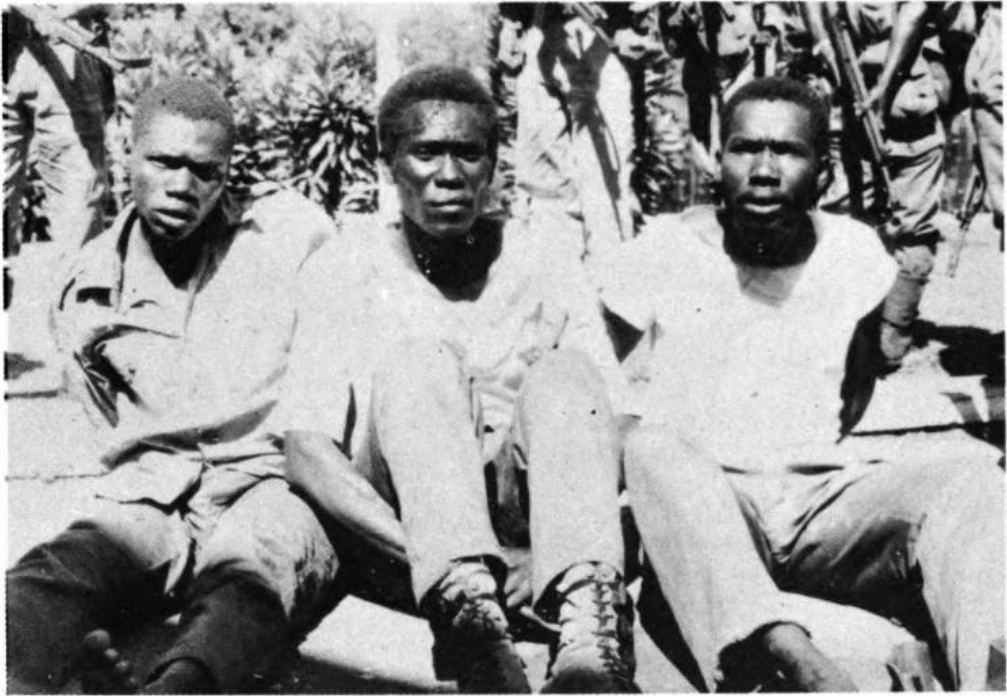
Bandit Women



Bandit Men

**Bandit Leaders
Museveni and Kayira pose with fellow bandits.**





*Wilfred Odongo, Picho Ali and Capt.
Oyile:*

War prisoners captured during
September, 1972 invasion:
"In September, 1972,
A number of Ugandan exiles
Then living in Tanzania
Invaded their Ugandan home,
And fought against heavy odds.
Yet, those glorious band of men
Neither temporized nor compromised."



*Wanume Kibedi (Uganda)
After the Mogadishu Peace Pact.*

“He ultimately deluded himself
Into the belief
That he was
A man of boundless importance.
Of the hundreds
Of human bubbles
Known in Uganda
None has ever been so skilfully puffed
Into existence
And none has ever
Soared so high
Or glittered so radiantly
And none has ever burst
With such an explosion.”



Basil Bataringaya

“The Christian firmness
With which he was to meet his death
In the hands of the Amin’s Yahoos
And the meekness with which his wife
Who had cheered the gloom
Of his maltreatment by Amin,
Was to suffer the same fate,
The blighted prospects
Of their young orphans
Then schooling
In Mt. Saint Mary’s College
At Namagunga, Lugazi
And in other Ugandan schools,
Have excited much sorrow
In Ugandans of all walks of life.”



*Professor Nabudere, Edward
Rugumayo and Omwony Ojwok*

**“The gang who organized Moshi
Thought it better to construct
A week Government which tottered
At their smallest push
And bound to fall in the first storm.”**



Lt. Gen. Tito Okello Commander of the Uganda Defence Forces and Major General Oyite-Ojok Chief of Staff of the Uganda Defence Forces commanded the Uganda National Liberation Forces during the war of Uganda Liberation.

**“They stood up and by their action
Proclaimed that as long as Uganda
Has a spark of life in her,
She would never submit at all
To tyranny of any man
Except, through the prostrate corpses
Of her brave and dear children.”**



Libyan War Prisoners Repatriated

**“Let shallow babblers
Who have seen the Presidential
inspection
Of army parades
But who have never seen a war
Imagine that victories
Consist solely of winning wars
And in winning against any odds.**

**The Libyan Commanders knew
That had they fought on, they’d have
Decimated their troops.”**

THE FALL OF AMIN

The manner in which Uganda
Was liberated signally proves
That the standard
Of political morality
Had certainly fallen
To its very lowest ebb.
That a tyrant who has massacred
Over a quarter of a million
And who has tortured and maimed
Several thousand Ugandans
And who has violated
Each and every aspect
Of the fundamental law,
Who persecuted the Church
And murdered Church leaders
Could not be toppled without the aid
Of Tanzanian forces
Is a circumstance to which
Our nation can never be proud.

It had become the custom
To swim along with the stream.
Not to do so was certain drowning.

The feebleness of the people
Contrasted ominously
With the gigantic might of Amin.
The entire faith of the nation
Seemed pivoted on the whims
Of one man, Iddi Amin.

Although, to assert the most sacred rights
Of man from continued attack
By odious tyranny,
A small number of desperate men
Engaged themselves in conspiracies,
Yet, as Amin's rule lengthened,
It became clear that the bulk
Of the people had sunk down
Under the horrid tyranny
With scarcely a struggle.

Amin and his ministers,
The Kyembas and the Kibedis,
Were happy,
Very happy.
The people could bear
To be ill governed.
Amin and his soldiers,
The Malyamungus, and the Maleras,
Were happy,
Very happy.
They could safely indulge
In the wildest freaks of torture.
They could dispose with immunity
The lives of any minister
Of the state and of the Church.
Those near them who engaged themselves
In the hazardous game
Of ambition and independence
Were made to disappear quietly.

It is sad that to those who have
More is yet given to them
And to those who have nothing
Even the little they have
Is taken away from them.

Thus in addition to the enjoyment
Of absolute power,
The leaders soon found out that
The populace inspired by fear

**And deprived of its self respect,
Was giving them complete prostrations
Of the oriental style.**

**But not all however prostrated.
There were many attempted coups
Against the regime of Amin.
In September, 1972.
A number of Ugandan exiles
Then living in Tanzania
Invaded their home, Uganda
And fought against heavy odds.
Yet these glorious band of men
Neither temprized nor compromised.
They stood up and by their action
Proclaimed that as long as Uganda
Has a spark of life in her,
She would never submit at all
To tyranny of any man
Except, through the prostrate corpses
Of her brave and dear children.**

**It was to be a two pronged attack
Attack by air and by land.
The invaders on land
Were to cross into Uganda
From Mutukula border
And some of them would proceed
To the capture of Mbarara
While the others proceeded
To capture Masaka Town
And then head to Kampala.**

**The invaders by air
Were to be landed at Entebbe
To eliminate Amin's airforce,
Secure Entebbe Town
And then proceed to capture Kampala
And announce the over-throw
Of the Iddi Amin regime.**

**Col. Tito Okello was to lead
The ground troops from Mutukula
While Lt. Col. Oyite Ojok
Led the "air" troops to Entebbe.**

**The East African D.C.9
Which was to fly the "air" troops
Landed punctually on schedule
At the Kilimanjaro Airport
Unfortunately while landing,
All the wheels somehow got locked
And all the four tyres burst.**

**The accident doomed the chances
Of any success of the invasion.
The Capital could no longer
Be taken by surprise
And Amin remained
In full control of his army
And of the communication system.**

**The land troops however managed
To capture some towns including
Mutukula and Kyotera
Kakuto and Kalisizo
Before they were forced to withdraw
From Uganda to Tanzania.**

**Besides, treacherous elements
In Museveni's movement
Which preferred gorilla warfare
And opposed conventional war
Had already leaked to Amin
The plan to invade Uganda.**

**On 14th September,
Nineteen Hundred Seventy-two
Before the invasion took place,
Amin had already initiated
His request to his friend Gadafi
For military assistance**

**He stated that "there was a danger
Of the British and the Israelis
Invading Uganda with the Tanzanian"¹
Gadafi had promised
To send reinforcement
When the invasion took place
And he did keep his word
By sending to Iddi Amin
Five Hercules Transport planes
With troops and armaments.**

**Day by day the Amin's radio
Broadcast false statements claiming
That Tanzania troops fighting
Side by side with Cuban troops
Had entered 10 miles inside Uganda
After wiping out a small garrison
At Mutukula Border.**

**Day by day the accusations
Were repeated more provocatively.
The Tanzanians, Indians and Cubans
Were said to be moving
Both by land and by water
Towards Kampala City**

**"Places where the current invasion
Has been planned personally
By President Nyerere"
Blared out Radio Uganda
"Have already been surveyed
By the Uganda Airforce".
The lies were not necessary.
The invasion was already doomed
From the moment that the plane
Had the locked wheel accident.**

**The Nubians in Amin's army
Had what they termed "a field day"**

¹*Amin* by David Martin, p. 165.

Amongst the Nubians, revenge
Has always been regarded
Not only as an exquisite pleasure
But also as a sacred obligation.
Amin now let Nubians loose
And activated by inordinate zeal
For revenge and for vengeance
They treated Ugandans like
A pack of dangerous wolves.

They perpetrated without
Any internal twinge of conscience
The most brutal act of savagery
That would have shocked a buccaneer.
And those acts of infamy
Were committed in the names
Of duty and of justice!

Amongst their victims was
Mr Basil Bataringaya,
A person who had long exercised
In Parliament an influence
Derived from spotless integrity,
Sound common sense, kind heartedness,
Good nature, simplicity,
And a special skill in debate.
By the Democratic Party,
Bataringaya had been honoured
As the leader of the Opposition.
By the Uganda Peoples Congress
Bataringaya was honoured
As one of its top Ministers
Holding the Ministry
Of Internal Affairs.
The Christian firmness
With which he was to meet his death
In the hands of Amin's Yahoos
And the meekness with which his wife
Who had cheered the gloom
Of his maltreatment by Amin,
Was to suffer the same fate,

The blighted prospects
Of their young orphans
Then schooling
In Mount Saint Mary's College
At Namagunga, Lugazi
And in other Ugandan schools,
Have excited much sorrow
In Ugandans of all walks of life.

Amongst the victims too
Was the Chief Justice of Uganda
Mr Benedictor Kiwanuka
Whose only crime was to speak out
Against the perversion
Of fact to whitewash the dictatorship.
Other victims included:

Mr John Kakonge—
Former U.P.C. Minister
Mr James Ochola—
Former U.P.C. Minister
Mr Frank Kalimuzo—
A former Vice Chancellor
Of Makerere University
Mr Joseph Mubiru—
A former Governor
Of the Bank of Uganda
And my brothers Ben Odur,
Opetto and Alfred Olwe.

Amin did not know at all
That my own contribution
To Uganda's liberation
Was a very humble one.
Nevertheless I am proud of it.
Immediately after the coup,
Three countries were determined
To invade the land, Uganda
And topple the Amin regime.
They were the Sudan, and Somali
And the Republic of Tanzania.

It became imperative
That Uganda troops at Moroto
Which was still loyal to Obote
Should receive immediately
Arms reinforcement to avoid
Their capitulation to Amin.
Reinforcement was to be sent
From the Republic of Sudan
Which required a person
To identify to her
The commander of the loyal troops
To avoid the arms falling
In hands of Amin's forces.

- A Uganda Army officer
Assigned to do that simple task
Suddenly grew cold feet.
I offered to do it
And was assigned the mission.

I met President Nimeiri
On the day I reached the Sudan
In the Government lodge
In which I was accommodated.
He was full of praise,
For the Government of Obote
And the small role I played in it.
A couple of days afterwards
His Minister of Foreign Affairs
Informed me that the invasion plan
Had been completely dropped.
His President, he said, had asked me
To accept a nominal title
As a Minister of State
For Foreign Affairs of the Sudan.
A passport would be given to me
Bearing that ministerial title.
I accepted the honour
But requested that the passport
Be given bearing my middle names
Of Solomon Auro.
And it was given accordingly.

Shortly afterwards Obote
Joined me in the Government Lodge
Which became the Headquarters
Of Uganda Liberation Movement.

He assigned me the duty
Of collecting information
From our country Uganda
And to keep him fully briefed
Of what was happening in Uganda
And to keep Tanzania
Public opinion informed
About the Amin regime.
Dar-es-Salaam was thus to be
My base of operation.

A few enthusiastic students
Formed the nucleus
Of my information gathering.
Two of them are now ministers.
They are Hon. Osinde
And Hon. David Anyoti.
We compared and contrasted
Every bit of information
Received from Uganda.

Three other students acted as couriers.
They were Mr. Ufoyuru
Now Uganda's Ambassador
To the Republic of China
Mr Fabian Odongo,
Now Personnel Executive
In Nyanza Textile Limited
And Mr Okello Ojok
Who became a magistrate
And was murdered by Amin's soldiers.

A Kenyan by the name
Of Peter Owili
Contributed tremendously
In our information gathering
And in dissemination.

Any information gathered
Was sent to Dr Obote
Either through diplomatic bag
Or taken in person by me.

And, Tanzanian public opinion
Was informed through the newspaper
Especially the Sunday News
In which I had columns
Under the popular pen name
Of Mr Peter Kibi.

Just before the invasion
Of Uganda by Obote liberation forces
In September of Seventy-two,
Peter Kibi columns
Came out with an article headed:
"THE RISE AND FOLLY OF AMIN".
When the invasion of Uganda
Subsequently took place
From the Republic of Tanzania,
The public opinion in that country
Had long been prepared to accept
The removal of the evil regime.

Indeed, the worst predictions
Contained in those articles
About the evils that would emanate
From the regime of Amin
Was exceeded in Seventy-eight
By the Amin invasion
Of the Republic of Tanzania
And annexation of Kagera.

Shortly, after the annexation
Dr Obote formed an ad-hoc committee
For the liberation of Uganda
With the aim of uniting
Under one command all Ugandan
Various liberation efforts.

Nabudere soon broke out of it
And after his departure
President Obote,
Vice President Paulo Muwanga.
Prime Minister Otemah Allimadi
And myself kept on meeting.
As a practising lawyer
I did however, miss many
Of the morning meetings.

After the Nineteen Seventy-two
Invasion of Uganda
Amin called a big conference
In the Conference Centre.
My father Yakobo Adoko
And my mother Loi Adoko
Were amongst those summoned
To attend and address the gathering.

The address was supposed to be
An apology for the sins
Of their exiled children
But my parents did see it
In a very different light.
Said mother: "You've done a good thing
To have called us in this meeting.
It's our Lango tradition
That whenever children fight
The elders are summoned
To hear the cause of their differences.

"Obote is a son to us
And you are his agemate.
You are thus like a son to us.
You and Obote have now fought
And you have summoned us, your elders,
To hear the cause of your fight.
Unfortunately, your 'Brother'
With whom you have fought isn't here.
Whereas therefore you can tell us
What you see to be the cause

Of your fight with him, he can't.
Now experience teaches us
That it's difficult to judge fairly
By hearing only one side.
We are thus rather at a loss".

Amin met my father
Who had been robbed of his radio
And other things by Amin's soldiers
Who put the barrel of a gun
On the chest of my father.
Father's response had been, tense:
"You are taking nothing of mine.
So, shoot if you so wish."
He wasn't shot but things were taken.
When Amin heard about this
He visited Lango
And talked to my father about it.
Said Father, "I have lived
Under Obote's Government.
His soldiers did not murder.
But your soldiers are different.
They are a new phenomenon."
Amin wrote for him a cheque
To compensate him for the loss.
Commented a British observer:
"I have never encountered
A more benevolent
And apparently genuinely
Popular leader as General Amin."¹

My Father was then old
But the vigour of his mind
Was in no way impaired.
His understanding was still strong
And his courage was
As it has ever been,
Of the truest temper.
Although he was surrounded

¹ *Lust to Kill* by Joseph Kamao and Andrew Cameron—A Gorgi Book, p. 53.

By perfidy and danger,
He stood firmly by his principle
To tell the truth and he told Amin so.

But the invasion had served
Useful psychological purposes.
It strengthened the determination
Of Ugandans to overthrow
Amin's regime by Force of arms.
It was soon to be followed
By many attempted coups.
Secondly, it filled Amin with pride
And there is no greater sin than pride.
In Nineteen Seventy-eight
Amin's pride and passions
Hurried him into an error
Which undid all his eight years
Of massacres and of intrigues
And ended his rule by guns.

He invaded Tanzania
And annexed Kagera Salient
Which occupies a 700
Square miles triangle of Tanzania.
He boasted that "All Tanzanians
In the area must know that
They are under direct rule
By the Conqueror of the British Empire."

The invasion had been
Particularly savage one:
Unarmed Tanzanians were killed.
Unwilling female were raped,
Properties were looted
And many houses were burnt,
A police post was shelled,
National Bank of Commerce was bombed
And several thousand herds of cattle
And several hundred vehicles
Were captured and brought into Uganda.

Tanzanians answered Amin
By showers of bullets too.
Amin was not only to be repulsed
But Uganda was to be liberated.

The people of Tanzania
Were very much moved by the news
Of the conquests of Kagera Salient.
The mention of Amin's title:
The Conqueror of British Empire
Over Uganda Radio
Couldn't be heard without tears of rage.
Amin's boast of his military exploit
And of the merger of Kagera
Into Uganda made their hearts sick.

To Iddi Amin's soldiers' boast
That to Amin all things must yield,
Tanzanians agreed with their President
That the boastful Life President
Of Uganda Republic
And his boastful soldiers
Needed to be taught a lesson.

Amin, said the Tanzanians,
Had gone too far, too, too far.
"We have only one task,"
Said President Nyerere,
"It is to hit Amin."
Then adopting the Caesarian style,
Nyerere added while his sentences
Were punctuated with the applause
Of the citizens gathered
In the Diamond Jubilee Hall
In Dar-es-Salaam City:
"The ability we have;
The determination we have;
The reason we have."
Amin did not appreciate
The seriousness of Nyerere's resolve.
"War is ended" stated Amin,

**“Nyerere’s forces have run away.
Nyerere is a liar and a coward
Who collects his family around him
To clap for him as if he were a madman.”**

**But the voice of Nyerere
To fight the snake was no longer alone.
It was joined by that of Obote
Whom Amin dreaded most
“I implore compatriots
Inside our country Uganda.”
Said Obote in a press statement
At the Kilimanjaro Hotel,
In Dar-es-Salaam City
“To organize themselves into bodies
For the express purpose
Of prosecuting this struggle.
Terror more than anything else
Has sustained Amin and his regime
For the past eight years.
There have been many attempts
By Ugandans to close ranks
And co-ordinate efforts
To overthrow this regime of terror.”**

**In answer to the appeal,
Many Ugandans in Tanzania
And students in the Universities
Offered to be recruited
In the Kikose Maalum¹
Of Ugandans who were fighting
Side by side with the Tanzania Forces.
Besides, many of Amin’s soldiers
Defied Amin and mutinied:
Tanzanian found some 120 bodies
Of Amin’s soldiers who had mutinied
And who were executed
And dumped in a forest in Tanzania.**

¹Special Battalion.

In February, 1979,
Explosions set fire to a fuel depot
In Kampala City
And tore down steel towers
That was carrying power line
From the Owen Falls Dam to Kampala
And thus caused a power cut
From water pumping stations
Which were forced to shut down.

This was followed by the destruction
Of a section of the main rail
Linking Uganda to Kenya.
A newly formed Save Uganda Movement
Which existed more in paper
Than it did in actual fact
Claimed credit for the sabotage.
But Amin knew much better.
He blamed Obote's sympathizers.

Towards the end of it all,
Amin turned from accusations
And from smear campaign to prayers.
He fired off telegrams after telegrams
To all those he thought could assist.
First to President Nyerere:
"Dear Brother, We want peace
To prevail between Uganda
And Tanzania and Kenya
So that our region may
Be stable for development.
There is no reason for Uganda
To be at loggerhead with Tanzania
Or why misunderstandings
Between us should not be resolved."

Then to United Nations
To Secretary General Kurt Waldheim,
"I appeal to you to inform
The Security Council of the situation.
My people have requested me

To ask your Excellency
And the Security Council
To prevail on Tanzania
To withdraw from Uganda peacefully.”

Lastly, he appealed to the Pope:
“Nyerere is a Catholic.
We hope that he will heed
An appeal by the Pope.
We appeal to Pope John Paul II
To use his good offices
To ensure Nyerere orders
His forces to withdraw.”

According to Taliwako
Uganda Chief of Protocol
The Pope’s answer was terse.
He advised Iddi Amin
To read Ezekiel Chapter 7
Verses 3 to 4 which read:
“Now is the end come upon thee,
And I will send mine anger upon thee,
And will judge thee according to thy ways,
And will recompense upon thee
All thine abominations.

“And mine eyes shall not spare thee,
Neither will I have pity;
But I will recompense
Thy ways upon thee,
And thine abominations
Shall be in the midst of thee:
And ye shall know that I am the LORD.

“Thus says the Lord God;
An evil, an only evil,
Behold, is come.
And end is come,
The end is come:
It watches for thee;
Behold, it is come.

**“The morning is come unto thee,
O thou that dwelleth in the land:
The time is come,
The day of trouble is near,
And not the sounding again
Of the mountains.**

**“Now will I shortly
Pour out my fury upon thee,
And accomplish
Mine anger upon thee:
And I will judge thee
According to thy ways,
And will recompense thee
For all thy abominations.”**

**As the war progressed
President Gadafi of Libya
Gave President Nyerere
Of the Republic of Tanzania
An ultimatum to pull out
All Tanzanian Forces
From our country Uganda
Or confront Libyan Troops.**

**But the blood of Tanzanians
Was up and remained boiling.
The enthusiasm of the citizens
Knew no limit
And knew no restraint.
They would not disgrace themselves
By abandoning the war.
Not on Gadafi's threats.**

**Shortly, afterwards Libyan troops
Arrived in Uganda
With the hope of fighting
Their way to victory and glory
As they had done in September,
Of the year Seventy-two
Against ill equipped troops**

Of exiles from Uganda
Who had invaded their land.

They found the war raging
In Southern Uganda
Where they were rushed to battle.
There, they discovered that coming
From the desert as they did,
Neither their training nor their experience
Had qualified them to fight
A war in an African bush.
Their helplessness however increased
When they soon found that although
They were fighting side by side
With an African troops
Led by ignorant officers,
Yet they were contending against
A hostile African army
Of greatly superior force
And much superior discipline.

In a few days' time their number
Had been considerably thinned
By the rains of bullets.
Their Commanders soon learnt
That their safety lay in not fighting
But in declining battles.
Let shallow babblers
Who've seen the presidential inspection
Of military parades
But have never seen a war
Imagine that victories
Consist solely in winning wars
And in winning against any odds.

The Libyan Commanders knew
That had they fought on, they'd have
Decimated all their troops.
They surpassed even themselves
In having done everything
To return some of their troops
From the dangers of Uganda bush
To safety of Libyan desert.

THE RISE AND FALL OF LULE AND BINAISA

At the beginning of the war
Of liberating Uganda
From Fascist Iddi Amin's rule,
President Julius Nyerere
Led Tanzanian Forces
While Dr. Milton Obote
Led Ugandan exile forces
That was fighting side by side
With Tanzanian Forces.

The bulk of the Ugandan forces
Engaged in the liberation war
Had in Nineteen Seventy Two
Under Obote's leadership
Invaded Amin's Uganda.

Early in Nineteen Seventy Nine
Obote made a public appeal
For a Uganda wide rebellion
Against Amin's dictatorship
And several Ugandans,
Mainly University students,
Responded to his call
By joining Tanzanian troops
In a war against Amin.

As the war progressed however
And the prospect of victory
Had become clear to all persons
Two factors came into existence.

First and foremost, the cause of the war
Was misconstrued by Western Press
To be the determination
Of President Nyerere
To make his friend Obote
President of Uganda.
Secondly, narrow-minded
Jealousies and interests
Amongst some Ugandans
Resulted into the calling
Of Moshi Conference
Under the nominal pretext
Of bringing about a merger
Of anti-Amin forces..

The real purpose of Moshi
Was to bring together
The anti-Obote elements
For the sole object
Of ousting Obote
From taking over the rein
Of Uganda Government.

A conclave of persons
Previously ascertained
To be predominantly disposed
To making Yusuf Lule
The President of Uganda
Were allowed to attend the Conference
And to vote for Lule's leadership
Of the Liberation Front.¹

¹ The full name is: Uganda National Liberation
Front—U.N.L.F.

Two-third of all Ugandans
Who were gathered at Moshi
To attend the Conference
Were, however, denied the attendance
On the unspoken reason
That they were pro-Obote.

Amongst those rejected
Were Godfrey Binaisa
Who subsequently became
President of Uganda.
Rejected too were Tiberondwa
Now Minister of Industry
And Mr. Sam Odaka
Now Minister of Planning
And Mr. Shafique Arain
Now High Commissioner in U.K.

And advocate, Gurdiel Singh
Now High Commissioner in India
And Mr. Peter Otai
Now Minister of State for Defence
As well as Zikusoka
An engineer turned diplomat.

A number of delegations
Were also excluded
From attending the Conference:
Uganda Widows Delegation
Consisting of Women
Whose husbands died in the struggle
Against Murderous Amin
Were denied access to the Conference
And so was the delegation
Of Uganda Student Veterans
Who had come from the war front
To attend the Conference.

On the other hand, persons,
Representing fictitious groups
Such as Moshi Discussion Group
And Muthaiga Discussion Group
Were allowed into the Conference.

Wherever and whenever
The subject of opening
The door of Moshi Conference Hall
To a lot of Ugandans
Was raised by any person
The organizers of the Conference
Were so prone to some strange fits
That they were incapable
Of listening to reason.

They had in any case
Past the stage of listening
To any reason at all
For they had already leaked
To some Western journalists
That the election of Lule
Was a foregone conclusion.

And so when the election
Was postponed for a day
One Western broadcasting Station
Announced the election of Lule
A day before it took place!

The Coup that took place at Moshi
Against Obote's leadership
Of the liberation forces
Resulted in election
As a leader of Uganda
A precarious authority
In the person of Yusuf Lule
And subsequently in the person
Of Godfrey Binaisa.

**The Gang who organized Moshi .
Thought it better to construct
A weak Government which tottered
At their very smallest push
And bound to fall in the first storm.**

**They wanted their own agent,
Not an independent person,
To be president of Uganda.
He was to be suffered to remain,
His excellency the President,
As long as he obeyed implicitly
The directions of his principals.**

**With the election of Lule,
All the temporizers and trimmers
Like the white ants which fly to light
Converged towards Lule's camp.**

**There sprang into existence
A caterpillar species
Of anxious politicians
Never before so conspicuous
In our country, Uganda:
They disclaimed political ties
Except those ties binding them
To the president personally.**

**It was the Moshi victory
Of the anti-Obote elements
That made the mighty victory
Against dictator Amin
Produce in the minds of millions
The consequences of defeat.**

**The victory of Moshi
Was the triumph of those persons
Who had hardly**

**Contributed anything
To the liberation
Of our country Uganda.**

**It thus became a cornerstone
Of the perversion of history
Of our country Uganda.
The whole past was falsified
Distorted and discoloured
By imaginary inventions
Of the immense contributions
To the liberation war
By those interloppers.**

**You found them everywhere
Puffing with self-importance
And chattering about this
And about that contribution —
Imaginary Contribution —
To the Liberation war
And reviling Ugandans
Who fought side by side with Tanzanians.**

**They exaggerated
Their sufferings under Amin
To have been eminently severe
Whereas it was as nothing
Compared to that experienced
By those they assisted Amin
To subjugate and victimize.**

**But in their heart of hearts
These imaginary heroes
Knew the truth about themselves
And they were scared by the truth.**

**How was Lule or Binaisa
Who never raised a finger**

To fight Amin going to rule those
Who fought and toppled Amin?

They could possibly have done so
By flattering the liberators
Supplicating them and bringing them
With offers of very high posts
And these courses were, indeed tried.
But how could any leader
Preserve harmony by such means?

It soon became apparent
That the position of Lule
And subsequently of Binaisa
Were exactly the same
As of persons being blackmailed.

Increasing demands upon them
Were made by some politicians
Who claimed that they had gorillas
Who fought the Amin Regime.

Since some politicians had
In the course of their exile
Become so perverse that they couldn't
Live contentedly anywhere
And had become so greedy
That their object was to get rich,
At the shortest possible time,
It was manifestly clear
That they couldn't be appeased for long.
The time was doomed to come
When the presidents could no longer
Give in to their increasing demands.

Besides, as time went on,
Neither Lule nor Binaisa
Was prepared to content himself

With either the substance of power
Or the semblance of power.
Each of them demanded both:
The semblance and the substance.
This led to awkward situations:
They resisted where they should have yielded
And yielded where they should have resisted.

Both the Government of Lule
And of Godfrey Binaisa
Were embarrassments to Uganda.
First, because of the rapacity
Of many of their Ministers
Who openly swindled the nation
Of several millions of shillings.
The Military Commission
Was busy investigating
As to whether the swindling
Had reached the Government apex.

Secondly, they were embarrassments
Because of the scandalous passion
Actuated by a remorseless
And unscrupulous Zeal
On the part of the two presidents
To have political followers.

In their pursuit for the attainment
Of that excellent end
They forgot the turpitude of means:
They incited evil passions
Of hereditary rule
Which once more began to rankle
In the bosoms of many.
They perpetrated their object
Without any internal twinges
Of that God in man — the conscience.

They planned the restoration
Of hereditary rule
With consummate ability
But the attempts to execute it
Was complete in nothing
But a succession of blunders.

Lule had unsuccessfully
Attempted to woo D.P.¹
To elect him as leader
Of the Democratic party.
Binaisa also tried in vain
To wrestle the leadership
Of the Uganda People's Congress
From Dr. Milton Obote.
The two thus having failed
To lead either of the party
They opted to lead K.Y.²

They couldn't possibly have lost there
All they had to do was to promise
The restoration of monarchy.

Lule's obstinacy
And Binaisa's folly
Blinded them to the great risk
Inherent in that course.
The wild talks of some royalists
Who were neither distinguished
For their taciturnity
Nor for their discretion
Deluded them into a belief
That the three props of their Government
Namely the Tanzanian army
And the Uganda army

¹Democratic Party.

²Kabaka Yekka meaning King Only.

And the Consultative Council¹
Though ostensibly opposed
To hereditary rule
Would not raise a finger
Against their plan if presented
As an accomplished fact.

In order to win the votes
In the Consultative Council
For his Restoration Plan
Lule tried to pack the Council
With his personal appointees.

Binaisa went a step further.
He proposed that most of the members
Of the Consultative Council
Be appointed either Ministers
Or Deputy Ministers
And the remainders were welcomed
To other appointments.

These subterranean manoeuvres
Gave an ominous character
To their administrations
And the Presidents were accused
Of treachery to Moshi Spirit
And the outcry was loud.
It was said that since the Presidents
Had given a forewarning
The nation should be forearmed.

It was said of Yusuf Lule
That he was just "a thief"
Who didn't enter the Presidency
By the main door but by climbing
Over the Moshi fences.

It was further said of him
That he was like manna

¹The National Consultative Council (N.C.C.)
which was elected at Moshi acted as the interim
legislature during the rule of Lule and Binaisa.

Which God bestowed on Uganda
And that like manna from heaven
Which was excellent while fresh
And foul after a short while,
Lule's rule was excellent
While Lule was in Moshi
But the rule became foul
When Lule was in Uganda.

Looking at the series of events
Which led to the removal
Of Presidents Yusuf Lule
And Godfrey Binaisa
From the vantage point of hindsight
It appears clearly that
It was unwise for Lule
And Godfrey Binaisa
To have run into conflicts
With forces that put them
And maintained them into power.

Why did Lule and Binaisa
Not trust the forces behind them?
The answer is that both saw
At the core of those forces
Apollo Milton Obote.
Both Lule and Binaisa
Were scared about the influence
They considered Obote had
In the Consultative Council,
In Uganda Armed Forces,
And in Tanzanian Army
Through his friend Julius Nyerere.

Thus both Lule and Binaisa
Being apolitical
Chose to ignore and to oppose
The means that maintained their power.
Had they pursued a cautious

And a soothing policy
Towards those three forces

They might have avoided the spark
That produced the flame
That burnt the banners
Of their presidencies
In its conflagration.

But happily, as it turned out,
Such was their indiscretion
That they frequently put forward
In the most offensive forms
Claims which were directly opposed
To the very continuance
Of their presidencies.

First, Lule enraged members
Of the Consultative Council
By telling them
That his powers as president
Were governed
By Uganda Constitution
Of Nineteen Sixty-Seven
Hence, he claimed, it followed that
The Council had no power
To approve the appointments
Made by him as President
Or to inquire into what he did.

Binaisa subsequently
Made the same claim as Lule
When he dismissed Paulo Muwanga
From the Ministry of Home Affairs.¹

The falls of Lule and Binaisa
Were primarily rooted
In their beliefs that between them
And those who put them into power
There could be nothing at all
Resembling a mutual contract
Since Uganda Constitution
Of Nineteen Sixty-Seven

¹Internal Affairs.

Had vested in them despotic powers
And no organ in existence
Could divest them of that power.

Secondly, Lule did move
To replace Tanzanian troops
With troops from Commonwealth countries.

Thirdly, he made a further move
To disband Uganda Army.

The Uganda Liberation Army
Consisted of the Ugandan exiles
Who had not been forced to join
The liberation army
Nor enlisted for lucre
But men, who, on their own accord,
Put their own lives to jeopardy
To save the people of Uganda.

Lule had made an order
That Commander Tito Okello
(Who is now Lieutenant General)
Be retired on grounds of age
And that Army Chief of Staff
Lieutenant-Colonel Oyite
(Who is now a Major General)
Be posted to China
As Uganda Ambassador
And the rest of the army
Was to be disbanded forthwith.

President Binaisa
Did subsequently follow
The footsteps of Yusuf Lule:
He demanded the replacement
Of all Tanzanian troops
Who had left Uganda
With certain foreign troops
And he demanded the dismissals
Of both Commander Okello

And Chief of Staff Oyite
On the grounds that they had recruited
Armies personal to them.

Although the allegation
About personal armies
Was proved to have been baseless
Yet Binaisa went ahead
And fired the Chief of Staff
And demanded that the Chief,
Leave the country forthwith
As an ambassador to France.
The army acted at once:
They told poor Binaisa
To get out and to stay out.

The falls of Yusuf Lule
And Godfrey Binaisa
Were due as much to their persons
And as much to their stars.

Lule became an object
Of discontent and derision
Because of his fondness for worthless,
Corrupt, rapacious minions
Who in two months of his rule
Had robbed the exchequer
Of several millions of shillings.

The country
Had reached such a situation
That the dignity of the Office
Of Uganda's President
Could only be preserved
By discarding its holder.
Hence, Yusuf Lule had to go.

As the news of Lule's Fall
Spread around in the country,
Roads and bars and market places

Outside Buganda Region
Broke forth with jubilation.
But, in Buganda Region,
Lule's corrupt ministers
Made use of their positions
To organize a demonstration
To oppose Lule's departure.

The news that Yusuf Lule
Had been voted out of the office
Of Uganda presidency
By the Consultative Council
Threw poor Yusuf Lule
Who had flattered himself
That the Consultative Council
Dared not remove him from power
Into exuding a passion
Of peevishness of an old man.

Smarting from his great defeat
He made it clear to all persons
That the defeat had only hardened him.
He denounced Tanzania
As being responsible for his fall!
He accused Tanzania
Of pursuing a policy
That could lead to the conversion
Of Uganda as its vassal.
But it's clear that neither Tanzania
Nor those who voted Lule out
Were prepared to accept
A state of vassalage
For our country Uganda.

It is now very well known
That during the Sixty Eight days
Of Lule's rule in Uganda
Almost everything went wrong
With the administration.

What is not very well known
Is that Lule wasn't the Sole Cause
For maladministration:

He was obliged to work with
The machinery he found.
And the machinery he found
Wasn't only rusted but rotten.

Some of Amin's appointees
In various political posts
Had fled the country with him
And some of the remainders
Were in prison or in hiding
And Amin's Civil Service
Which had been demoralized
Was simply not functioning.

Offices had been ransacked
And the body politic
Was evidently straining
Every nerve that it possessed
In a wrestle for life or death.

These glaring infirmities
Of mismanagement by Amin
And of mismanagement due
To a chaotic state
Caused by the liberation war
Shouldn't be imputed on Lule.

Both Lule and Binaisa
Were forced to work with timeservers
Who had been very saintly
In their profession of love
For their President Amin
And who had been unscrupulous
In their dealing with the populace
And who had either remained home
Or had fled with Iddi Amin
Only to return at home

At the earliest opportunity
To rejoin the government.

They were forced to work with men
Who regarded politics
As a dexterous game of chance,
Who have no zeal for a cause,
No reverence for prescription,
Who renounce all thoughts of constancy
In order to maintain a post
In any ruling power.

They were forced to work with men
Who are adept at seizing
The right moment
For deserting a cause
Which is about to sink
And whose fertile resources
Are ever on the watch
For any indications
Of a coming adverse reaction
Against faction now uppermost
So as not to be late
Into entering a new career
Of power and pomp and wealth
With some new associates.

Yusuf Lule, for instance,
Chose as his confidante
A person who was a Minister
In Obote's Government
And was Amin's top diplomat
And again Lule's Minister.

He chose to that position
A person who is rather rash,
A vainglorious errant
Best known for the intemperance
And extreme of his bigotry,
His deadly enmity
Towards the non-Bantu-tribe,

And the animosity he bears
Towards Bantu of non-royal descent.

He chose to that position
A person whose policy
Seemed to be nothing but persecution
Who breathed nothing but vengeance.

Lule didn't have the firmness
Nor the skill to withstand
The clamorous importunities
With which this confidante
Who is ever vindictive
Demanded Vengeance on the followers
Of the Uganda People's Congress.

On the advice of this confidante
Yusuf Lule appointed
As provincial commissioners
Some persons known to bear grudges
Against the U.P.C.

Like a warlike barbarian,
Lule's confidante,
Who seems to esteem revenge
As the most exquisite of pleasures
And the most sacred of duties,
Began to boast openly
Of his mission to teach U.P.C.
A lesson that it won't forget.

He made Lule treat as trifles
The most serious state business
And he converted trifles
Into serious state business!
The gravest affair of the state
Was to take curative measures
And preventive measures
To rid Uganda immediately
Of daily massacres and lootings

**By Amin's fugitive soldiers
As well as armed criminals.**

**It called for immediate recruitment
And training of security forces
But the government didn't see this!
It continued to muddle through.**

**Apart from this confidante,
Other confidantes of Lule
And Godfrey Binaisa
Are distinguished for their avarice
And their eminent successes
In starving public service
And deranging public finance
To enable those parasites
To grow rich and richer.**

**They had boundless license
And they used it like vultures
Which follow the march of the army.
These were the cabal fanatics
Who, for lucre, acted the zeal
Characteristic of neophytes.**

**When Lule was voted out
These fanatics found themselves
Without their gentle leader
In the midst of a population
Which looked upon them as a drove
of wolves.**

**Another factor responsible
For maladministration
Was the Consultative Council.**

**Both Lule and Binaisa
Ruled Uganda through the Council
In their capacities as Chairman**

Of the Moshi formed U.N.L.F.
Which was the organization
Devised to rule Uganda
As a political party
Whereas in fact it was not.

It was merely a coalition
Of political parties
And like all coalitions
It had, inherent in it,
Seeds of dissolution.
The more numerous the factions
Constituting the allies
The greater the dangers
Of eventual dissolution.

The parties forming U.N.L.F.
Were U.P.C., D.P., K.Y.
How then were these parties
Expected to unite for long
In amicable harmony?

When Lule identified himself
With Kabaka Yekka
Jealousies inevitably
Sprung up and embittered relations.
When Binasisa was identified
With the Uganda People's Congress
The allegiance of D.P.
And the Kabaka Yekka
To the front became lukewarm.
Democratic party leader
Mr. Paul Semogerere
Rejected to accept
Appointment as a Minister
In Binasisa Government.

It was thus no wonder
That the legislative arm
Of the Liberation Front

**Namely the Consultative Council
Pertook the form of concuses
Engaged in counteracting
And blocking each other.**

**Moshi was the easiest igress
To the National Assembly.
The elected members of the Council
Were not bothered to go through
The miseries of a campaign;
They carried nobody's baby;
None of their bull was slaughtered
To entertain the electorate;
Nor did they buy cases of beer
To entertain their campaigners;
They risked no losing and no insults
And above all they were spared
The pang of watching their victors
Carried shoulder high by the crowd.**

**The people elected in Moshi
Could not claim in any way
To represent the deliberate sense,
Of the people of Uganda.**

**Many of them never expected
To be directly elected
To the National Assembly.
The sole claim of many of them
To the membership of the Council
Was their ferocious hatred
Of the Uganda People's Congress.**

**It was not to take very long
For their extremism to cause
Sober minded Ugandans
To watch with extreme dismay
The kind of persons into whose hands
The legislative powers had fallen.
Soon there was a general cry**

Of discontent and disaffection
That the country was being misgoverned
And had become a prey of worthless men.
True, the Council had some men of
 goodwill.
But the exertions of such men
Were constantly being frustrated.

The history of the Council
Was one of perfidious quarrels,
Fiercest animosities and intrigues.
It was full, on the one hand,
Of grovelling compliances
And yet full, on the other hand,
Of venomous artifices.

They were adept in the art
Of schismatic agitations
But not versed in the duty
Of their legislative calling.
They made blunders
But would never admit
To have made them.

They introduced into politics
Two unbecoming phenomena.
First, is the phenomenon
Of Ugandan refugees
To beg and borrow as of right
From the Government Treasury
The sum of shillings Forty thousand
In foreign currency
With a prior assurance
That there will be no repayment.
It was therefore no wonder
That the Government of Lule
And Godfrey Binaisa
Dominated by exiles
Became some sort of charities.

Secondly, is the phenomenon
Of allocation of necessities
And luxuries to themselves.
The rulers and the ruled
Were seen to live world apart.
The gentry afforded
Scanty opportunities
Such as soap, sugar and clothes
Saw with indignation
The ever increasing splendour
And profusion beyond all example
In which their rulers lived
In Nile Mansion and the State House.
Their rulers plea for economy
Only fell on deaf ears:
Since the gentry had nothing
The plea to them was meaningless
And since the rulers weren't economical
Why should the gentry be?

The minds of Ugandans
Was thus in such a temper
That the public act of their rulers
Excited much discontent.

Amongst the rulers
Who deserve special mention
Are those known as the Gang of Four¹
But for this Gang, neither Lule
Nor Godfrey Binaisa
Would possibly have been toppled.

They exposed Lule's blunders
And brought about Lule's downfall
And they campaigned furiously
On the side of Binaisa

¹The Gang of Four were four former University lecturers namely: Professor Nabudere, Professor Tundon, Lecturers—Kugumayo and Omwony Ojwok.

**For a controlled system of election,
Lule fell because they exposed him
And Binaisa fell
Because they supported him.**

**The four used to parade themselves
As men who had received Communist
dogma
With childlike docility
But these erstwhile communists
Became capitalists at Moshi.**

**When the Gang of Four was supreme,
No member of the Council
Dared to admit his membership
Of the U.P.C. openly
Except Dr. Kirunda.**

**Most of the talk about U.P.C.
Took place in private houses
After a couple of beer.
Some agitators from the Council
Pledged their support in secret
To the Uganda People's Congress
And reported to the Gang
The whole episode later.**

**Meanwhile the coalition
Which people like Paulo Muwanga
And Luwuliza Kirunda
Were trying by conscious efforts
To dissolve at any cost
Was in danger of falling apart
From intrinsic rottenness.**

**Two of the constituent parties
And two only were in hearty support
Of the U.N.L.F. Coalition:**

**These were the K.Y. Supporters
And deserters from D.P.
As well as from U.P.C.
Nor were these two groups quite free
From mutual jealousies and antipathies.
But both were resolved on one thing:
Never to allow U.P.C.
To come to power again.**

**They were prepared to make a common
cause
With D.P. on one condition
Namely that the D.P. accept their leaders
Amongst D.P. leadership.
Both K.Y. and the Deserters
Were prepared to go to any extent
To ensure that the U.P.C
Did not contest the election.
All of them placed their whole soul
In the struggle to that end.**

**The D.P. hesitated.
Were they to allow those upstarts
To swamp D.P. leadership?
What support had the Deserters
Amongst the Uganda masses?
Would the accommodation
Of the Deserters in the top leadership
Of the Democratic Party
Not dilute the image of D.P.?
The stand of D.P. on the issue
Was never to become very clear
Till after Lule and Binaisa
Had already been toppled.**

**But, the U.P.C.
In the expanded N.C.C.
Accepted right from the start
That the war against the Deserters
And all their sympathizers
Was a U.P.C. war.**

**They offered to bear and did bear
All the burdens which the war
Had made necessary.
They were persecuted
And were refused appointments.
When Osinde Wangwor
Was voted by a majority
Of the N.C.C. Members
To become the Minister of State
In the President's Office
Binaisa refused to make the appointment.
"I am being surrounded" he grumbled,
"By too many Obote men."**

**When the people of Uganda
After a long depravation
Of their political rights
To stand to be elected
To the National Assembly
Were beginning to embrace
The liberators as the restorers
Of political freedom
There were heard some whispers
Which at the beginning
Were so far indistinct
But perhaps more ominous
Because of their indistinctness
Imputing to the Gang of Four
A deliberate design
To rob Ugandans of a free franchise!
Their scheme was to close the door
Of the house of Parliament
Against all the persons
Who didn't see eye to eye with them
By arrogating unto themselves
The right to screen candidates
Desirous to be elected.**

**They planned to draw the line
Between persons to be admitted**

And those to be excluded
As candidates for election.
The history of Moshi
Was to be repeated
In Uganda Capital!
For your candidature to succeed
You had to appear to them
Like their very caprices.
They weren't looking for interpreters
Of the sense of the nation
But for interpreters
Of the sense of the Gang of Four.

If the Gang had been impelled
To resort to screening candidates
By the belief that they would nominate
Much better candidates
They would have been opposed
With a lot of sympathy.

But since they were impelled
By the fear that since they hadn't
Any popular support
They won't succeed in a free election
And that in any case
Their leadership was bound to be
swamped
If the election was free
The opposition against them
Was vented with the spleen it deserved.

Because their attempts to encroach
On our rights to elect our leaders
Was fully supported
By President Binaisa
Who didn't want Dr. Obote
To contest the election
The minds of our people
Became so much excited
That the populace posed one question
If they can deny us the right

Of electing our leader
Can't we equally be entitled
To claim the privilege
Of overstepping their claim
To rule this Pearl of Africa?

Tales abound about devils
Who could be raised easily
But couldn't be laid easily.
As long as the magician,
Who called them up kept them busy,
That long would they do his biddings.
But, if he left them in repose
Then they would tear him to pieces.

Lule was soon to find out
That the N.C.C. he raised
Was not to be easily laid:
They became ungovernable;
They raged from the tops of hotels;
And in many of their meetings,
They chattered, frowned, whined and yelled.

Lule who appeared to them in Moshi
Like a promising pole-star
Appeared to them in Kampala
Like an ominous Apocalypse Star
Which fell from its celestial dwelling place
To plague and torment the earth
To turn its sweetness into bitterness
And its nourishment into poison
Binaisa equally
Appeared like the Apocalypse Star

And so the U.P.C. leaders
As well as D.P. leaders
Came out openly and said
That they will contest the election
Under the banners of their parties
And that none will be allowed
To screen their candidates.

**Binaisa responded
By ordering the Police
To arrest all the persons
Campaigning as party members.
The Police agreed to do so
As soon as the necessary law
Was enacted by the Council.**

**Since no such law was likely
To be enacted by the Council
Against the opposition
Of both U.P.C. and D.P.
Binaisa vented his wrath
Against an army leader
Whom Binaisa maintained
Supported free election.
He fired Brigadier Oyite
And the Military Council
In turn fired Binaisa.**

**Binaisa's one main fault
Was, so to speak, his head.
While on his way to Uganda
To lobby for an appointment
As ambassador to the U.N.
He found himself suddenly
Made the President of Uganda!**

**His sudden elevation
And his strong ambition
Married to his judgement
That was never very ripe
Combined to turn his head.
Whereas Binaisa's fault
May thus be said to be his head
Lule's fault was his nature:
His stubbornness produced effects
Opposed to those he expected.**

He was, for instance, adamant
To the advice that the decisions
Of the Consultative Council
Which was the representative
Of the people of Uganda
Ought to be conciliated
And conciliated at any price
And hence
That it was advisable for him
To attain whatever object
He may have had in his mind
By a road less objectionable
To the Consultative Council.
Such advice only embittered him!

It thus became a common saying
That Lule was the avowed enemy
Of those whose fidelity
He owed his presidency:
That nothing short of the utter ruin
Of those he saw as his enemies
Would contend or please Lule.
The sturdy spirit of Ugandans
Thus swelled up against him.

Although he was kept informed
Of these unwelcome developments,
Yet, Lule would not change his ways!
He continued to be cold,
A stranger to his people,
An exile in the State House.

He took no pain to hide the fact
That he did not like strangers
And that he preferred the company
Of his old friends of both sexes
When he was toppled from power
The list of names of the people
That he had prepared for appointments
Has been called the "List of Old Friends."

He regarded many members
Of the Consultative Council
As enemies or as rivals
He made it clear to members:
Friends, enemies and rivals alike
That his duty was to govern
And in no way to obey;
That he would only yield obedience
When their demands were in compliance
With his propensities!
He held that to do otherwise
Would have been to abdicate
His right to judge the propriety
Of each and every proposal.

It was thus hardly possible
To keep him from regarding
A demand for him to obey
As an insult and an affront
And to restrain him from affronting
The person making the demand.
Toward all such persons
His conduct was generally
Imperious and insolent.

To many who knew Lule well
The day he was pronounced president
Was a day of grief and of mourning
And his subsequent attempt
To claim legitimacy
Under Uganda Constitution
Remains a memorial of Shame.

THE PRESIDENTS AND FORMER CRONIES

(i) MUTESA AND IBINGIRA

The course
Which Sir Edward Mutésa pursued
And the effect he produced
As the ceremonial President
Depended not so much on him
As on the circumstances
In which he was placed
As the Kabaka of Buganda.

He was indeed more than a king.
He was the Husband of Man
¹ Before whom
All prostrated themselves.
The time thus made him
Who he was.
It is the age that forms the man
Not the man that forms the age.
There were ages
When man fashioned shapeless blocks
And worshipped them as deities.

We are inclined to think
That without Sir Edward,
The Uganda Crisis of Sixty-six

¹ Sabasajja.

Would still have taken place.
His presence merely outran
The crisis in the direction
It was already following.

The greatest contribution
That his presence made
As far as his subjects
Were concerned
Is that it snatched the issues
Which were the causes
Of the crisis
Away from an examining frame of mind
To a believing frame of mind.

As a king,
He was the root
Of his tribe
And the author
Of a new code.

So, if he chose to trample
On the laws then, by that very fact,
Those laws have ceased to exist
And his subjects were thus free
To follow the set example
And to trample on those laws.
If he chose to rebel
Against the Central Government
The rebellion itself
Became legal by the very fact
That he was the one who led it.

“The Kabaka” states Apter
¹“Is the symbol of the past
And the continuity
Of historical tradition.
If there is more than a hint
Of the scandal that periodically

¹Political Kingdom.

Surrounds the court,
It nonetheless has about it
An atmosphere of primeness.
Any assault upon moral virtue
Becomes in its own way,
An expression of moral virtue itself.
The departure from the norm,
In the case of the Kabaka,
Appears simply to reassert the norm”.

Now if you add
The constitutional immunities
Inherent in the President's post
To the automatic
Consecrations of desecrations
Inherent in the post of Kabakaship,
Then the kind of temptations
That confronted Sir Edward
Becomes manifest to all.

It is common knowledge
That a constitutional
Head of state,
Can do no wrong.
He cannot do any wrong
Because he has no power
To do anything.
He is merely a rubber stamp.
His work, apart from presiding
Over state ceremonies
Is to stamp by way of affixing
His signatures to decisions
Made by parliament, and government.

He is like a queen ant:
He does nothing at all
Like the queen ant, he must sit there
And watch
With stoic imperturbability
The struggles and scrambles

Going on all around him.

But as soon as he abdicates
His passive chair and joins
The active scramble
For decision making,
Then he must,
Like all other scramblers,
Accept the stings and the bites
Inherent in political struggles.

When in Nineteen Sixty-six
Sir Edward in his capacity
As the Constitutional President
Invited foreign troops
To ensure order in Uganda
It appeared to the Government
As if Sir Edward had joined
The scramble for political power.

From the point of view
Of Obote's opponents
There was much reason
For the request.
But, the point of view
Of the foreign countries
From which such help was sought,
There was much reason
For turning down the request.

In normal circumstances
Sir Edward Mutesa
As the Constitutional President
Had no constitutional powers
To request any foreign troops.
Only the Prime Minister
Had that power.
The foreign countries
Might have considered
The request from this President
In abnormal circumstances,

Of insurrection in the capital
During the absence
Of the Prime Minister.

In short, they would be
Foreign troop donors
Demanded insurrection
Before invasion
Whereas Obote's enemies
Demanded invasion
Before insurrection.
There was thus a deadlock.

Obote's enemies knew
That insurrection
Without the backing
Of a single discipline unit
Of the Uganda army
Would be put down long before
The Foreign troops could arrive.
They would be troop donors
On the other hand, knew well,
That invasion
Without insurrection
Would outrage
World public opinion.
There was thus a stalemate.

The resort to violence
As a means
Of bringing about changes
Signified that the body
Of citizens that did believe
In hereditary rule
Had ceased to be fundamentally
At one with the other citizens
Upon the main goals
Of the activities
Of Obote's Government.

**They had concluded
That the Government activities
Were systematically
And permanently excluding them
From power and consequently
From the benefits of power.**

**The fear of the invasion
Of their customary right to rule
And of the disturbance
Of their wanted expectations
So hanged over their lives
That they couldn't seek to settle
Their differences by reason.
They thus resorted to the guns.**

**The soul behind Mutesa's move
Was of course Grace Ibingira.
With all the cleverness,
Grace Ibingira was deficient,
In common sense.**

**His mind was ever full of schemes
Which on a superficial scrutiny appears
To be either impracticable
Or just downright pernicious.**

**His heart was ulcerated
By one monomania, namely,
That top political leadership
Of Uganda should be confined
To people from "royal" families.
His faith in his schemes
To confine the leadership of the country
To the royalty mainly
And the numerically superior
And the opulent tribes
Was so strong
Even to martyrdom.**

**His belief in the necessity
Of the schemes was honest.
Indeed, if it was not,
It wouldn't have deceived so many.**

**The eloquence
With which he pleaded his case
And the sternest expression
Of his face,
His voice, his gestures,
His boundless self-confidence
Had all the charm
Of enthusiasm.**

**His general demeanour
And the air he gave himself
Deluded many people
After the fashion
Of a false prophet,
To become his pupils
And from his pupils
He drew new faith
In his own belief.**

**There was, of course, a mixture
Of truth in his day dream.
Enough truth to appeal
To the credulity of his pupils.
It is absurd to demand
That political leadership
Should come from royalty
But it is true
That political leadership
Should come from
The numerically superior party
Not necessarily tribes.**

**The criterion
For political leadership
Is not a tribe but personality.**

His puffed up bubble
Of grievances
Soared high
And glittered brilliantly

To the eyes of some beholders.
But even as it soared
It was clear
To any shrewd politician
That it was doomed to burst
With a terrific explosion.
And that was what indeed happened.

Very seldom has any villany
Devised by imposters
Been so calamitous
To the society
As the dreams of this man.

There followed a violent outcry
Against Grace Ibingira.
Leading U.P.C. members
Pressed Dr. Obote
To dismiss him from the Ministry.
Dr. Obote would not at first
Listen to such advice.

Complained a leading U.P.C.
"Since he had decided
To run a Jesus Christ Government
Let him be prepared
For the crucifixion."
Said another, "Such lenity
Is less attributable
To good nature
Than to a weak nature."

Obote too had his supporters
Who argued that he understood
Uganda politics better

Than those who obtruded
Their advice on him.
Such was Obote's popularity
Within the U.P.C. party,
So they argued,
That nothing could have been more futile
Than the attempts of Ibingira
To win the U.P.C. Leadership
By constitutional means.
As long as he confined himself
To constitutional endeavours
That long could Obote afford
To ignore him and his followers.

The mighty elephant
Would do exactly that
If the rabbit were to challenge it
In a game of tug of war.
The mighty elephant
Did exactly that
When according to a fable
The rabbit had challenged it
In a game of tug of war.
It ignored the rabbit
Till it later discovered
That it was not the rabbit
That was pulling the rope
At the other end
But the mighty hippo.

Obote also tolerated
Mr. Grace Ibingira
Till he later discovered
That Grace Ibingira
Had mighty interests
Which were calling the tune.

By then Ibingira had succeeded
To infect political atmosphere
With all sorts of suspicions

And people imagined
That there was a snare
In every sentence
And that there was an evasion
In every phrase.

Factional spirit had become
More strongly excited.
An observant eye detected
Behind the Ibingira's moves
Hatred, fear, and ambition
Disguised under the specious pretence
Of hereditary royalty.
Yet there was also much zeal.
A real honest zeal.

(ii) OBOTE AND ONAMA

The year Nineteen Sixty-four
Witnessed two important events
Which had far reaching consequences
In the history of Uganda.
These were the election
Of Mr. Grace Ibingira
As Secretary General
Of Uganda People's Congress
In place of John Kakonge
And the return
From Buganda to Bunyoro
Of two countries
Which the British Colonialists
Had given to Buganda
As a war booty.

The loss of the Lost Counties
To Buganda region
Through a referendum
Had considerable
Psychological impact
In Uganda generally

And Buganda particularly.
It meant that Buganda
Had ceased to be
What it had once been
And what it continued to be
Down to Nineteen Sixty-four.
From that year Buganda
Which had domineered
Over the land
Of her once powerful neighbours,
Buganda which had sent
Her armies in alliance
With the British colonialists
To subdue other areas
Of this country Uganda,
Was no more.

Nothing remained
Of that old Buganda
Save, possibly, an arrogance
Which might have once excited hatred
But which if it were to excite
Anything at all,
It would excite only
Disinterest.
Sir Edward Mutesa,
The President of Uganda
Refused to sign
That Act of Parliament
Transferring the lost counties
From Buganda to Bunyoro.

Sir Edward was torn between
Fulfilling his duty
To his countrymen
Or to his tribesmen.
He chose the latter.
For this he has been much blamed.

To me the question was
Neither one of tribalism

Nor one of nationalism.
It was merely a question
Of a cowardly approver
Or of a brave approver.
After working secretly
And after working openly
To ensure that the Lost Counties
Did not go to Bunyoro,
He would have been
A cowardly approver
To endorse what was opposed
To his own conscience
And which he could refuse to endorse
Without having committed
A breach of any law.

The Constitution of Uganda
Of the time had provided
That in the event of the failure
Of the President to sign
Any official document
Which by law requires his signature,
The Prime Minister would sign it.

Nevertheless, the partiality
Of President Mutesa
In this matter
Contributed
To the growing rift
Between the U.P.C. and K.Y.

It was therefore not surprising
When Parliament enacted
A law against K.Y.
Making it an offence
Against anyone
To use a symbol
Connected
With the name of a Kuler
Or of Constitutional Head

**In order to incite
Disaffection
Against another Kuler
Or another Constitutional Head.**

**The law had the effect
Of restricting the establishment
Of K.Y. offices
Outside Buganda region.
As the Katikiro of Buganda
Mayanja Nkangi put it,
It is very difficult
To ensure that a name
Of a ruler or a constitutional head
Can be mentioned without causing
Disaffection
Or feeling of ill-will
In some quarters.¹**

**Now let us turn to the election
Of Mr. Grace Ibingira
As the Secretary General
Of Uganda People's Congress.**

**The Uganda People's Congress
Annual Delegates Conference
Held in Gulu in Nineteen Sixty-four
Brought about a split
Based on ideology.**

**The issue was raised
By Adoko Nekyon
Minister of Planning
And Community Development.
Nekyon was pre-eminent
In every quality
That either exalts or destroys.
He was eloquent,**

¹*Uganda Argus*, 11.1.1966.

**Intrepid, adventurous`
And, above all,
Ready of inventions.
His pride was insolent:
Insolent to ferocity
And his spirit was daring:
Daring to rashness.**

**Nekyon condemned communism
In the strongest terms.
He stressed that there was a group
Within the U.P.C.
Who seemed to favour communism
But deliberately hid
Their true intention
Under socialism.
He made it clear
That the U.P.C.
Would never favour communism
Because of the great importance
It attached to security,
Happiness, and freedom
Of the individual.**

**The innuendo was self-evident.
The Secretary General
Mr. John Kakonge
Was being referred to as a communist.
It did not therefore come
As a great surprise
When Mr. John Kakonge
Was ousted from the post
Of Secretary General
And replaced by Ibingira,
Then Minister of State.¹**

¹*Uganda Argus*, Wednesday, 6 May, 1964.

A week later, on 6th May,
Mr. John Kakonge
Called a press conference
Which took place in his house.
He was surrounded
By U.P.C. Headquarters staff;
Mr. Kirunda Kivejinja,
Mr. Wadada Musasi,
And Mr. Bidandi Ssali.

He said that it was wrong
For him to continue to act
On false pretences,
Thus giving the impression
That all was well
Within the party
When that was not the case.
“I have no doubt”, he said
That the President of the party
Is behind
The move to eject me”.

The Group behind the President
Had, he said, been responsible
For keeping him out of Parliament
And had attempted to oust him
From the Secretary Generalship
Of the U.P.C. Party
During the previous year.
It had failed then but had succeeded
A year later.

“But I have given too much
Of my energy
To building the U.P.C.
And I cannot tamely surrender
The building that I helped
To construct
From its foundation.”

He affirmed that no amount
Of manoeuvres would divert him
From his firm resolve to render
A selfless service
In the interest
Of the broad masses
Of Uganda
Since that had been the cause
Of his joining the U.P.C.
As its founder-member.

He warned, however,
That if the party's executive
Were to expel him,
He would have no alternative
But to form a new party.

He pointed out
That many African nationalists
Had been called communists.¹

On the following morning
Mr. Adoko Nekyon
With his anti-Kakonge group
Consisting of three Ministers:
Minister of State Grace Ibingira,
Minister of Works B.K. Kirya
And Minister of Internal Affairs
Mr. Felix Onama
Held a press conference.

Nekyon denied that there was
Any split between
The left wing and the right wing
Within the U.P.C. Party.

The idea to have two wings,
Said Adoko Nekyon,
Had come about in '61

¹*Uganda Argus*, Thursday, May 7, 1964.

When some M.P.s had decided
"To move to the left
On issues of principle."

He claimed that he was
The leader of the left wing
But added that the whole idea
Was then dying
Because the whole party
Was already moving left:
"If any group is moving
More to the left than my wing
Then that group should be communist."

"When one is defeated",
Moralized Adoko Nekyon,
"He should swallow his pride
And accept the order of the day."

Ibingira affirmed
That it was not true
That they were expelling
Mr. John Kakonge
From the U.P.C. Party

But advised John Kakonge
Not to try to force himself
On the people of Uganda
When they were trying to have a change.

Said Mr. B. K. Kirya:
"If he wants to form a new party,
There is no need for him to wait.
Let him go forward."

Said Mr. Felix Onama,
"Kakonge made the statement
Out of emotion."

But fate is a great joker.
It always laughs last.

**Kakonge died a U.P.C.
But none of those
Who led the battle against him—
Ibingira and Nekyon,
Onama and Kirya—
Has remained a U.P.C.**

**In nineteen sixty-five
It began to be clear
That a noiseless revolution
Was brewing in Uganda.
Partly by chance
And partly by device
The U.P.C. Government
Was splitting into two.**

**One group was led
By the President of the party
Dr. Milton Obote.
The other group was led
By the Secretary General
Of the U.P.C.
Mr. Grace Ibingira.**

**At the beginning very few
Seemed to have understood
The nature and importance
Of the split.**

**But everybody could see
That the Government Ministers
Were distributed
Not unequally behind
Obote and Ibingira
Leaving only a few neutrals
Who seemed to have adopted
The policy of Wait and See.**

**The two groups
Were perpetually haranguing,
Backbiting, and caballing
Against each other.**

As a result of the division
The temper of the National Assembly
Was becoming increasingly
Unpredictable and ungovernable.

The Ibingira followers
Were ever prompt
To defend one another
Against every attack
And in order to swell their number
In the National Assembly
They closely bound themselves
To opposition members
By public and private ties.

The history
Of this period of change
And of the steps taken
To accommodate the situation
By meeting daily exigencies
By daily expedients
Would have made interesting reading
Had they not culminated
Into Uganda Crisis
In nineteen sixty-six.

Many staunch party supporters
Had insisted that the separatists
Be kicked out of the Ministries
And that during the coming election,
They be kicked out of the party.
They argued that a Ministry
Was reward for loyalty
To the leader of a Government
And should only be given
To those who were able
And prepared to follow that leader
Without scruple or reservations.

Obote found himself
Surrounded everywhere

By malicious talebearers,
And officious counsels
Who intruded their advice
On the best way' to end the evils
Of mutual animosity
Of the factions.

He remained inscrutable.
He uttered not a word
Blaming any side.

His arrest
Of the arch divisionists
Came as a surprise.
Many thought wistfully
That there would then be unity.
But unity was not to be.
The Great Lukiiko was yet to pass
A resolution for secession.

The politicians
In the Central Government
Thought that the Great Lukiiko
(Parliament of Buganda)
Would listen to reason.

It seemed clear
That even an ordinary member
Of the Great Lukiiko
Would begin to contemplate
The possibility,
Nay, the probability
Of an alarming confrontation.

The Ministers of Buganda Government
Much more accustomed
Than an ordinary member
Of the Great Lukiiko
To take broad views
Could not certainly mistake the beat
Of that critical pulse

Which had begun to indicate
The hovering perturbation
Of the body politic.

But Buganda Cabinet
Was headed by Nkangi,
Mr. Mayanja Nkangi,
A highly educated person
Who was notorious for dwdling.
He kept his cabinet
Discussing interminably
The issue pertaining
To the conflict
Not because
The subject matter was difficult,
Not because
It was at a loss
As to whether to support
The stand of the Lukiiko
Or of the Central Government
But simply because it was
Unable to make up its mind.

Mr. Mayanja Nkangi
Had been Obote's Minister
In the Central Government.

And President Obote
Was very much conversant
With the peculiarities
Of the working
Of Mayanja's intellect.

He was a man of speculation
He took pleasure in finding
Hundreds of ingenious things
To say on both sides
Of any question.

His disquisitions and disputations
Were fortunately subtle
But unfortunately
They led to no conclusion.

His election
To the Katikiroship
Of Buganda region
Was therefore a cause of elation
To Dr. Obote.
"From now henceforth" joked Obote,
"The decisions of Mengo
Will be taken from this Chair."

During the crisis Obote wished
That Mayanja Nkangi
Could take some decisions.
Since there was none to take decisions,
The agitators in Buganda
Therefore took over
The running of the show.

They made use of the fact
That many people
Are psychologically alarmists
To the talk about the dangers
To which the property of the rich
And the talk about the dangers
To which hereditary monarchy
Would be exposed
If the Central Government
Was allowed to continue
To operate in Buganda.

Hence those people in Buganda
Who must always be afraid
Of something
And who were hitherto afraid
Of repression by the federal rulers
Began to be afraid
Of the Central Government.

The unscrupulous politicians
In the Great Lukiiko
Noted that there was some change
In the tide of public opinion
And sought to take the tide
When it served
But the art of taking the tide
Of public opinion is not easy.

They found themselves
Having made
The greatest mistakes of their lives.
Had they, at that time,
Earnestly pressed the Government
To acknowledge their fears
And demanded certain safeguards
With regard to hereditary rule
And the federal powers
Granted to Buganda
Under the '62 Constitution,
It is not improbable
That the Central Government
Would have granted their demands.

In any case,
Even if the demands
Were turned down on the grounds
That the constitutional guarantees
Were quite adequate,
There still would have been nothing
Ignominious in their failure.

Unfortunately,
Instead of raising
With the Central Government
Issues of great public concern
On which they had the right to raise
And on which they might have succeeded
Or failed without any loss of face,
They did not do so

Instead, they chose to force
The hands of the Government
By the use of arms.
The course that they took
Was not only wrong,
And, in any case,
Whether right or wrong
The ill-equipped mob
That they had organized
Could not have won
Against the regular army.
Normalcy was soon restored.

Obote was now
At the height of his power.
He had vanished those who plotted
To topple his Government.
In the process, he had quelled
The courage of his political enemies.
The K.Y. seemed extinct.
Indeed, the name K.Y.
Was hardly used except
With the prefix "ex."

The army was devoted
To the Central Government.
The commander of the army,
And the commander of the Police
Kivalled each other
In loud profession
Of their commitments
To the ruling U.P.C.
And of their attachment
To the head of state
And acted up to those professions.

The economy was flourishing.
He began to play the role
Of championing more effectively
The causes of the common man.

After the Uganda Crisis
U.P.C. had succeeded
Beyond the expectation
Of the most sanguine.
It had become virtually
A single party in the State.
Most of its opponents
Had voluntarily joined it.
And in nineteen sixty-nine
According to the general law
Which governs human affairs,
Success began to produce disunity.

A group of persons
Within the U.P.C.
Under an undeclared leadership
Of Minister Onama
Began to regard
The nationalization measures
Taken by the U.P.C.
As infeasible robbery.

They had been excluded
From massive acquisition of wealth
By the British colonialism.
They had fought hard against it.
They had defeated it.
They were then beginning
To exult in the prospect
Of massive acquisition
Of wealth
Which would enable them
To live the way the British rulers
Had lived in Uganda.

Then all of a sudden,
The policy of nationalization
Began to threaten
To shut them out once more
From participation in wealth.

Burning with resentment
And flushed with hope,
They looked to certain people
In the army for salvation.
They found Iddi Amin
And Colonel Bar-Lev
Just as Daudi Ocheng
Brought about the fall of Mutesa
From the presidency,
Onama was to do the same
To Milton Obote.

Dark plots began
To spread their ramifications
Through the Ministry of Defence.
Of the plotters, Onama,
The Minister of Defence
Must be regarded as the soul.
There never was any doubt
As to what head and what heart
The design for the coup
Was to be imputed.

Both Onama and Ocheng
Were huge men
And each of them had a fault
Of which the other
Was most impatient.
They seemed exquisitely fitted
To torment each other.
Ocheng often perverted
His rare talents
To the more noxious purpose
Of mud-slinging those with whom
He did not see eye to eye.
His inexhaustible power
Of covering whoever he didn't like
With innuendoes emanating
From vague gossips
Galled the temper of Onama.

On the other hand,
Felix Onama's pose
And claim of being omniscient
Enraged Daudi Ocheng
E'en to the extent of imprudence.

Ocheng played the part
Which in private life is played
By an evil agent of chicane:
An agent
Who betrays his neighbours
To each other
And thus sets them quarrelling
Knowing that whoever
May be ruined in the process
He himself would benefit from it.

Onama played to Obote the role of Iago
Pretending to be most loyal
To the person he intended
To destroy by cunning.

(iii) AMIN AND KIBEDI

The triumph of Amin
Over the Nineteen Seventy-two invasion
Made him contract a passion for war.
He persuaded himself
That by indulging in
That passion he was rendering
An invaluable service
To Uganda.

He forgot
The peculiar circumstances
Which had caused his victory.
To defeat
With the help of foreign troops

A battalion
Of poorly armed exile invaders
Is very different
From an invasion
Of a country
By a disciplined army
Led by experienced generals.

Had Amin known that
He would not possibly
Have refused to release
Israeli hostages
Of a Palestinian plane hijackers.

He had instead bluffed
That the Israeli hostages
Had been kept in an airport building
And were surrounded by explosives.

Confident that his bluff had worked
And confident in the accuracy
Of the intelligence given
To him
By Col. Bar-Lev
An Israeli army officer
That the Israeli Cabinet
Was considering the demands
Of the Palestinian hijackers,
Iddt Amin was at ease.

He entertained himself
In the State House
Where there was abundance of drinks,
And of beef and poultry
And he kept open communications
With the Entebbe Airport.

Light conversation
And self praise
Occupied most of his hours.

Meanwhile the Israelis
Invaded Uganda,
Rescued the hostages
And returned to Israel.

It became clear to all
That President Amin
Had committed great faults:
He had not surrounded
The hostages with explosives
As he had told the world;
He had kept careless guards;
He had trusted the information
Given to him by Bar-Lev
Which turned out to have been false;
He had ignored
The well known experience
That Israelis never submit
To the demands of Palestinians;
He had made no contingent planning
For what did happen.

The result was that his guards
Were taken unaware.
The Israeli assailants
Had full advantage of surprise.
Their invasion was calculated
To paralyse the faculty
Of any ordinary guards.
The fact that the Ugandan guards
Braced themselves on time
And hit back the enemy
Was in itself a small achievement.

The successful invasion
Stimulated
Amin's murder instincts.
His sickly and distorted mind
Would not be appeased

Till the disposal
Of every person
That he held responsible
For failure
To rout the invaders.

The moral effect
Of the Entebbe invasion
Was significant.
Big Dada's bluff
Was proved to be hollow.
In the field he might be a match
For ill equipped
Uganda exile invaders.
But he was suddenly no match
For a national army.
The same lesson
Was to be repeated
In Nineteen seventy-nine.

In Israel, however,
The news of the successful invasion
Was received with transport
Of national pride and joy.

The Israeli parents
Glorified their children
For the display of so much valour.

The heirs, so they claimed,
Of illustrious names
Which "liberated" Israel
Had proved to the world
That Israelis
Could not be trifled with.

They repeated exultingly
That none could doubt
That Israel had the power
To rebuff dangers facing it.

The Jews lined the road
To give the invaders
A memorable welcome home.

Amongst the African States, however,
Discontent and desperation reigned.
Animosities against Israel
Kaged without restraint.
Kesentment were voiced from roof tops.
The outcry against any person
Alleged to have assisted Israel
Was loud and bitter.
The United States was accused,
Perhaps unjustly,
Of having supplied Israel
With the latest aerial photograph
Of Entebbe Airport
Which showed the Airport
To be very poorly guarded.
The Western press was accused
Of stating, with unfeeling levity,
That the Israeli belligerents
Had contended desperately
Against great odds
Which was not true.

The unfeeling levity
Koused Iddi Amin's fury
To an unusual pitch.
He raved that he would spare
No living supporter of Israel,
Not the aged
And not the babies.
Indeed death was too light
A punishment for them.
He would torture them.
He would even roast them alive.

In his rage he ordered
The slaughter of Dora Blotch.
Troops were instantly sent

To all regions of Uganda
To collect victims
Dubbed imperialist agents.

Amongst Iddi Amin's
Anti-imperialists protagonists,
The most vocal were Bob Astles
And Wanume Kibedi.

It is impossible
Not to pause for a moment
On the name of this man
In whom Amin's regime
Was so predominantly personified.

Let us be introduced
To Wanume Kibedi,
Who for some years swayed
Together with Iddi Amin
The destiny of Uganda.

Let us watch for a moment
His familiar gestures
And his familiar ambition.
During the Amin rule,
Kibedi projected himself
As the idol of the youth.
His offices were crowded
With people soliciting
For high government posts
Of which he was known
To be the dispenser.

To be seen with this man,
This Amin's brother-in-law,
Was a great distinction.
He ultimately deluded himself
Into the belief
That he really was
A man of boundless importance.

Of the hundreds
Of human bubbles
Known in Uganda,
None has ever
Been so skilfully puffed
Into existence
And none has ever
Soared so high
Or glittered so radiantly
And none has ever bust
With such an exploison.

It was this Kibedi
This Amin's brother-in-law
That Amin sent to Addis Ababa
To negotiate repatriation
Of Ugandan exiles
In the kepublic of Tanzania.
As Minister of Foreign Affairs,
He should have been an advocate
In whose hands the dearest interests
Of Ugandans were entrusted.
But instead, he went to Addis Ababa
As Amin's lacquey.

He praised Amin,
Advocated Amin's intrigues,
Panegyrised
And supplicated for Amin
And tried to lull suspicions
Of all about Amin's machinations.

His jokes and lamentations,
His demands and supplications
Were detestable
In both matter and manner.

When Kibedi returned
From Mogadishu
He reported
To his brother-in-law Amin

With much rapture
About the successful conclusion
Of the Mogadishu Accord.

He called the Mogadishu Accord
Which was merely a pack
For non-aggression,
Non-interference
In each others affairs
And non-engagement
In hostile propaganda
Between Uganda and Tanzania
As having augured
The era of reconciliation.

He was foolish enough
To overlook the fact
That the original cause
Of invasion was not removed.
He mistook the cause
To have been the presence
Of Milton Obote
And his followers in Tanzania.
But it was not.
The cause had all along
Been President Iddi Amin.
As long as Amin remained
The President of Uganda
The prospect of a further invasion
Couldn't therefore have been ruled out.

Let us now glance briefly
At Bob Astle.
Mr. Bob, as he preferred
To be called and was so called
Was a British serviceman
Before he came to Uganda.
His main occupation in Uganda
Was to spy for Israel.
To this end he specialised

In ingratiating himself
To people in key positions
Especially the army.
Mr. Felix Onama,
The Minister of Defence
And Major General Iddi Amin
The Commander of the Armed Forces
Became his very close friends.
It was not difficult for him
To befriend them as he himself
Was a very useful man
To have around.

He had a small plane
In which he flew the Commander
Or the Minister wherever
They wanted to go.
More, he would pick up a girl
For the Commander
From any part of the country.

He had a big motor boat
In Lake Victoria
In which he sometimes took the Commander
To an Island
Which Astle named Bob Island.

He was quite knowledgeable
About vehicles, planes and ships.
He just went to any extent
To please Iddi Amin.
Should Amin be slightly indisposed,
Astle would take a movie projector
To the sick room
And show a film there.
“He was” as Amin once put it,
“A difficult man to hate.”

He had a strange hobby.
In his house in Kampala

He had snakes crawling
All over his bed rooms.
On his Bob Island
He had big pythons
Which he loved to feed.

He was a liar
And it has always been difficult
To distinguish his lies
From whatever grain of truth
They might have contained.
According to him,
He acquired the first python
By a joke.
While talking to his "Islanders"
He joked that he would give them
Lots and lots of money
If they captured for him a python.

A couple of days later
He was awoken at dawn
By much excited noises
And a cacophony of shrill alarms.
He snatched a gun and answered the alarm
Expecting to find a person
Being gnawed by some wild animal.
He reached to find several people
Pressing a python down.
He had forgotten the joke
But they reminded him of it
And he unwillingly parted
With a couple of thousand shillings.

Bob Astles was married
To Mary Senkatuka.
More appropriately,
They lived together
With intent to marry each other.
They adopted an Asian child.

One day my adopted daughter,
Hardly a child of five then,

Asked him point blank,
"How come that you're white
And your wife is black
But your child is an Indian?"

Bob roared with laughter
Until tears streamed from his eyes.
Then he answered while he laughed
"That's the problem with the world".
That was Bob alright.
He was ever original.

On the 25th day
Of January, seventy-one
Bob Astles led some troops
To round up and kill some Langi
And Acholi soldiers
Who were running away.
He came across my brother
Whom he knew very well
To be a Lango.
As soon as my brother saw Astles
With the Amin's Anyanya troops,
He concluded that the game was up:
He was a dead man.
Nor did the words of Bob Astles
Belie that conclusion.
"I smell" yelled Bob Astles,
"The smell of Langi."

Then he glanced at my brother
For a second and ordered the troops.
"Let's go. They're not here."
Bob was already then
Amin's Security Advisor.

He was subsequently
Appointed Special Advisor
On British and European Affairs.
Ultimately Amin made him
An honorary Major

In the Uganda Armed Forces
And head
Of the Anti-corruption Unit.
He is now U.P.C. Chairman
In Luzira Prison.
Can you beat that!

(iv) LULE AND THE GANG OF FOUR

How, you may now ask,
Was it possible for the organizers
Of the Moshi Conference,
While professing
Their most punctilious commitment
To the principle of democracy,
While lecturing to their compatriots
About their duty
To democratize the institutions
Of Government in Uganda,
And while begging for foreign assistance
In order to liberate Uganda
From tyranny
And to bring about
A democratic rule,
To have committed
A flagrant violation
Of the fundamental principle
Of democracy
By exclusion from the Conference
Of most of Ugandans,
Without any African newspaper
Pointing an accusing finger
At them?

How was it possible
That the Western media
Of public opinion
Which is so prone to finding faults
In matters pertaining
To Uganda

To have remained profoundly silent?
Neither the BBC
Nor Radio Deutchavella
Uttered a murmur!

Let it be admitted
That African polity
Differs widely from Politics
In the Western countries.
We are still experimenting
With democracy.
Here and there, we have cases
Of encroachment
On the peripheral aspect
Of democracy.

As long as the trespass
Is of a minor nature
It may not call for too much resentment.
But an outrageous trespass
Of the Moshi type
Which seeks to exclude
The party
With the majority following
From having an effective say
In the Government
Is bound to force the aggrieved party
To stand on its right
And demand that it be respected.

The Moshi exclusion was an unjust
And impolitic act.
Its insolence remains
A perpetual disgrace
To all those responsible for it.

It was bound to rouse
As it, indeed, did,
A just resentment
Of the majority
Of Ugandans.

The arrival of Lule
In Kampala, Uganda
Was therefore
Not an unmixed blessing.
It was greeted
With bewildered hiatus.

To which political party
Did Yusuf Lule belong?
Was he going to rule
Like Iddi Amin
Without basing his rule
On one of the two
Big political parties?

How did he become
Uganda's Commander-in-Chief?
In any case, Commander-in-Chief
Of which army?
Definitely not
The Uganda Liberation Army
Which he hated much
And which reciprocated
His feelings in full measure.

People asked, how had it all happened?
How, in the space of a few weeks
Between the convening
Of the Moshi Conference
And the fall of Kampala
Was a whole leadership
Of the liberation movements
Turned down?

At no stage
Of the liberation movements
Did Lule seem to have shown
Any interest in being a party
To liberation.
He seemed deliberately
To have allowed the liberation
To slip by him.

How then came he to lead it:
The maze of intrigues
Which possessed
A handful of academics
And the well-to-do exiles
To elect Yusuf Lule
As their token symbol
To rule Uganda
While they themselves
Carry out their devices
To rule Uganda
In the name of Lule
Were, at that time,
Not yet known to many Ugandans.

All they knew was
That Lule had returned
Under dubious circumstances;
That he did not participate
In the liberation movement;
That he had no practical experience
As a political party leader
Or as a ruler;
That he should keep quiet a little
To learn what was taking place
In our country, Uganda,
But that instead
He began by lecturing
To Ugandans
As if they were
A group of naughty school boys.

Although the dread of war
Had been succeeded
By the joy of deliverance,
Yet, from the little he had heard
Being murmured
Amongst the members
Of the Uganda People's Congress
And of the N.C.C.
The prospect which lay before him
Was rather gloomy.

Even during the three weeks
After his election as Chairman
Of the U.N.L.F.
And before assumption
Of the presidency
Of Uganda,
The coalition
Of which he was the head
Though not the author,
Had been in danger
Of dissolution.

Mr. Paul Muwanga,
The Chairman
Of the Military Commission
Had told the executive
That he did not know
What was called the U.N.L.F.
He did not know
What it stood for.
As far as he was concerned,
He belonged to a party—
The Uganda People's Congress
His party had a leader—
Dr. Milton Obote.
The party aims and objectives
Were spelt out in a manifesto.

There were others
Who were equally defiant.
By strenuous exertions
And by dishing out
Ministerial portfolios
To the unruly
In order to pacify them
Yusuf Lule succeeded
To prevent for two months
And one week
The coalition from falling apart.

The conduct
Of these rebellious potentantes

Who were notably jealous
Of each other
Soon convinced Lule
That he was playing a high part
For which he was not qualified.
He had neither the tact
Nor the patience
Nor the inclination
To listen to endless
Oratory of rabbles.

He was by nature cold and reserve.
He was neither at ease
Nor of good spirits.
The State House became to him
A place of exile.
He took no pains to hide the fact
That the life he lived
In the State House was hell,
Compared to the quiet life
He had lived in Britain.

Soon jealousies and enmities
Began to show themselves
Within Lule's close colleagues.
Many were disgusted
By Lule's haughty
And imperious demeanour.
Many more were estranged from him
By opposition to his policy.

They admitted that he found Uganda
In the depth of humiliation
But complained that his policies
Were not designed
To raise it to the height of glory.
On the contrary
The drain on the meagre foreign exchange
Which was still remaining
In the public coffer
Was unexampled.

He was incapable
Of inspiring the masses
With confidence.
His speeches were so tedious
That he found it difficult
To obtain the ear
Of his listeners.
They were weary
Of his accidental ascendancy
And were anxious
To be rid of him
On the ground that he had never
Been a politician,
Had never opened his lips
In the National Assembly.
From a civil servant
The lucky minion
Had been turned into a president
By the whims
Of half baked politicians
Who denied other Ugandans
The right to attend
The Moshi Conference.

Lule was thus persuaded
To believe that the only issue
Which could win for him a quick following
Was one of monarchy.

He knew that the feudalist
In Buganda
Was very much attached
To Kabakaship.
He was persuaded to believe
That every act of a president
Who denounces monarchy
Was certain to be regarded
With suspicion in Buganda.
Already his being sworn
To the high office of President
Was already being welcomed
In Buganda region

As auguring changes
That would restore monarchy.

On the other hand,
It had occurred to Lule
That if he stooped
To conquer Buganda
By restoration of monarchy,
He would inevitably
Raise against him a storm of obloquy
In other parts of Uganda.

Would he, with his meagre experience
As a ruler,
Succeed to govern a nation
Torn into two
By strong attachment to monarchy
On the one hand,
And to republicanism
On the other hand?

Two things were certain.
First, a large portion of Ugandans
Would not forgive him
For attempting
To reintroduce monarchy.

Secondly, an influential
And affluent portion of Buganda
May not forgive him
For failure to attempt
To reintroduce monarchy.

If he took under his tutelage
The kings, and the queens,
The princes, the princesses,
And other hosts of caterpillars
Who feed on public treasury
Because of their claim to royal blood,
What could he but expect
Save that the Acholi from the North,

The Teso from the East,
The Bakiga from the West,
To mention only a few
Would join the cry of reprobation.

Nor would the move be wholly
Approved in Buganda.
The Catholics in Buganda
Never liked Mengo establishment.
So have many progressive protestants.
The verse:

“No dead man has any right
To rule over the living
Directly through its own ghost
Or indirectly through heirs.”

Has struck responsive chords
In many a heart.

There were other matters
Which caused Lule headache.
He found every part
Of the administration
Completely disorganized.
Yet, the people expected him
To begin running
An efficient administration.

They gave no allowance,
During his 68 days rule,
That he had hardly come
Into the country;
That it must take sometime
To right a whole machine of government;
That the Amin's elements
In the Government
Were constantly thwarting
His endeavours;
That because of the political nature
Of his post

He could not employ
In top positions
Only those he knew
To be able and experienced
But must, for the purpose
Of equitable
Regional representation
In the Government,
Appoint many other people
Whom he did not know
And whose ability
He could not vouch for.

And the blames
For maladministration
Were heaped on him.
The glory with which he was received
Had begun to tarnish.
He began to feel
That while thus situated
He might not be able
To render an effective service
As a President.

Indeed, even his colleagues
In the National Consultative Council
Had already begun to murmur
And to grumble
That he was not pulling his weight.

They did not dispute his understanding
Of the nature of his calling.
They admitted that he had always
Been an excellent civil servant.
It was his age
That they began to question.
True, he was only nearing seventy
And he seemed
To bear his years well.
But, he was also a sickly man
And his faculties

Were not exactly what they had been.
He found it difficult
To remember the names
Of his associates.
His memory was therefore failing him.

This was all nonsense, of course.
Lule's mind was in no way
Impaired by age.
His mind was so firmly toned
That, typical of him,
He treated with insolent disdain
His many critics
In the National Consultative Council.

It is reported that
Even before they removed him,
He had already considered
The possibility
Of giving it all up:
He would return to England,
He would, once more, regain
The peace of his mind,
He would allow those shallow babblers,
Those turbulent
And ungrateful members
Of the Consultative Council
Who detested him
Because they all want
To be presidents
To continue with their dark conspiracies.

They were born politicians.
He was not so born.
He had just tasted
The game of politics
And he did not like any bit of it.
He had neither the adroitness
To parry reproaches
Nor the fortitude
To endure the gibes

To which he was exposed
As a politician.
He shrank from the responsibility
Of fighting
As much as from the responsibility
Of not fighting.

While these thoughts
Were passing through his mind
A motion for his removal was tabled.
That changed everything.
Resignation and dismissal
Are certainly two very different things.

He had to fight.
But fighting
Was not an easy matter.
A marathon 36 hours Meeting
Was held to topple him.
He could not fail to read
His doom in their contemptuous look.

To make matters worse
The Chairman Dr. Kirunda
Had lost all pretence
To impartiality.
Both the Chairman and the President
Were frank men.
They had wounded
Each other's feelings.
They were political opponents
And were gradually reaching a stage
When they regarded each other
With peculiar malevolence.

Kirunda never had
Any reputation for restraining
His petulant tongue
And some of Lule's remarks
Concerning the UPC
Had cruelly galled his temper.

He had responded to some
With ungovernable ferocity.

Poor Yusuf Lule.
Unused to political animosity,
Political ribaldry
And political lampoon
He was very much adversely moved
By what he considered
As unprovoked animosity
And a baseless motion
Of no confidence.

The main fault
With some of our rulers
Is that they tend to think
That between themselves
And their lieutenants
There could hardly be reciprocity
Of obligations.

The duty of their lieutenants
Is to risk all
To maintain them in power
And to bear without a murmur
Whatever their rulers
Chose to inflict upon them.

Well, it did not exactly
Work out like that.
Lule's lieutenants deserted him
At the eleventh hour.
To trace the turns and doublings
Of many of our politicians
Can only lead to misanthropy.

But Lule was not prepared
To accept the results
Of the vote against him.

He was bitter
Against the Gang of Four
Who joined the plot for his fall.
In his bitterness he swore
To teach the Gang of Four
Whom he regarded as
Professor Two-Tongues,
Dr. Turn-About,
Mr. Time-Server
And Mr. Face-Both-Ways
A bitter lesson
They would not easily forget.
He referred to them
As Communist detractors.

The agony of suspense
Which had stimulated
The pro-Lule and the anti-Lule alike
That the crisis would resolve itself
In their favour
Was no more.
The minds of men remained
Greatly excited.
None could doubt
That unless something was done
And done urgently,
Physical clashes
Between the two opposed sides
Were inevitable.

U.N.L.A hastened
To take necessary precautions.
Demonstrations were prohibited
And soldiers gathered
In strategic places
In the capital
With the order to disperse
Persons assembling on the streets.

(v) BINAISA AND MUSEVENI

Lule was attacked first.
He was forced to defend himself.
And lost dismally.
The same thing had happened
To Obote in Seventy-One.
Amin had attacked first.
So reasoned Binaisa.
He would put the other side
On the defence.
He overlooked, however,
That an attack
Is also a means of defence.
So when he attacked,
By removing Oyite
From being Chief-of-Staff,
He was surprised
By an unexpected counter attack.

He found that the army
Wanted the post of President
As much as or even more
Than he wanted the post
Of Chief of Staff.
Grumbled Binaisa
To his bodyguard Makanya.
"What is wrong with Oyite?
I have given him his job back."
To Makanya and the world
It appeared as if
There had been no giving back
But a snatching back.

A vague uneasiness
Had settled over Kampala
Following Binaisa's announcement
Of dismissal of Oyite.

In bars, shops and offices,
Market places and hotels
And in every public place

People talked
Of ominous developments.
Nobody seemed to know quite
What development
Was to be expected.

Those of us in Dar-es-Salaam
Were anxious
To know what was taking place.
I telephoned my brother
And asked him point blank:
"How has the crisis been resolved?"
"What Crisis?" he asked surprised.
"Binaisa-Oyite Crisis."
"Oh!" he exclaimed.
"Don't you call it a Crisis?"
"It is a crisis
If you must call it so:
A crisis of delusion.
Binaisa is behaving
As if he has behind him
An army loyal to him.
But he hasn't.
On the other hand,
The Uganda Army is behaving
As if it hasn't taken over
The Government of Uganda
Whereas it has."

With the fall of Binaisa,
Fell also the politics
Of Moshi.
Whatever had leaned
On the ruined fabric
Of Moshi Conference
Began to totter.

The post of the Chairman
Of U.N.L.F.
Was never filled again
And because it was not filled

There was to be no President.
Instead of the president,
There were to be
Three presidential commissioners
To carry out the ceremonial function
Of the President of Uganda
And there was to be the Chairman
Of the Military Commission.

Paul Muwanga became the Chairman
Of the Military Commission
And carried out the executive function
Of the President of Uganda.

He was assisted
By members
Of the Military Commission,
Namely Yoweri Museveni,
Major General Tito Okello,
Brigadier Oyite Ojok,
Col. Omaria and Maruru.

The politics
Of machinations and confusions
Appeared as if
It would come to an end too.
There would no longer
Be an election
Under the U.N.L.A. umbrella
Which was to screen candidates
And allow only those
Whose views were compatible
To the U.N.L.A. hierarchy
To stand for election.
Now every party
Would be allowed
To have candidates
Of its choice
To contest the election.

Meanwhile, the Gang of Four
Who were outside the country
When the coup against Binaisa
Took place
Opted unnecessarily
And necessarily
To remain outside the country.

Unnecessarily
In that the Military Commission
Had nothing against them
And wanted them
To contest the election.

Necessarily
In that they were resolved
Not to take the defeat
While lying down.

Although they were the prime cause
For President Lule's fall,
They now went and joined Lule's cause
To agitate
From a neighbouring state
Against the rule
By the Military Commission.

They wrote pamphlets and articles.
They pointed out the extreme dangers
The state of Uganda would suffer
Under the Military Commission:
The clock of progress would be reversed
To Iddi Amin's days.
There would be danger to life,
Liberty, and property.
Nay, More.
Much more.
The national independence itself
Would be at stake.
The Military Commission

**Was plotting to make Uganda
A slave of Tanzania.**

**It would therefore be lunacy
For patriotic Ugandans
To tolerate the sight
Of Tanzanian soldiers
On their dear land.**

**Who did not know
That all the acts
Of injustice
Which caused scandal under Lule
And under Binaisa
Were done by the combination
Of Ugandan and Tanzania
Members of the armed forces
With which the unlucky nation
Had unfortunately been cursed?
Who did not know
That Uganda's crying grievance
Has all along been the armed forces?**

**Could any patriot
Therefore be so heartless
As to look at the grabbing of power
By the Military Commission
Without feeling the passion
To revolt?**

**What is there to make us
Trust Muwanga's soldiers
And make us, on the other hand,
Distrust Amin's soldiers?**

**Something we must certainly risk.
We have risked Amin.
Can we yet afford
To risk another Amin
Camouflaged as Muwanga?**

The Gang remained indefatigable
In inflaming discontent
Against the rule
By the Military Commission.
They heated each other to fury
By interpreting the take over
As paving the way
To the U.P.C. rule.

In dismissing Oyite Ojok,
Binaisa had let everybody
See the punishment
But he let none know
The provocation.
The alleged provocation
Of private army
Had already been investigated
And found to be baseless.
No other provocation
Was put forward after that.

In the absence
Of such a provocation
The public opinion naturally
Sided with the victim.
The inclination to side
With the innocent victim
In this case was strong
Because the victim happened to be
One of the national heroes
For the liberation
Of the country.

Oyite was the one who announced
The fall of the Amin regime
Over kadio Uganda
On that historic day
Eleventh April Seventy-Eight.

The immediate effect
Of his dismissal

Was to unite the U.N.L.A.
The hitherto suspended
Bitter antipathy
With which the Wakombozi¹
Looked upon those
Who snatched the rein of government
Without having contributed
To the liberation movement
Was given free expression.

Secondly, the fall of Binaisa
Very much calmed the public mind.
For about a month prior to it,
His ministers and N.C.C members
Had toured parts of the country
Criticizing their President openly.

The President had directed
The police
To arrest his critics.
The police had responded
That under the existing law
They could not do so.
Could the President enact
An appropriate law?
Of course, the President could not.
The N.C.C., that is to say,
Would not enact the law.

The nation was thus forced
To watch the conflict
In an irritable and suspicious mood.
Would the conflicting parties
Shoot it out or not?
Would the fever of war
Again inflame the whole society?
Such was the nation's anxiety
When it was announced

¹The Liberators.

**That Binaisa was no longer
The President of Uganda.**

**It was the second time
Binaisa had let down the nation.
The first time he did so
Was in sixty-six.
When he was the Attorney General
In the U.P.C. Government
Of Dr. Obote.**

**A crisis had taken place
In Uganda in sixty-six.
At that time many ministers
Wanted President Mutesa
To be in a situation
Which would render it necessary
For him to cooperate
With the Prime Minister Obote.
None wanted to subvert
The constitution
Or to interfere
With the kingship of Buganda.**

**One Minister warned
That they should not put themselves
In a position
In which they were made use of
For the purposes beneficial
To the enemies of monarchy.**

**But Godfrey Binaisa
Held that half measures
Would be a great mistake
And were already
Bringing the affairs of the country
Into a condition
Requiring perilous expedients.**

The country was in a conjuncture,
Said Godfrey Binaisa,
When the government had to choose
Between victory over
Or defeat by its enemies.
Yet the Government seemed
To be afraid to make a choice.

Hence, the affairs of state
Which ought,
Under the circumstances,
To be conducted
In a resolute manner
Appeared to be conducted
In a languid manner.
The time for mitigation,
Negotiation, moderation,
Submission and compromise
Had already passed.

Arms had been taken.
The best way to conciliate
Had become a speedy
Termination of hostilities.
Violence, unfortunately,
Called for a remedy
Which is, in its own nature,
Violent.

His advice was therefore:
"Go the whole hog."
The Cabinet thus resolved
To go the whole hog.
"The whole hog" became
The general slogan.

Then in sixty-seven
When it became
Particularly important
That he should present
In parliament

The sixty seven Constitution
Abolishing the monarchy
For which he had worked
So hard to draft
And when it had become
Equally clear
That the constitution
Would not exactly be received
In Buganda royal circle
With accolade,
Binaisa flinched from his duty
And resigned
As the Attorney General.

He was happy to say
In the dark of the Cabinet room
What he dreaded to repeat
In the open floor of Parliament.
Instead of standing up
To be counted
As one of the producers
Of the revolution
Which overthrew
A deeply-rooted monarchical system
He sat down and sought
To be counted
As a mere product
Of the revolution.

He must have certainly known
That whatever bad things
May be said of the leaders
Of a great change
That overthrow deeply-rooted system,
One quality cannot be denied them
By both their protagonists
And their enemies alike,
Namely, their intensity of will
And fixedness of purpose.
Without such a zeal

**There could have been
No such revolutions.**

**Yet, Binaisa chose
To be one of the leaders
Of the revolution
But not to be openly
Identified with it.
In his mind, identification
With the revolution
Was associated with danger.**

**As long as he enjoyed
His status
As the Attorney General
In safety and comfort,
He did so.**

**As soon
As he no longer enjoyed it
Without danger,
He gave it up.
The malady of desertion
In such an eventuality
Is not unknown
In Uganda politics.**

**“Good riddance” said Bataringaya.
Many were certainly happy
To see Binaisa go.
They held that Buganda
Was at such a conjuncture
When a lukewarm colleague
Who will not make public
His stand on an issue
Dividing the nation
Was more to be detested
Than even an enemy.
It was at a conjuncture
When it was better to treat**

He who was not with you
As being against you.

The malady of desertion
And of switching sides
Continued to afflict Binaisa
Even when he became President.
He was elected President
By U.P.C. influence
And, at the beginning
Of his rule
He was such a staunch supporter
of U.P.C. Party
That he even removed Museveni
From the key Ministry of Defence.
But towards the end of his rule
He was so close to Museveni
That on the abolition
Of the U.N.L.F.
He joined Museveni's party.

I know Museveni well.
I was, at one time,
His Permanent Secretary.

As his Permanent Secretary,
I had to read any speech
He was to deliver in public.
The first speech he gave me
Was the one to be delivered
At Kisubi School.
It was on the Government policy
To move to the Left.
As I skipped through the speech
And glanced at the author
It occurred to me
That he was not a very easy person
To describe positively.

It was easier to describe him
By negatives.

He could not be accused
Of possessing
Much creative imagination.
Nor of being a great reasoner.
Loose observations
Which might pass in conversation
Found their way in an article
Written, corrected, and ready
For presentation by him.

I returned the speech to him
Without any correction
And with my approval of it.

I then took advantage
Of the occasion to discuss things
Generally with him.
He did not have high opinion
About many around him.
He sneered almost at everybody.
I would say, "But surely
The Vice President is doing everything
With obvious successes,
To increase the population
Of exotic cattle
In the hands of farmers."

Answer: "He is a snake".
Question: "And what about Onama . . ."
Answer: "That is a C.I.A."
After the coup, he was asked
About Milton Obote,
Akena and Oyite
On whom Amin had placed millions.
His comments were pithy:
"Obote is reactionary.
Tried to pass a progressive.
Failed badly."
"Akena is not a politician.
Why talk about him?"
"Oyite is bourgeoisie

**Military automation.
Never serious.”**

**He practised the art
Of sneering at everybody
So much so that it obtained for him
The reputation
Of being a great judge
Of character
From those people who are impressed
By such art.**

**His conversation
Kept his listener attentive
And on occasion entertained
But didn't appeal
Much to the imagination.**

**But he was ever persistent
And it did not take me long
To discover
That he was eaten up
By ambition.**

**His ambition
Was so intense
That it became
A substitute for talents.
His whole heart seemed
To have been devoted
To the attainment
Of the goal of his ambition.**

**The characters of men
May be compared
To the facial features of men.
Just as no two features
Are quite alike,
So are there no two characters
Which are quite alike.**

None of the twelve million Ugandans
Can be taken by a person
Who knows him for another.

Yet grotesque deviation
From the common
Characteristic facial feature
Of a forehead, two eyes,
A nose, a mouth and two ears.
Are indeed very rare.
Here and there you may encounter
An unusually large or small
Eyes, or nose or mouth or ears.

The same with characters.
Inborn in all of us
Is the passion for love,
Hatred, jealousy, avarice,
Pleasure and pride and so on.
Yet one mind may
Predominantly display
One of these passions
That the other passions
Are dwarfed completely.

In the case of Museveni
The passion developed
To morbid degree
Is one for political power.
The monomania
To rule over others.

We have expressed ourselves
Rather strongly
On the subject of Museveni.
We have not done so
From any unfriendly feeling.
On the contrary,
We have been at pain
To project him as he is
Or, at least, as we see him.

We do not agree
With those who proclaim him
As a man with a political base
Outside Uganda
Or that he is
An overrated politician
Without the personality
Necessary to maintain him
On the eminence
Of the political battle field.

We believe, on the contrary,
That his being known as one
Of the Ugandan political leaders
In exile
Was due to his contribution
To anti-Amin activities.

In any case, competition
For Ugandan leadership
Amongst some two thousand exiles
Is a very different thing
From competition
For Ugandan leadership
Amongst twelve million
Ugandan citizens.

THE RETURN OF OBOTE

The obscure tract of Bushenyi
May not unaptly be compared
To the source
Of the noble kiver Nile
Which spreads fertility
Over Uganda, Sudan
And the Republic of Egypt
And bears life laden water
To the needy.

It is in Bushenyi
That we must seek
For the resurrection
Of life laden spirit
Of party politics.
It was there
That political factions
Rose to the dignity
Of political parties.

It was there
That the principles
On which the U.P.C.
Was to stand
And contest the election
Were first enunciated
With distinctness.

It was on 27th
Day of May, Nineteen Eighty
That two aeroplanes,
One Tanzania and one Zambia,
Convoyed Milton Obote
And those accompanying him
From Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania,
To Bushenyi, Uganda.

He was received with pomp
And unsurpassed grandeur.
Several hundreds of spectators
Couldn't help weeping with delight.

Bushenyi had become Rome
Of Uganda on that day
All roads had led to it
And the roads did look like
An interminable fair.

Everywhere U.P.C. flags were flown
And U.P.C. songs were sung.
Beer, Whisky and Waragi
Did flow like rivers
To the health of Obote

Many people belonging
To different parties
Joined the festive pageant.
Much as they did not like
The U.P.C. as a party,
Yet they couldn't help to associate
The return of its leader
With the return of peace and order.

As advocate Kazora
Had said, way back in the Sixties,
When Obote was shot at,
"You may or may not like Obote
But, at the moment,

**He is the only one
Who can maintain peace in Uganda”.**

**In May, Nineteen Eighty,
It had become common knowledge
That the Presidency of Uganda
Was in danger of falling
Under despotism of small men
Kaised up and pulled down
Now and again and now and again.**

**To deliver the nation
From the rule of small men
Had therefore become
The object of many patriots
Kegardless of their party affiliation.**

**The return of the U.P.C. leader
Was therefore treated
By many enlightened patriots
As an auspicious moment
On which the future destiny
Of the nation was dependent.**

**It was felt that there was a need
To stop splitting hairs
And to stop opening wounds.
A need for hearts not destitute
Of kindness
To enlarge and to soften,
To forget old injuries,
And to waive petty scruples.**

**The calamities of his fall
From the presidency,
The death of his brothers,
Relatives and friends
At the hands of Amin’s thugs,
The bitter lesson he learnt
Of ingratitude and perfidy
That lay hidden**

Under the obsequious demeanour
Of friends in politics,
His offer to be given a chance
To deliver the country
From intolerable bondage
Of poverty and decadence,
His bitter experience
When Amin offered wealth
To any who would betray him
And when Amin's brother in law
Wanume Kibedi
Almost pronounced the sentence of death
To any who would shelter him,
Had made him an object
Of tender interest.

Having graduated
From such a school,
Coupled with his known abilities
Could he fail
To lead Uganda
Out of the political quagmire?

In many respects,
Obote was much better fitted
For the presidency of Uganda
Than his predecessors:
Lule and Binaisa.

Both Lule and Binaisa
Returned from exile
As presidents of Uganda
Without having had a single week
To live in Uganda,
To mix with the people they were to rule,
To note the changes
Which under the Amin regime,
Had contributed to shaping
The National character
And the national feeling.

In the circumstances,
It was not therefore surprising
That they made the serious mistake
Of treating the post-Amin Uganda
As if it were the Pre-Amin Uganda
Which they had known very well.

It is scarcely possible
To believe now that Ugandans
Did not have the foresight
To see that a person
Who has been compelled
To go into exile
For many years
Can't be a fit president
On the very day he returns
To his homeland from exile.

He is disqualified
From the presidency
By the fact
That during his exile life
He had looked
On all that happened at home
Through the false medium
Of informers
Who, like him,
Tended to judge
The auspiciousness of events
Not in terms of the nation,
But in terms of bringing about
The fall of the loathed regime at home.

At Bushenyi
Dr. Milton Obote
Made the destitute condition
Of the widows and orphans
One of the issues of the election.
He said
That immediately Kampala fell
Many leaders in exile

**Rushed to Kampala to grab factories,
Industries, shops and vehicles.**

**He did not do so.
He felt it his duty
To look after the Welfare
And interests
Of the widows and orphans
Of those brave men
Who had fallen fighting
The war of liberation.**

**It took him about a year
To organize their return.
He was thus able
To return to Uganda
After one year, one month,
Two weeks and two days
Had elapsed
From the day Kampala was liberated.**

**While in Dar-es-Salaam
He had resolved
That on the day he landed in Uganda
He would present to the Government
An address requesting,
Nay, an address demanding
That the Government do something
As a matter of urgency
To alleviate the sufferings
Of widows and orphans
And to ensure that orphans
Were given free education
And brought up in decent homes.**

**The main issue in the election,
Turned to be the past performance
Of the U.P.C. Government.
The D.P. U.P.M. and C.P.
Asserted in essence
That the U.P.C. must not be judged**

By its professions
Made at the time
When it was feeble and out power.

On the contrary,
The U.P.C. was to be judged
For what it actually was,
And what it actually did
When it was dominant
And was in power.

It was dominant and in power
In the Republic of Uganda
From the 9th day of October
Nineteen Hundred Sixty-two
Up to 25th day of January,
Nineteen Hundred Seventy one.

What did it do at the time?
It removed hereditary rulers
From the thrones that their forefathers
Had occupied for several years.

It flung five ministers
Into prison without trial
And thus exposed them
To the rudeness of gaolers.

It abrogated one constitution,
Replaced it by another
Which was again replaced
By yet another Constitution.

It nationalized the properties
Of the well-to-do.

It enacted Public Security Act
Which was indeed
A Public Insecurity Act
Which enabled it to detain citizens
Without lawful court orders.

**U.P.C. on its part
Joined the issue.
It claimed that the achievement
Of its Government
Was second to none in Africa.**

**Another issue in election
Was the role each party leader
Played to liberate Uganda.
Only two of the parties' leaders
Claimed to have played any critical roles.
These were Milton Obote
And Yoweri Museveni.**

**Obote's role couldn't be denied.
There were too many
Living testimonies to prove it.
The Commander of the Uganda Armed Forces
Lieutenant General Tito Okello,
Obote would point out,
Commanded his liberation movement.**

**The Army Chief of Staff
Major General Oyite Ojok
Was deputy Commander
Of his liberation movement.**

**The Chairman of the Military Commission
Mr. Paul Muwanga
Whom Obote had given
The title of General Muwanga
Was Obote's Civil Administrator
Of the liberated zone.**

**Ministers Rwakasisi
And Rurangaranga
Whom Obote had given the title
Of majors
Had been responsible
For recruitment of persons
From the liberated zone.**

**About a battalion of exiles
From Tanzania who had fought
Side by side with Tanzania army
Did so under Obote's banner.**

**Museveni was said to have had
Only a handful of supporters
Who did not even fight.**

**Museveni's supporters
Complained that the account
Of the liberation struggle
Being published by the U.P.C.
Was not fair to Museveni's FkONASA.**

**The complaints were sometimes
Couched in scurrilous language
And were accompanied
By caluminous accusations
Which were triumphantly refuted.**

**Whereas Obote defended himself
With moderation,
His supporters retaliated
With vigour on his assailants.
These supporters kept on echoing
Obote's challenge to Museveni
To give the names
Of his guerilla commanders.**

**The controversy ended up
In favour of Obote.
He was regarded
As a liberator
Who having heroically fought
To oust the Amin regime
Was rabbled
By a mob of power hungry persons
Who combined to form the U.N.L.F.**

Immediately after the election
Of U.P.C. to power
Obote's Government
Began to tackle the problems
Of moral rehabilitation.

Thomas Hobbes once held
That the will of a prince
Was the standard of right and wrong.

In Uganda
The ostentatious profligacy
Of Amin's military rulers
Had been followed
By great and varied talents
And the contagion
Had spread like bush fire.

Academic education
Was treated
By the military rulers
As a past-time for the poor.
Poetry was a game for the queer.
The but of ridicule
Was thus poverty and learning.
It was not uncommon
For Amin's Vice President
To say of a child
Who is not succeeding in life,
"He is as stupid
As an educated man"
Or "He is not any better
Than a University graduate."
To get rich quickly,
To get rich by hook or crook,
Became an undisputed criterion
For success.

Poverty
Became an undisputed mark
Of failure in life.

**It is therefore no surprise
That years of the rule by Amin
Were precisely the years
During which National Virtue
Was at its lowest ebb.**

**The prevailing immorality
Engulfed all groups in the Society.
Two groups in particular
Were more affected.
These were the soldiers
And the politicians.**

**To the Amin's soldiers,
The gun became the determinant
Of what or who was right
And it became the almighty provider.**

**The politicians found themselves
Exposed to malignant influences
Which affected the nation generally
But affected them specially.**

**In the course of ten years
From the year Nineteen Sixty One
To the year Nineteen Seventy One
The civil policy
Of the country
Had repeatedly changed
And two of the changes
Were by violent revolution
And counter-revolution.**

**They had watched
The Democratic Party
Come to power in Sixty One
And fall out of power
The very following year.**

**They had seen
The British Colonial Flag**

Hurled down in Sixty Two
And watched the U.P.C.
Take reign of the Government
Of independent Uganda.

They had watched
The Sixty Six revolution
That culminated
In the abolition
Of monarchies in Sixty Seven.

They had seen
The counter-revolution
Of Amin while it overthrew
The U.P.C. Government
And abolish Parliament.

They had seen the Amin regime
Wipe out the socialist experiment
Of the U.P.C. Government
And replace it
With a make-shift policy —
If it can be called a policy —
Of muddling-through.

They had seen
Many thriving politicians
Change with every change of fortune.
They had felt
The pinch of trying
To be an Island
Of changelessness
In an ocean of changes.

They had watched their colleagues become
Adept at extricating themselves
From falling causes
And entering another career of power.

They had seen politics
Become a mixed game of dexterity,

**Double-crossing and chance
In which an adept moves
From power to power
And in the process loses
The quality of constance,
Integrity and fidelity.**

**It is this taint
Of unprinciple
In public and private life
That Obote's Government
Felt called upon to cure
By way of moral rehabilitation.**

**But whereas the Government
Blamed the deed which resulted
In the prevailing moral lapse,
It did not blame the doers as such.**

**The Government therefore
Adopted the policy
Of reconciliation
And of no-revenge
And in pursuit of that Policy
It has gone all the way out
To have Ugandan Kefugees
Repatriated and resettled
Within Uganda.**

**Detainees are also
Being systematically released.
To mark the 19th Independence
Anniversary
Of Uganda Independence
The Government did release
About two thousand ex-soldiers
Of the Amin Kefime
Who had been detained
By the UNLF Government.**

On the occasion of the first anniversary
Of Obote's return from exile,
Best Known as the Heroes Day,
The Government announced amnesty
For Three Thousand prisoners
Arrested and detained
By successive Governments
Since the liberation of Uganda.

Nkrumah pet saying
That seek ye first political kingdom
And all the rest
Would be given unto you
Is certainly true
Of political followings
In Africa of today.
"In Africa politics"¹
States Africa Now
"The rule of Thumb is
That the winner takes all."

Although it was not expected,
Yet it was not surprising
That about a year after
The U.P.C. had been in power
Six members of Parliament
From opposition D.P.
Crossed the floor and joined U.P.C.

The crossing was significant
In that all the crossers
Came from Busoga Region
Which had been a stronghold
Of D.P. during the election.

A week later,
Another D.P. M.P.
From the same area
Crossed to U.P.C.

¹ *Africa Now* Feb. 1982 p. 27.

The policy
Of rehabilitation
In the political field
Thus bore fruits
Which began to be reaped
In Eighty Two.

Obote had hardly been sworn in
As President of Uganda
When he started to deal
With the problem
Of the shattered economy.

Scarcity was prevalent.
The people as usual
Railed against the Government.

Binaisa had promised
To fill the shops with commodities.
He had failed dismally
To fulfil his promise.
He had instead followed Amin's footsteps
By trying to direct
Public indignation
Against Magendoists¹

The nation was assured
That there was no cause for alarm
That the country had all sorts
Of commodities in abundance.
It was the villanous arts
Of Magendoists
Who hoarded goods in locked godowns
With the hope of making
Enormous profits
That had produced scarcity.

Acting on such a premise
Milton Obote went further.

¹ Profiteers.

He appointed Omaria
Minister of State
In the Ministry of Internal Affairs
And charged him with the duties
Of wiping out Magendo
In just a few months time.

Omaria authorized Special Force
Of the Uganda Police Force
To inspect godowns
And empowered them
To ensure that hoarded goods
Were made available for sale.

It was not till six months later
When Obote discovered and announced
In his budget speech
What amounted in essence
That such official interference
With the course of trade
Was more likely to increase
The suffering it was meant to relieve.

The solution to the problems
Of scarcity
Was to be remedied
By emphasis on production
And correct fiscal policy.

In his budget speech
For Nineteen Eighty and Eighty One
The N.C.C. Finance Minister
Mr. Lawrence Sebalu
Had assured the N.C.C.
That, "The working out of the budget
Was based on the realization
That in Uganda
There is nothing taxable anymore,
And the capacity
Of the people to be taxed
Is highly considered."

Hardly a year had elapsed
When this policy
Was completely reversed
By the U.P.C. Government.

On May Day of Eighty One
Obote shot up the prices
Of petroleum products,
Beer, tea leaves and tobacco.

In October, Eighty-One
He explained that the basic objective
Of the rehabilitation policy
Was the same namely
To contain inflation
By eliminating price distortion.
The policy had resulted,
In the elimination of *magendo*.

While summing up the debate
On the budget for Eighty and Eighty-One
The N.C.C. Finance Minister
Mr. Lawrence Sebalu
Had declared that the Uganda Shilling
Would not be devalued
Despite the hyperinflation
The country was undergoing.
"We are an importing country"
Said Lawrence Sebalu
"Therefore devaluation
Of the shilling will make it
Very difficult" for us
To trade internationally
In that "the purchasing power
Of the shilling will be brought down."

He assured the House
That devaluation
"Cannot be considered now.
Not even in the near future.
There is no question
Of devaluation".

Twelve months had hardly elapsed
When devaluation
Became in fact, though not in theory,
The official fiscal policy
By the U.P.C. Government.

In his budget speech
Of First June, Eighty-one
The President pointed out
The problems confronting
The Uganda Shilling.

First, it was over-valued
In terms of other currencies
And secondly, it had lost
Its purchasing power domestically.

What then were the cures?
First, with immediate effect
There was no longer
To be any fixed rates
For Uganda Shillings
In relation to foreign currencies.
The shilling was to find its own level
Depending on its supply and demand.
In short the shilling was to float.
Secondly, the prices
Of various commodities
Were to find their own levels.

Uganda, as Dr. Obote explained it
Was economically sick.
The economy needed
A major surgery.
The surgery
The Government had decided on
Was a package containing
The value of the shilling,
The management of money and credit,
The balance of payments
And incentives
To producers of wealth.

By way of boosting incentives
To the producers of wealth
And by way of counter-acting
The adverse effect of the FLOAT
On the farmers and peasants
The prices of farm produce
Were increased several times.

On 23rd day of March,
Nineteen Hundred Eighty Two
Obote reported to Parliament
That his Government budget
And economic policy
Was transforming the nature
Of the economy
From the declining speculative
And from *magendo* trends
To honest production
And honest investment.

The economic policy measures
Of the Uganda Government
And, in particular,
The fiscal policy measures
Were well received in Western Hemisphere.
One observer described them
As courageous, bold
And far-reaching policy measures.
The World Bank which had withheld
Seventy million dollars
Promised Uganda by IDA¹
Released the sum forthwith.
The money was then allocated
For imports of spare parts
And raw materials
For the rehabilitation
Of Ugandan industries.

The International Monetary Fund
Extended to Uganda

¹The International Development Association.

**A stand-by sum amounting
To One Hundred and Ninety Seven.
In addition to grants and loans,
Several friendly countries
Have rescheduled, the debts
Which Uganda owe to them.**

**The Government policies
For economic recovery
And moral rehabilitation
Are being pursued with vigour
In spite of banditry acts
Being irregularly perpetrated
By a small section
Of the population
Which has refused all compliance
With the Government
Elected by the people.**

**It was impolite
And ungenerous
On their part to do so.
Their criminal contempt
For the ballot box
Is mingled
In one headlog torrent
With personal ambition
And wanton fanaticism.**

**According to Obote,
The parties whose candidates
Lost deposits in the national election
Had become bandits
In order to shoot down
The people of Uganda
Because Ugandans do not
Support any of them.¹
On 20th August,
Of Nineteen Hundred Eighty-One**

¹*Uganda Times, Wednesday, April, 1 1981*

While opening the National Council
Of the ruling UPC party
Obote assured the nation
That eradication
Of atrocious killings,
Was top priority to UPC.

He said, "We shall hunt bandits
And terrorists
In every district,
Gombolola,
Village and home."
He regretted that the killings
Had gone on for a very long time
And emphasized that the time had come
When killings must stop.
He blamed four classes
Of people for the killings.
They were Amin's gangsters,
Criminals, the get-rich quick
As well as the terrorists
Who did not value human lives.

It is not necessary
To mention all the acts of banditry.
A bus struck a landmine
On Kampala/Lira koad
Resulting in several casualties.
An ambulance struck a landmine
On Mityana koad killing
Eleven people including
A veterinary doctor,
Two nurses, and two patients
As well as some children.
Yet another vehicle
Struck yet another landmine
On Kampala/Jinja koad
Killing many passengers.
On the 6th day of February,
Nineteen Hundred Eighty-One
Bandits attacked

Kabamba Military training school
In Mubende district
And were repulsed.
Between February, 6th and 9th
They again attacked
Five isolated Police posts.
One of them
Was in Kabarole District
And four in Mubende District.

Then on the 9th February,
They attacked
Three police stations
In and around Kampala.
The establishment
Of the Police posts attacked
Was below a maximum of Fifteen staff.
No large stock of arms
Could be captured
From such posts.

“It appears clear to the Government”
Said President Obote,
“That the attack on police stations
Was meant to frustrate
The full implementation
Of Government Policy
To entrust the Police
Who had started to take over
Their duties with enthusiasm
And dedication
After many years
Of neglect and subordination.
This was an attack
On the security
Of the law abiding Ugandans.”

During the early hours
Of Tuesday
The 23rd day of February
A gang of terrorists

**Attacked Malire Military Barracks
And Kampala suburbs
Of Kawempe, and Mengo,
Kibuye, Najjanankumbi,
Kabowa and Ndeeba.**

**Two Uganda Army personnel
Were killed
While 67 attackers
Were counted dead
And of the many wounded,
Ten were in critical conditions.
The rest fled in disarray
Abandoning large quantities of arms
Including mortars, RPGs,
Machine-guns and rifles.
The arms captured were reported
To have certain markings
Which gave a general indication
Of the suppliers.**

**Soon after the terrorists
Had launched the attack,
The Army was deployed strategically
In such a way that it cordoned
The attackers
Without firing a bullet.**

**Meanwhile the attackers
Continued to fire
Indiscriminately.
At sunrise the army responded.
The attackers then found themselves
Wholly surrounded.
Hence the heavy casualty.**

**The following morning
The Government issued a statement
"At about two O'clock this Morning"
So stated the Government,**

**“A gang of terrorists,
Taking advantage
Of the relaxed situation
Entered into the Southern part
Of Kampala.
These are part of the people
Who, for a year now,
Have engaged
In terrorist activities
In the districts of Mpigi,
Luwero and in the rural areas
Having sought
To create terror and fear
In the city of Kampala.”**

**“Throughout last year
The leaders of these terrorists
Have been stating
That they were waging
A guerilla war.
The events of this morning
Clearly demonstrate
That they are now in desperation
Because of lack of support
Amongst the people.
They have now resorted
To adventuristic military action
Which will achieve nothing.”**

**His Eminence
Cardinal Emmanuel Nsubuga
Held a press Conference
At his residence in Kubaga
In which he described
“The search
Of my private residence”
By the Uganda army
And the “godless
And sacrilegious act
Of some members
Of the Uganda Army
In violating my Cathedral.”**

In its editorial
Of 3rd March Eighty Two,
The Uganda Times pointed out
That the people of Uganda
Expected religious leaders
To condemn acts of terrorism
That had sporadically
Dragged Uganda Society
Into a state of insecurity.

It asked, "Why should a whole Cardinal
Keep mute when a vehicle
Carrying patients,
Nurses and doctors
Is blown up by landmines
But is quick to point out
How sacrilegious it was
For the security forces
To search his Cathedral?"

The Times failed to see why
The search of the Cathedral
By the security forces
Should be more sacrilegious
Than the use of the Cathedral compound
By terrorists for savage acts.

"Does the Cardinal expect
The security forces"
Commented the Times
"To flirt with the terrorists
Or people who abate
And give them protection?"

Uganda's Vice President
Who is also Defence Minister
Hon. Paulo Muwanga
Had a Meeting on the same day
With the religious leaders
Of the Church of Uganda
And of Roman Catholic Church.

He briefed the Church leaders
About the attack by terrorists.
He regretted
That the mortars used
By the attackers were placed
Virtually on the doorstep
Of the Koman Catholic Cathedral
Of Kubaga.

He then added significantly
That throughout that night
Officers of the Government
Tried in vain to contact
The Church leaders by telephone
To warn them that the attack
Was being launched from the direction
Of the Koman Catholic Cathedral
Of Kubaga
And the Protestant Cathedral
Of Namirembe.

It was subsequently established,
Said the Vice President
That for some un-known reason
The telephone
Of the religious leaders
In both areas
Had been taken off the hook.

The Catholic Vicar General
Regretted that the incident
Took place at Kubaga.
He stated, "It was this afternoon
That I came to know
That there were men standing in front
Of the Church shooting across.
I am very embarrassed about it."

On Saturday 13th of March
Over Twenty-two thousand members of
D.P.

Joined the ruling U.P.C.
“In a series of letters
Written to their former leader,
Mr. Paulo Semwogerere
To explain their decision
To quit the Democratic Party
The new U.P.C. members
Said that they had decided
To cross to the ruling party
Because some supporters
Of the Democratic Party
Were involved
In the acts of violence.”¹

On Wednesday 17th of March,
President Milton Obote
And Cardinal Nsubuga
Met in Parliamentary Building
And condemned the fact
That the attackers
Had placed their guns
In front of Kubaga Cathedral.

They hoped that due respect
Would be accorded
To places of worship
By every Ugandan.
They then pledged never
To condone any act
Of violence or banditry.

What the Government of Uganda
Seemed to be stressing
Was that there was a right time
For everything under the sun.

There certainly is a right time
For an infant to be led by a string
And a time for it to cast away
The leading string.

¹ *Uganda Times*, Vol. 1, No. 802, Monday March 15, 1982.

A time for a child
To believe everything
Without requiring proof
And a time for it
To disbelieve everything
Until proved otherwise.

Whereas it may be commendable
For a child to receive
Every assertion
Of a dogma with docility,
It is contemptible
For an adult to do so.

The same is true of society.
What is good for the society today
May be bad for the Society tomorrow.

Let us give an example.
During the Amin era, the encroachments
Of the ecclesiastical power
On the domain of the civil power
Which was in the hands
Of persons opposed to the ecclesiastes
Would have been a good thing.
After the Amin regime, however,
The right of worship was guaranteed to all
And civil power confined
To temporal not spiritual matters.
Ecclesiastic interferences
In civil power in such eventuality
Would thus, according to the Government,
Become rather noxious.

Intestine hostilities
Of banditry nature
Uganda has had
And continues to have.
But Civil war it has not.

During the twenty years
Of its existence
As a sovereign nation
It has never had a civil war.

Even during the colonial rule
Ugandans were, generally speaking,
Accustomed to pursuit
Of peaceful industry,
And have thus steadily
Advanced in civilization
Which makes them hesitate.
Even when discontented,
To rebel and take up arms.

The intestine hostilities
Of banditry however continue
And the Government continues
To stand firm against the bandits.
It has called for the support
Of the entire nation
And the nation responded
By rallying round the Government
And assisted it to quell
The many bandits.

But the Government does understand
The character of the nation.
Unlike Amin and Binaisa
It does not carry obstinacy
To a point of no return.
It does not administer
Punishment alone.

It also tries to sooth
The mutineers.

Several thousands of them
Who found life in exile
Not exactly full of lotus
Were allowed to return

Into the country
And assisted to resettle.

Those resettled admit publicly
That it is increasingly
Becoming apparent to all
That guerilla bandits
Taken from the plough
Or from office work
Cannot stand their ground
Against regular soldiers
Whose nerves are being increasingly
Braced by familiarity
With the dangers.

Would these acts of banditry
Be justified
If we were to accept,
For the sake of argument,
That the election result
Was not fair but a mere ruse
For yet another military coup
Perpetuated
By the Military Commission?

If coups mean the replacement
Of one set of leaders
With another set of leaders
There would hardly be much cause
For resisting them
With acts of banditry.
As far as the society
Is concerned
All that it needs is a government
That will secure for it
Liberty and order—
Unless circumstances arise
That make liberty and order
Incompatible.
In that eventuality,
The society will understand

**A government which sacrifices
Liberty here and there
In order to preserve order
Or sacrifices order here and there
In order to preserve liberty.**

**But the society would find it
Difficult to understand
The conduct of a group of people
Who would sacrifice
Not order for liberty
Or liberty for order
But liberty and order
So as to return
One set of leaders
In perpetual power.**

**That is why many people
Are not inclined to resist a coup
At its outset.**

**They would rather not give
The new Government a cause
To endanger
Either liberty or order or both.**

**They generally choose
To give the new Government a chance
So as to judge it
By its performance.**

**Immediate resistances
To successful coups
Are thus usually generated
Less for the purpose of maintaining
The old set of leaders
In their position of power
Than for fear of victimization
Of the old set of rulers.**

**In this case, Obote's Policy
Of no-revenge and non-victimization
Thus deprive the bandits
From any excuse for the perpetration
Of acts calculated
To deprive the populace
Of both liberty and order.**

**According to the Government,
There are four groups of bandits.
Three of the groups are headed
By three former presidents
And one group is headed
By a former Minister.
The groups are known by the names
Of their leaders namely:
Amin, Lule, Binaisa
And Yoweri Museveni.
We give below a summary
Of the report
Concerning the four groups,
Made by President
To Uganda Parliament.**

**Obote explained to Parliament
That some Ugandans
Had resorted to violence
Claiming that their cause
For resorting to violence
Was because the elections
Of Nineteen Hundred and Eighty
Were rigged in favour
Of Uganda People's Congress.
But the real reason for
Their resort to violence
Could not have been the elections.**

**It was common knowledge
That the overthrow**

¹ On 18th December, 1981.

Of the Amin regime
Was never accepted
By Iddi Amin's Ministers
Who were also his soldiers,
Or by his Military commanders.
All such persons continued
To advocate violence
Against the successive
U.N.L.F. administrations
And still continue
To do so up to now.

Their case
For resorting to violence
Could not therefore, have had
Its origin in Elections.

Besides, those men were estopped
From arguing that the elections
Gave them an additional reason
For wanting
To overthrow the Government.
This was because
When they ruled Uganda
They banished democracy
And created a dictatorship
Of the most vile characteristics.

Obote further reported
With a heavy heart
That the first and second
U.N.L.F. Presidents —
Brother Yusuf Lule
And brother Godfrey Binaisa—
Have resorted to violence
As a means of governing this country
And have joined hands with the very men
Who they know were Amin's lieutenants
In the terrorisation
And killing of the people
And the banishment
Of democracy from Uganda.

Immediately after
The overthrow of the Lule administration
His followers resorted
To acts of violence in Buganda.
Several of Lule's, Ministers
Went into exile
To organize the overthrow
Of the U.N.L.F. administration
Under Godfrey Binaisa.

It was therefore a mockery
Of intelligence
For the Lule group to claim
That they had resorted to violence
Because of the alleged rigging
Of the elections
They were already engaged
In acts of violence
Eighteen months before the elections.

It was a well known fact
That Godfrey Binaisa
With some of his cohorts
Who included Mr. Kugumayo
And Professor Nabudere,
Made pronouncements in March
Nineteen Hundred and Eighty
Which abolished all political parties.
Multi-party democracy
To that group was abhorrent.
When they were defeated
In their objectives
They too resorted
To acts of violence.

The cohorts disclosed
At a Press Conference in London
That their campaign of violence
Started in July of Nineteen Hundred and
Eighty—
Six months before the Elections.

**Their claim that the justification
For their resorting to violence
Was that the Elections
Were not free and fair
Could not, therefore, be sustained.**

**The President was sure
That the House knew well
That in Nineteen Eighty
Yoweri Museveni
Made strenuous efforts
To postpone the Elections
On the argument that
"A revolution had to be
Consolidated first."**

**Museveni, said Dr. Obote,
Had never hidden his abhorrence
For democratic means
As a form of governance.
To him, political issues
Could only be resolved
Through the barrel of the gun.**

**A suggestion had been made,
Said Dr. Obote,
To the effect that the Government
Should hold fresh elections,
To be supervised
By a body of independent persons
From outside Uganda.
It was a suggestion
Which completely ignored
The fact that the last elections
Had been observed
By an independent team
From nine Commonwealth countries.**

**The suggestion was an insult
Not only to individual members
Of the Observer Team,**

**But also to the Governments
Of their respective countries.**

**The suggestion could not be
Entertained by the Government
Because it had the seeds of chaos.
It could create a precedent
That if a party loses an election
Its members have only to pick up guns,
And make wild allegations
Alleging rigging and fraud
In the previous elections,
In order to subject the country
To a fresh election.**

**It may sound strange to outsiders
Who know the litigant minded Ugandans
That some Ugandans
Did resort to acts of banditry
Before challenging in Court
The legality
Of Obote's Government.
But, to Ugandans,
It is not strange at all.**

**Uganda has had two
Constitutional cases
Challenging the legality
Of Obote's Government
Which toppled Mutesa
From the presidency of Uganda
And forced Mutesa to become
An exile in London
And had a Constitutional case
Challenging the legality
Of Binasisa's Government
Which toppled Lule's Government
And sent Lule scarrying
To exile in London.**

In both cases the judges
Looked at the question simply
As one of obedience.
There was a President
Kaised by a Crisis
Kuling in Kampala.
Another President
Deposed by the Crisis
Was living abroad.
The President in Kampala
Was appointing Ministers,
Ambassadors and judges.
The army carried out his orders
And the Police made arrest in his name.

The President living abroad
Could not perform
Any of these functions.
The President in Kampala
Had his pictures on the walls
Of public buildings,
But the one in London did not.

To whom then was obedience due
The one who collected taxes
Or the one who would not do so?
The one who could mint money
With his head on it
Or the one who could not?
The one who paid the judge's salaries
Or the one who did not?
The question had been asked before:
To whom must Caesar's due be given?

Their lordship had no difficulty
In holding that the President
Who professed and performed
De facto the function
Of Uganda Government
Was the legal President.
For all practical purposes.

The Judgments were, of course,
A foregone conclusion.
Coups happen in Africa
Almost every year.
Yet not one successful leader
Of a coup has ever been
Refused obedience
On the grounds
That he was usurping the powers
Of a legally elected President.

As soon as the new President
Establishes himself,
The citizens have presented
Their addresses to him,
Paid him homage, held parties for him
Sung songs in his praise,
Loaded him with gifts
Of cattle, goats and spears.
People competed
To become conspicuous
In supporting the side
That is uppermost
Leaving only a few men
To cling to their fidelity
To the cause in adversity.

And why the inconsistencies?
Simple, very simple, indeed:
To save their benefices.
The motive is strong.
With a wife and children,
Not to talk about yourself,
Your beers, and your daily hobbies,
Very few dare suffer
The loss of their benefices.
Their loyalty to the government
Therefore remains unchanged
Till its fortune changes.
All these have been experienced
By Ugandans of all walks of life.

**The legality
Of Obote's Government
Has not therefore been challenged
Not only because it possessed
And performed *de-facto*
The function of Government
But also because—
In spite of the allegations
By the opposition to the contrary—
The fairness and the free manner
Of the election
Were beyond dispute—.**

**What then is the conclusion?
It is clear
That the UPC enemies
Are determined
To rule by hook or crook.
What then is the duty
Of the Government
Under the circumstances?**

**The first duty of a Government
Is no different
From that of an individual.
It is survival.
To survive, security measures
Have to be taken.
The first security measure,
To put it negatively,
Is for the Government
Never to put itself
In a position where the opponent,
Whether from within or without
Can wipe it out.**

**Zambia had to move its capital
From the border of Rhodesia
To Lusaka.
Tanzania, India, and Nigeria,
Had to move their capitals inland**

Away from the cost.
Uganda will have to follow suit.

There is an additional reason.
It will have to do so
As long as the capital
Continues to be surrounded
By enemies who will continue
To do everything
To wipe the Government out.
The move to change the capital
From Kampala to a more central place
Is not a new one.
But the need to do so,
Has never been more urgent than now.

Secondly, the structure
Of administrative organ
Must be adapted
To the task of dealing
With the security risk
In the society.
Every part
Of the administrative organ
Must be vested with the authority
To deal with security problems.

But the authority
Must be clearly defined
So that an administrative officer
Or a county Chief
Or a sub-county Chief
Knows exactly
How far he can go on his own
To deal with sources of insecurity.

The power vested in any officer
Carries with it the duty to ensure
That it is effectively used
And that any neglect of duty
Will carry with it a reprimand.

In short, the security problem
Is so great that it calls for
The return to the colonial system
Of Government in which chiefs
Were vested with both administrative
And limited judicial powers.

On hearing of any problem
Within his jurisdiction
The Chief or Administrative Officer
Would command local askaris
Or the police to act fast
And to bring the culprit
Before him for trial.

Suspects are known
To the administrators
Who take preventive measures.
Cases get heard very quickly
And the central court system
Is relieved of too many cases.

All that the Government does
Is to appoint loyal administrators
And to let them do the job
And make the noises
About security risks or agitators
In their administrative areas.

We are advocating
A system of indirect rule
In and around Kampala.
As Lord Macaulay put it,
Lord Clive was perfectly aware
That the most easy and convenient way
To exercise sovereignty over India,
Was to govern the nation,
And to speak through the mouth
Of some glittering puppet
Dignified by the title of Nabob
Or Nizan.

Let the Minister of Internal Affairs
Talk about insecurity in Uganda
At national level
Where his talk appeals mainly
To Ugandan leaders.
But let also the officials
Dignified by the title
Of Saza Chief of Kyagwe,
Talk about insecurity
In his county where his talk
Is appreciated at grass-root level.

Just before the Amin's coup,
This reversal of position
Was accepted
In document No. 3
Of the move to the Left
And was due for implementation.

The point is important
And worth emphasis
By way of repetition.
Any government
Which cannot achieve
The main objective
Of maintenance of peace and order
Is seen by all as a failure.

Now the problem of lawlessness
In and around Kampala
Is so wide spread
That it cannot be left
Into the hands
Of the security forces alone.
It must be the task of all.
Everybody must be
His brother's keeper.

This was the case during the British rule
And if insecurity
Is to be defeated

The same system then obtainable
Must be made applicable again.
Power to administer
And power to judge
Must be vested into the hands
Of the Chief.
All the government has to do
Is to select responsible chiefs
And give them askaris
And entrust into their hands
The responsibility
Of restoring peace and security
In their administrative areas.
They are to be held accountable
For acts of lawlessness
In their administrative areas.

In the after Amin Uganda
Of *Magendo* and party bitterness,
‘Native’ courts would be found
To administer now,
As indeed it did then,
More substantial justice
Than other courts of law
Characterised as they are
By long delays and technicalities.