

## Crisis of Legitimacy and Political Violence Under the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF), 1979–1980

C. Gertzel noted the severe crisis of legitimacy that confronted the post-Amin regimes: “Uganda in April 1979 was in a real sense a ‘broken-backed state’... We suggest that the fundamental obstacles to the restoration of civil order in Uganda in 1979 arose from the same problems of legitimacy that had confronted Ugandans in the past, and which now inhibited the efforts of the new government to establish a sufficient authority to make or to enforce decisions.”<sup>1</sup> He further observed that:

The real problem that emerged in Uganda in 1979 was that neither the coup nor the eight years of Amin’s tyranny had overcome the divisions that characterized her politics in the past. The complex ethnic, religious and ideological cleavages that had divided Ugandans before the coup remained, in circumstances where neither legitimacy nor the means of coercion was sufficient to permit the regulation of social conflict... [T] hose who sought to restore order to Uganda in 1979 had to engage in the same quest for legitimacy and control that had posed the fundamental dilemma for the former civilian regime before 1971.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>C. Gertzel, “Uganda after Amin: the continuing search for leadership and control,” *African Affairs*, 79, 314 (January 1980): 461.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*: 461–462.

## THE LULE REGIME

On April 12, 1979, Professor Yusuf Lule was sworn in as Uganda's President. How various groups responded to the Lule regime depended on their perceptions of the regime and the prevailing socio-economic and political order. Many Baganda, for example, embraced Lule as a legitimate leader because they expected him, a fellow Muganda, to protect Buganda's interests, provide them with dignity and security, and prevent Obote from regaining power. The monarchists among them also expected him to restore Buganda's traditional institution of legitimacy and national pride: Buganda's monarchy. To some extent, President Lule met the expectations of the Baganda: he repeatedly addressed the country in Luganda, appointed some prominent Baganda monarchists to important political offices in his administration, awarded government contracts to some prominent Baganda, restored Buganda as a single administrative unit, and increased the administrative power of Buganda.<sup>3</sup>

While the Baganda accorded legitimacy to Lule, they withheld it from the institutions of the state, such as the Uganda National Liberation Front (UNLF), the National Consultative Council (NCC) and the Uganda National Liberation Army (UNLA), because the institutions were dominated by ethnic and political groups whose interests were perceived to be hostile to those of Buganda. What this meant was that Lule had legitimacy in Buganda but not the state and the institutions of the state in Buganda.<sup>4</sup>

Other ethnic groups, such as the Acoli, Langi, Banyankole, Banyarwanda, Etesot and Bagishu, on the other hand, did not accord legitimacy to Lule. Rather, they accorded legitimacy to the institutions of the state that the Baganda considered illegitimate: the UNLF, UNLA and NCC. Their response was based on the fact that members of their ethnic groups occupied dominant positions in the institutions. Unlike the Baganda, these groups did not accord legitimacy to the presidency

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<sup>3</sup>Respondents No. 68, four Baganda politicians (former supporters of Lule), interview by author, Dr. Nsibirwa's Clinic, Nairobi, July 5, 1992; Tindigarukayo, "Uganda, 1979–1985: Leadership in Transition," 609–610; Gertzel, "Uganda After Amin": 473–475; Ingham, *Obote*: 155.

<sup>4</sup>Respondents No. 68, four Baganda politicians (former supporters of Lule), Dr. Nsibirwa's Clinic, Nairobi, July 5, 1992; Tindigarukayo, "Uganda, 1979–85: Leadership in Transition," 609–610; Gertzel, "Uganda After Amin": 473–475; Ingham, *Obote*: 155.

because they believed that Lule was determined to promote Buganda's interests at the expense of the interests of the rest of the country. Another factor that discouraged these groups from according legitimacy to Lule was the dominant and popular perception that he was a representative of British interests, not Ugandan interests. Also, the claim that he had not participated in the war against the Amin regime discouraged those ethnic groups whose members participated in the war from providing legitimacy to him.<sup>5</sup>

In a similar vein, the two major ideological camps in the country: the conservatives and the radicals, supported only a section of the regime. For example, the former supported Lule because it was aware of the fact that he had been appointed on the instructions of the British government. In this instance, this group, which was diametrically opposed to Obote, supported Lule because it believed that as long as he was in power, Britain would do everything possible to keep Obote out of post-Amin politics. Given its capitalist ideological position and its opposition to Obote, the group did not extend its support to the NCC, UNLF and UNLA because the institutions were controlled by "Marxists" and Obote's supporters.<sup>6</sup>

The radicals, led by D. Nabudere, Omwony Ojok, Y. Tandon, E. Rugumayo and Y. Museveni, on the other hand, provided legitimacy to the major institutions of the state, especially the NCC and UNLF. They did so because the institutions were controlled by them. The group, however, did not accord legitimacy to Lule because, in its view, he represented what the country needed to rid itself of: capitalist imperialism. Despite the opposition of the radicals to Lule, they cooperated with him because he lacked autonomous political space to define the ideological path that the country should follow. By and large, that space was defined and controlled by the custodian of the regime, an African

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<sup>5</sup> Respondents No. 10, two professors at Makerere University (former supporters of the socialist camp in UPC), Kampala, August 1992; Respondents No. 14, three cabinet ministers in Obote II and two high-ranking UPC members, Nakasero, Kampala, December 18, 1984; Respondents No. 69, four UPC and two (Democratic Party) DP politicians, conversation with author, Kampala, September 13, 1985; Respondents No. 70, three former UNLA officers, twelve former civil servants and two former businessmen, interview by author, Nairobi, July 5, 1992.

<sup>6</sup> Respondents No. 10; Respondents No. 14; Respondents No. 69; Respondents No. 70. For the demand made by Britain, see Owen, *Time to Declare*: 274.

socialist and a close ally of the radicals: President Nyerere of Tanzania. The group also cooperated with Lule to guarantee that its former boss, but now arch enemy, Obote, did not return to national politics.<sup>7</sup>

Another group whose relations with the regime increased the crisis of legitimacy of President Lule was the UNLA. This armed umbrella group comprised many personal armies, led by Lieutenant Colonel Oyite Ojok, Museveni, Colonel Omaria, and Akena p'Ojok. The group provided legitimacy to the UNLA, UNLF and NCC, but not to the presidency. This meant that the President and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Lule, had a severe crisis of legitimacy in the army. This crisis stemmed from Lule's lack of participation in the war against Amin, his perceived hostility towards the Tanzania Peoples' Defense Forces (TPDF) and the UNLA, the conflict between Lule and the "owners" of the personal armies, and Lule's declared intention to push the army to the periphery of national politics immediately after the overthrow of the Amin regime. Despite the crisis, the UNLA cooperated with Lule as long as Nyerere and the owners of the personal armies so ordered.<sup>8</sup>

There were three groups of Ugandans that were indifferent to the regime because they did not see the benefits of either supporting or opposing it. The first group comprised those who had lost hope in the capacity of the neocolonial state, its institutions, self-imposed leaders and their challengers to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable members of the society. This perception was based on the fact that the governing elites were once again using the state, its capabilities and resources primarily for personal enrichment. The perception was also influenced by the fact that the regime had maintained the long established patron-client relations and systematic corruption in the political system. Additionally, the group was convinced that the regime was incapable of ending decades of political violence because it had captured and continued to maintain political power exclusively through political violence and the systematic exclusion of people from West Nile and other ordinary Ugandans. At times, some members of this group acted as if they

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<sup>7</sup> See Gertzel, "Uganda After Amin": 465–478; Ingham, *Obote*: 51, 151–152.

<sup>8</sup> Respondents No. 10; Respondents No. 14; Respondents No. 69; Respondents No. 70; Gertzel, "Uganda After Amin": 467.

supported the “liberation” because it was the only safe and fashionable thing to do. This group was found in every region of the country.<sup>9</sup>

The second group believed that the Lule regime was worse than that of Amin because of the unprecedented level of anarchy, insecurity, murder, rape, corruption and greed that characterized it. In fact, almost throughout the country, the state over which Lule presided was effectively a failed state, characterized by widespread and intense lawlessness and insecurity. This group was also convinced that the destruction of the moral fibre of the society could not be halted by the new rulers who were morally bankrupt. Most of those who belonged to this group were members of radical evangelical Christian congregations.<sup>10</sup>

The third group comprised those ethnic groups that had been treated almost as sub-humans since the colonial days: the Bakonjo, the Baamba and the Karamojong. According to this group, the Lule regime was a product of political violence between the politically relevant ethnic and ideological groups in the country. From that viewpoint, it followed that the regime was incapable of effecting any fundamental change in the lives of those who had always been considered “irrelevant.” This perception made the Karamojong, for example, view the deaths of thousands of their people from the famines of the late 1970s as a continuation of the long-established policy of programmed marginalization and extermination by the predatory and genocidal state.<sup>11</sup>

There were three broad groups that were quite hostile to the regime: the Muslims, the *mafutamingi* (wealthy predatory business persons)

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<sup>9</sup> Respondents No. 10; Respondents No. 14; Respondents No. 69; Respondents No. 70.

<sup>10</sup> Respondents No. 71, three members of Pentecostal Assembly of God, six members of the Jehovah Witness, two members of Legio Maria, eight members of the Chosen Evangelical Revival and five members of Quakers, interviews by author, Kampala and Jinja, August 1992.

<sup>11</sup> Respondents No. 1, twenty former members of District Councils and thirty-one ordinary Ugandans, Gulu, Kabale, Kitgum, Mbarara and Soroti, June–August 1984; Respondents No. 72, three UPC politicians from Karamoja, interview by author, Nairobi, July 4, 1992; Respondents No. 73, two prominent members of UNLF-AD, conversation with author, London, December 9, 1992. Information about the famine is contained in UNICEF, “Some Lessons of the Karamoja Emergency. Eastern Africa Regional Office, Nairobi (October 1981),” (deposited at the Refugee Studies Programme, Oxford University): 1–2; US Committee for Refugees, *World Refugee Survey*, 1984: 6; S. Robinson, et al., “Famine Relief in Karamoja, Uganda,” *The Lancet* (October 18, 1980): 849; Lutheran World Service, *Uganda* (1985): 8.

and people from the West Nile region. Members of the Muslim community were hostile to the regime because they were being killed throughout the country, ostensibly for having supported the deposed regime. For example, immediately after the overthrow of Amin in 1979, many Muslims were murdered at Kaziba, Kagango and Sheema in Bushenyi (Ankole) by some Christians. In April 1979, four prominent Muslims: Idi Tumukedde, Abdallah Kyegombe, Mustapha Mubuye and Mansouli Mutebi, were executed at Mbagwa in Kiziba parish. In May 1979, some 200 Muslims in Ankole were arrested, detained, tortured, forced to drink alcohol and later executed. It was reported that the persecution of these Muslims was encouraged by a prominent Munyankole and a leader of the Uganda People's Congress (UPC), Edward Rurangaranga. Towards the end of the month, many more Muslims in Ankole, including Hajji Abbas Kyayemba, Ismail Mutangizi, Hajji Mustapha Kanubbi, Hajji Amisi Kawalaga and Hajji Hassan Sewanyana, were publicly executed. Houses belonging to Muslims in the area were destroyed, their properties were looted, and at least 10 mosques were razed to the ground.<sup>12</sup> On June 26, 1979, some non-Muslim Banyankole—reportedly operating under the instruction of the Minister of Defence, Yoweri Museveni—arrested and executed some 100 Muslims, including women and children, at Kinoni prison and the River Rwizi.<sup>13</sup>

The *mafutamingi*, who had accumulated enormous wealth and influence during the Amin era, lacked strong connections with the Lule regime and faced systematic persecution and discrimination. The only way they could avoid being detained or murdered was by constantly bribing those with influence in the Lule regime. Within a short period, many of them ran out of money and fled the country or joined the insurgents.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup>Uganda Government, *Report of Commission of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights*: 94–97. The Commission was established by the Museveni regime to investigate violations of human rights under previous regimes.

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.: 89; Dr. Haruna Kabuye's testimony (exhibit No. 77 (a)), Ibid.: 93; Respondents No. 74, ten Ugandan Muslims, interview by author, Kibera, Nairobi, July 11, 1992; B. E. Harrell-Bond, *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986: 39–42.

<sup>14</sup>Respondents No. 25, eight Uganda Banyarwanda/Bafumbira and three Rwandese refugees, Kisoro, August 9, 1983; Respondents No. 30, three Acoli refugees, London, July 24, 1994; Respondents No. 33, three prominent members of UPC from Buganda, Kampala, August 1992; Respondents No. 74, ten Uganda Muslims, Kibera, Nairobi, July 11, 1992.

**Table 2.1** Ugandan refugees

<i>Year</i>	<i>Asylum</i>	<i>Number</i>
1979	Rwanda	7800
	Sudan	39,000
	Zaire	50,000
	Kenya	4000
	Tanzania	5100
1980	Burundi	55,000
	Kenya	5000
	Rwanda	7800
	Sudan	69,000
	Zaire	100,000

*Sources* UNHCR, *Refugees*, 1979 and 1980 (However, the majority of refugees settled spontaneously and did not register with the UNHCR because of severe lack of protection and humanitarian assistance.)

The ethnic groups from the West Nile that violently opposed the regime comprised the Nubians, Lugbara, Kakwa, and Madi. Members of this group were hostile towards the regime because they were being intentionally and systematically discriminated against, tortured, raped and murdered for being “Amin’s people.” By demonizing members of this diverse group as “Amin’s people,” the regime, other Ugandans and the international community consciously sanctioned the systematic discrimination and genocide these people faced. Those who survived the genocide became refugees in Haut-Zaire and southern Sudan (see Table 2.1).<sup>15</sup>

Against this background, Lule began to address the severe crisis of legitimacy that confronted his regime by appointing his loyal friends and Buganda monarchists to powerful ministerial positions. Some of these cabinet ministers included Robert Serumaga (Minister of Commerce), Dr. Andrew Kayira (Minister of Internal Affairs) and Sam Ssebareka (Minister of Finance). He reinforced this strategy by demoting some prominent supporters of the UPC in the cabinet. He then appointed Obote’s most determined political opponent, Grace Ibingira, to become his Principal Political Advisor. The next strategy Lule adopted was to mobilize and fan anti-Obote sentiment in Buganda by authorizing

<sup>15</sup> Respondents No. 25; Respondents No. 30; Respondents No. 33; Respondents No. 74; Harrell-Bond, *Imposing Aid: Emergency Assistance to Refugees*. 39–42.

anti-Obote rallies in the region. One such rally was organized by Ibingira and two prominent Baganda businessmen: Gustov Sebunnya and L. Ntambi, at Kampala City Square. The organizers of the rallies appealed to the Baganda to unite and prevent Obote from returning to politics in the country. While the war against Obote was raging on, Lule also focused his energy on weakening the power of his other challengers, the radicals. To achieve this objective, he began to exercise the executive power of the presidency that the 1967 constitution afforded him.<sup>16</sup>

The exercise of this power to alienate, marginalize and silence his challengers, however, brought him into open conflict with the UPC and the radicals.<sup>17</sup> For example, the challengers insisted that the Moshi Agreement stipulated that the NCC had to ratify whatever decision the President made. The challengers supported their claim by presenting minutes of the Moshi Agreement.<sup>18</sup> On the basis of the minutes, the challengers warned Lule against exercising the executive powers without the approval of the NCC. The Minister of Defence, Museveni, even went further and dismissed Lule's attempt to use the executive powers. According to him, the 1967 constitution "had dictatorial powers written into it, and the Moshi spirit favors a democratic system of government where Presidential powers can be collectively curbed."<sup>19</sup> The position of the challengers was supported by Tanzania, which had the final say on any major political development in Uganda.

This "constitutional" crisis paralysed the government, and turned many cabinet ministers and members of the NCC against the President. In some respects, the "constitutional" crisis resembled that which tore the country apart in 1966 and 1967. The major difference was that the

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<sup>16</sup>See Gertzel, "Uganda after Amin," 48; "Uganda: Honeymoon is over," *Africa Confidential*, 20, 13 (June 20, 1979): 2–3; Uganda Government, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights*: 31.

<sup>17</sup>Uganda Government, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights*: 31.

<sup>18</sup>*New African*, August 1979, cited in Gertzel, "Uganda after Amin": 48.

<sup>19</sup>Gertzel, "Uganda after Amin", Ibid. UNLF Anti-Dictatorship, *The New Military Dictators in Uganda*: 7, maintained that Museveni's opposition to Lule and democratic rule started before the fall of the Amin regime: "After the UNLF was formed Museveni still persisted in his position of a front of the "fighters" and a political front being separated. Nyerere had to call a special meeting of the NEC of the UNLF at the State House Dar es Salaam to talk on this issue. Nyerere correctly argued that one could not separate the fighters from the political organs. On the contrary, he argued that the political organ must give



crisis of 1979 emanated exclusively from the cabinet and the parliament (NCC). Its location at the citadel of power meant that its effects were quite harrowing on the society.<sup>20</sup>

The harrowing crisis suggested to Lule that the only way he could avoid becoming a more marginalized figure-head president was to reduce the power of Tanzania in the country. This was important because the challengers depended largely on the power they received from Tanzania. The only way he could carry out this plan was to undermine the credibility of the TPDF so much that Nyerere would have no choice but to withdraw his forces. Accordingly, he encouraged the local dailies, such as *The Citizen*, *The Economy*, *Ngabo* and *Mulengera*, to constantly criticize the presence of the TPDF in the country. However, this strategy exacerbated the crisis of legitimacy for Lule because the UNLA, most members of the cabinet, and the NCC felt that it was morally unacceptable to abuse the very army that had “liberated” the country. Furthermore, these groups wanted the TPDF to stay until the entire country had been “liberated”, and the UNLA was reorganized and strong enough to assume its responsibilities. Things got worse for President Lule when he used his executive power to obtain an emergency aid program worth 100 million pounds sterling from the West. This development worried those of a more radical outlook, Nyerere among them, who felt that Lule was renting out the country to international capitalism.<sup>21</sup>

This development gave the NCC the opportunity it needed to remove Lule from power. Accordingly, on June 19, 1979, it passed a vote of no-confidence in President Lule.<sup>22</sup> Using the executive power provided to him in the 1967 constitution, Lule ordered the TPDF to arrest and detain the palace coup-makers. The TPDF, however, told Lule that it took its orders only from Tanzania. Thereafter, the coup makers did

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Footnote 19 (continued)

direction to the military wing, otherwise one stood the danger of the gun dictating the political line. Later Nyerere asked Lule to try to “accommodate” Museveni on the NEC. It was in consideration of this that Museveni was made deputy secretary to the Military Commission.”

<sup>20</sup>Gertzel, “Uganda after Amin”: 471; Mutibwa, *Uganda Since Independence*: 129.

<sup>21</sup>Ingham, *Obote*: 155. See also, Sathyamurthy, *The Political Development of Uganda, 1900–1986*: 661.

<sup>22</sup>See Gertzel, “Uganda after Amin”: 471; Tindigarukayo, “Uganda, 1979–1985: Leadership in Transition,”: 610–611.

what the British colonial government had done in a similar situation: exile the most credible political opponent. Accordingly, Lule was flown to Dar es Salaam, where he was detained for three weeks at the State House. The same night that Lule was toppled, the NCC chose the first post-independence Attorney General, Godfrey Binaisa, to become the next president. Binaisa was in the country lobbying to become Uganda's Permanent Representative to the United Nations.<sup>23</sup>

### THE BINAISA REGIME

On June 20, 1979, Binaisa, the Queen's Counsel (QC), was sworn in as the President of Uganda. He assumed power as the weakest president in the political history of the neocolonial state. This was so because he had no popular support anywhere in the country. To win the support of those who had appointed him, Binaisa deprived Buganda of the administrative power that Lule had given it. According to him, the administrative unit that Lule had created was "too large for the smooth running of the administration." More importantly, he added, the unit promoted sectarianism and ethnicity.<sup>24</sup> Next, he removed some of the closest supporters of Lule from the cabinet. Many of these people fled the country and became refugees in Kenya (see Table 2.1). Aware of the power of the UPC in the UNLA and NCC, he offered nearly half of the 24 new cabinet positions to supporters of the UPC.<sup>25</sup>

Despite the fact that Binaisa, like Lule, was a Muganda, many Baganda did not recognize him as a legitimate ruler. Two reasons accounted for this development. First, the Baganda were convinced that Lule was deposed because of his unwavering commitment to Buganda's legitimate interests. Anybody who was appointed to replace him could not, therefore, be regarded as a protector of Buganda's legitimate interests. The removal of some of Lule's closest associates from the cabinet, and the administrative reorganization of Buganda by the Binaisa regime

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<sup>23</sup>Ingham, *Obote*: 157–158; Tumusiime, ed., *Uganda 30 Years*: 53–54; "Lule, the First Post-Amin President Dies in London," *The Weekly Review*, Nairobi, January 25, 1985: 21; Uganda Government, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights*: 32.

<sup>24</sup>Gertzel, "Uganda after Amin," 473.

<sup>25</sup>Uganda Government, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights*: 32.

reinforced this perception. Secondly, during the constitutional crisis in 1966 and 1967, Binaisa was Obote's Attorney General. This historical fact made the Baganda perceive him as one of the architects of the constitutions that destroyed Buganda's monarchy. His previous association with Obote also made the Baganda perceive him as a Muganda who was hand-picked to pave the way for Obote's return to power.<sup>26</sup>

The removal of Lule, therefore, alienated many Buganda from the Binaisa regime.<sup>27</sup> The result was that thousands of Baganda demonstrated their determination not to recognize the Binaisa regime by blocking almost every street in the capital city of Kampala. The demonstrators chanted: "Kill us if you wish, but we want Lule", and "No Lule, no work." The message was reinforced by Buganda-wide strikes by Baganda taxi and bus drivers. The strikes left tens of thousands of commuters stranded. Baganda traders and merchants also joined the protest by raising prices of essential commodities, including food, so high that most residents of Kampala could not afford such items. The protesters also destroyed many trucks that were carrying essential commodities to the city. Some of the protesters, who had acquired guns from deserted military barracks and police stations during the war against the Amin regime, used them to attack the army and the police in Buganda. They also used the guns to assassinate some perceived political opponents of Buganda, in particular UPC supporters in Buganda. This wave of anti-regime violence made Buganda ungovernable, and inflamed anti-Buganda sentiment among members of other ethnic groups.<sup>28</sup>

The regime responded by dispatching the TPDF and UNLA to disperse the demonstrations, clear the roadblocks and restore law and order. The soldiers managed to restore some calm and stability, and escorted trucks carrying supplies to the city. By and large, however, instability and political violence persisted because of the impunity with which the army tortured and killed the Baganda. The armed activities of some Baganda groups, such as the Uganda Joint Underground Liberators (UJUL), that were formed immediately after the overthrow of Lule, also contributed

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<sup>26</sup>See *Africa Research Bulletin*, May 1–31, 1980: 5682B; Ingham, *Obote*: 158; Mutibwa, *Uganda since Independence*: 130–131.

<sup>27</sup>Gertzel, "Uganda after Amin," : 476.

<sup>28</sup>Tumusiime, ed., *Uganda 30 Years*: 54; Ingham, *Obote*: 158.

to the increased violence and instability in Buganda. The primary objective of the insurgency groups was to make Buganda ungovernable by assassinating perceived supporters of the regime, including prominent medical doctors, university lecturers, journalists and church leaders.<sup>29</sup>

Political instability and political violence also persisted in Buganda and elsewhere in the country because of the behavior of the military. To begin with, the largest and best-armed military group, the TPDF, comprised some 40,000 members. About half of this group was well trained and very disciplined. The other half, which comprised the People's Militia, was ill trained, arrogant and extremely undisciplined. In fact, this later segment of the TPDF acted very much like an army of occupation. It also saw the war and the prevailing lawlessness in Uganda as an opportunity to acquire wealth and prestige. The result was that it engaged in widespread armed robberies, rape, torture and murders. Soldiers belonging to this segment of the TPDF also sold guns, ammunition and military uniforms to anybody who was prepared to pay for them. The people who suffered most from this reign of terror were the Baganda and the people in West Nile.<sup>30</sup> Such terror provided an opportunity for the anti-Tanzania press in Kampala to escalate its opposition to the presence of the TPDF. For example, *The Citizen* criticized the Binaisa regime for relying on the TPDF "without first establishing their competence and suitability." It added that there "are grave doubts if a victorious army in a foreign country can be expected to change its role and attitude and quality for the policeman's role ... The temptation is great for such military personnel to be arrogant and trigger-happy."<sup>31</sup>

Another major factor that contributed to the persistence of political violence and the severe crisis of legitimacy was the composition and behavior of the UNLA. The UNLA comprised many personal armies.

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<sup>29</sup>Interview with President Binaisa, March 2001, New York; Interview with Vice President Paulo Muwanga, October 1984, Kampala; Tumusiime, ed., *Uganda 30 Years*: 54; "Uganda: Beyond the Coup," *Africa Confidential*, 21, 12 (June, 1980): 6; Uganda Government, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights*: 31.

<sup>30</sup>Respondents No. 75, fifty-six Ugandans, interviews by author, Arua, Gulu, Jinja, Kampala, Kitgum, Moyo, Soroti and Tororo, June–August, 1984; *Africa Research Bulletin*, January 1–31, 1980: 5546B.

<sup>31</sup>*Africa Research Bulletin*, January 1–31, 1980: 5546A; Respondents No. 75, fifty-six Ugandans, Arua, Gulu, Jinja, Kampala, Kitgum, Moyo, Soroti and Tororo, June–August, 1984; "Uganda: No end of Trouble," *Africa Confidential*, 21, 5 (February 27, 1980): 4.

A few of these personal armies will be mentioned. The first group comprised the Museveni Fronasa, which expanded from 30 soldiers at the beginning of the war<sup>32</sup> to 10,000 in June 1979.<sup>33</sup> The overwhelming majority of these soldiers were recruited by Museveni while he was the Minister of Defence. This army was composed of two main ethnic groups: Tutsi refugees from Rwanda and the Banyankole. The former joined the army primarily to secure protection against reprisals for having served in "Amin's death squads." Equally, it wanted to acquire military training for a future war against the Hutu-dominated regime in Rwanda. This idea was encouraged by the Rwanda Alliance for National Unity (RANU), which was formed in June 1979. Many Tutsi refugees in the UNLA, including those who would later become leading members of the Rwanda Patriotic Army (RPA), such as Chris Bunyenyezi, Sam Kaka, Katitara, Fred Rwigyema, Dr. Peter Bayingana and Paul Kagame, belonged to RANU. The only way the refugees could stay in the army was by disguising their national identity. This was not extremely difficult because many of them were born in Uganda and they "looked" like the indigenous Banyarwanda, Banyankole and the Bakiga. They had also acquired names from Buganda, Ankole and Kigezi. The Banyankole, on the other hand, joined Museveni's army to get rid of Amin and secure employment. The only way they could keep their jobs and obtain promotion in the army was by remaining loyal to their leader.<sup>34</sup>

These soldiers unleashed terror against the Muslims in Ankole, who had prevented the Fronasa from gaining support in the area during the uncoordinated and hastily executed invasions against the Amin regime. The soldiers also waged a war of supremacy in Ankole against Obote's Kikosi Maalum faction of the UNLA. For example, the massacre of many people in Ankole, including over one hundred Muslims in Busenyi

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<sup>32</sup>See, for example, Ogenga Otunnu, "Uganda as a Regional Actor in the Zairian war," in Howard Adelman and Govind C. Tao, eds., *War and Peace in Zaire/Congo: Analyzing and Evaluating Intervention: 1996-1997*. Trenton, NJ.: 2004: 24, 37-38. See also, UNLF Anti-Dictatorship, *The New Military Dictators*: 11. Here, it is estimated that Museveni's army comprised over 8000 troops by September 1979.

<sup>33</sup>See Museveni, *Selected Articles on the Uganda Resistance War*: 6.

<sup>34</sup>Respondents No. 24, five Rwandese refugees, Mbarara, July 3, 1983; Respondents No. 25, eight Uganda Banyarwanda/Bafumbira and three Rwandese refugees, Kisoro, August 9, 1983; Essack, *Civil War in Rwanda*: 19, 36, 45; Rwanda Patriotic Front, "Background to Genocide," (deposited at the Refugee Studies Programme, Oxford

in June 1979, was attributed in part to the power struggle between Museveni's Fronasa and Obote's Kikosi Maalum factions of the UNLA. Also, some of the assassinations of military officers, doctors, university lecturers, journalists and church leaders in Buganda were an extension of the power struggle between the two factions of the UNLA. The Fronasa, which was assigned the task of "liberating" the Western Axis—Mbarara, Fort Portal, Masindi and West Nile—was also responsible for the first wave of terror and systematic extermination of the population in West Nile.<sup>35</sup>

According to the UNLF Anti-Dictatorship, *The New Military Dictators in Uganda*, the second personal army, the Kikosi Maalum, was led by a Langi, Brigadier David Oyite Ojok. It expanded from 600 soldiers at the beginning of the war to 5000 in September 1979. The third personal army was led by an Etesot, Colonel Omaria. It expanded from 100 at the beginning of the war to 5000 in September 1979. The fourth group belonged to an Acoli, Akena p'Ojok. This army expanded from 300 at the beginning of the war to 12,000 militia in September 1979.<sup>36</sup>

Those who joined the personal armies, led by Oyite Ojok, Omaria and Akena p'Ojok, did so for a number of reasons: to dislodge the former Uganda army; to avenge the massacre of their people—Acoli, Langi and Etesot—during Amin's rule; and to secure employment and

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Footnote 34 (continued)

University), June 1994: 7–8; Watson, *Exile from Rwanda: Background to an Invasion*: 13. Y. K. Museveni, *What is Africa's Problems?* Kampala: NRM Publications, 1992: 125; Uganda Government, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights*: 31.

<sup>35</sup>Interview with Vice President Muwanga, Kampala, September 1984; Interview with President Binaisa, New York, March 2001; Respondents No. 76, two UNLA majors, five captains and two sergeants, conversation with author, Republic House, Kampala, March 15, 1983; Respondents No. 77, three FUNA officers, conversation with author, Nile Mansion, Kampala, September 18, 1985; Respondents No. 78, two officers and four members of UNRF, conversation with author, Wandegaya, Kampala, September 30, 1985. Uganda Government, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights*: 31, also explained some of the terror that engulfed Ankole and Kampala as part of power struggle between the Fronasa and Obote's Kikosi Maalum. According to Y. Museveni, *Selected Articles on Uganda Resistance War*: 6, the "Fronasa under the command of Museveni was assigned the Western Axis..."

<sup>36</sup>Tito Okello, interview by author, Nairobi, July 24, 1992; UNLF Anti-Dictatorship, *The New Military Dictators in Uganda*: 11; Gertz, "The Politics of Uneven Development": 24.

wealth. These armies, which were often viewed by many Ugandans as an army belonging to Obote, were divided into two groups: those who passionately wanted Obote to return to power, and those who did not like Obote but were unable to block his return to power. The former comprised largely the Langi and Etesot. This group was prepared to support any regime as long as it did not stop Obote from coming back to politics. The latter group was composed largely of Acoli. This group was willing to work with any regime as long as it did not turn against some of its leaders, especially General Tito Okello, Colonel Basilio Okello, Colonel Peter Obama and Akena p' Ojok. It was also prepared to work cordially with the Army Chief of Staff, Brigadier Oyite Ojok, whom it believed was a very fair and competent army leader.<sup>37</sup>

The leadership of the latter group, however, had serious problems with Obote. Some of the problems were associated with the assassinations of Brigadier Okoya and Colonel Omoya (during Obote I rule), the conflict between Obote and Acoli refugee warriors in Tanzania in the 1970s, and the claim that Obote was indirectly responsible for the assassination of Archbishop Luwum in 1977. Colonel Peter Obama (Brigade Commander, Moroto) and Colonel Basilio Olara Okello (Brigade Commander, Central), for example, had another problem with Obote and the UPC: as devout Catholics, they favoured the Democratic Party (DP) to assume power. Obama had two other problems with Obote and the Langi: they wanted to eliminate him from the army because they claimed that he had collaborated with Peter Abe and Alipayo Oloya (Acoli) to produce and circulate the *Lango Master Plan* during the Amin regime<sup>38</sup>; and because he had worked for the Amin regime and had appealed to Acoli and Langi soldiers to support the regime.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup>Tito Okello and Basilio Olara Okello, conversation with author, Nakasero, Kampala, December 13, 1982.

<sup>38</sup>See Francis Agwa, "Did the UPC, Dr. Obote and the Langi kill the Okoyas and Omoya?": 2; "Uganda: the Unending Muddle," *Africa Confidential*, 21, 15 (July 16, 1980): 7. On the eve of the elections in November 1980, the pro-UPC newspaper, the *Uganda Times*, offered a new theory about the murder of Archbishop Luwum. See "Uganda: what might have been," *Africa Confidential*, 21, 25 (December 10, 1980): 7–8. This theory, however, is not convincing. See "Uganda: Exile activity," *Africa Confidential*, 18, 12 (June 10, 1977): 4.

<sup>39</sup>Omara-Otunnu, *Politics and the Military in Uganda*: 104, mentioned the appeal Major Obama made to Acoli and Langi soldiers.

These personal armies from Acoli, Lango and Teso were poorly trained, lacked discipline and supplies, hardly received salaries, and were excessively violent. When they were deployed in West Nile, for example, they raped, detained and massacred many people. Indeed, these soldiers were as brutal as the Fronasa section of the UNLA that had raped, tortured and massacred thousands of people in the region. The unrestrained terror the personal armies from Acoli, Lango and Teso unleashed in the area was aimed at avenging the massacres of their people during the Amin rule, acquiring food and wealth, and crushing the insurgency activities that continued to claim many of their number. The unrestrained terror further increased the severe crisis of legitimacy of the regime in the area, and violently uprooted hundreds of thousands from the area (see Table 4.2).<sup>40</sup>

The UNLA also played an important role in escalating political violence in Buganda. This began when a small segment of the army was transferred to guard parts of Kampala at the end of April 1980. Immediately after it arrived, the level of terror and political instability dramatically increased in Buganda. For example, on May 2 and 3, 1980, it unleashed terror on the inhabitants of Katwe, Kisenyi and Naguru. This incident took place when it was searching for illegal arms in and around Kampala. During this “search and impound operation” or “pacification,” hundreds of Baganda were tortured, detained, raped and murdered. Many more Baganda lost their property. Another factor that contributed to the terror and instability was an attempt by the Fronasa section of the UNLA to disrupt preparation for the return of Obote by making Buganda extremely unstable. A section of the TPDF also contributed to increased terror in Buganda to further discredit the UNLA and make Buganda so unstable that the TPDF would be allowed to remain in the country for an indefinite period.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Respondents No. 79, seven Ugandan refugees who fled to eastern Zaire and then to southern Sudan, conversation with author, Oxford, August 25, 1995; Harrell-Bond, *Imposing Aid*: 31–41; *Africa Research Bulletin*, January 1–31, 1980: 5533C, 5546BC.

<sup>41</sup> Oyite Ojok and Tito Okello, conversation with author, Nakasero, Kampala, December 12, 1980; Major Kapuchu, conversation with author, Nakasero, Kampala, May 3, 1984; “Uganda: Beyond the Coup,” *Africa Confidential*, 21, 12 (June 4, 1980): 6–7. UNLF Anti-Dictatorship, *The New Military Dictators in Uganda*: 21; Uganda Government, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights*: 32; *Africa Research Bulletin*, January 1–31, 1980: 5545C–5546B.



This wave of political violence forced some residents of Buganda to rely on the UNLF ten cells community organizations, or the *manyumba kumi*, to provide them with some security.<sup>42</sup> The violence also forced many people, including medical doctors, teachers, students and businessmen, to become refugees in places such as Canada, Kenya, Zambia, the UK and the USA. Some of the refugees subsequently formed political organizations to support insurgency activities in Buganda. Some of the anti-regime organizations aimed at removing Binaisa from power and tarnishing the reputation of Nyerere in order to compel him to withdraw the TPDF from Uganda.<sup>43</sup> For example, representatives of one of the refugee groups, the Ugandan Action Convention (UAC), went to the 16th Organization of African Unity (OAU) summit in Monrovia and delivered a letter to the OAU Assistant Secretary-General, Peter Onu, demanding the withdrawal of the TPDF: "We of the Ugandan Action Convention... wish to draw and do hereby draw urgent attention to President Nyerere's deceit and treachery of the people of Uganda and the world in annexing Uganda under the guise of overthrowing Amin..."<sup>44</sup>

While the insurgents and the military were terrorizing the country, President Binaisa was busy trying to consolidate his power. One of the strategies he adopted was to tour the country and win the support of the masses. By going to the masses and listening to them, Binaisa won some popular support in the country. He then moved swiftly, as required by the Moshi Agreement, to expand the NCC to include representatives of those who had not attended the Moshi conference. By expanding the NCC, Binaisa also expected to erode the power of those who posed an immediate threat to his political survival: the radicals, the UPC and the DP. However, while the expansion of the NCC weakened the power of the radicals, it increased that of the UPC and DP. This was so because, unlike the radicals who had no political base in the country, the two political parties had very strong institutional networks which they used effectively to mobilize support during the NCC elections

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<sup>42</sup>These organizations were also quite effective in mobilizing armed opposition to the regime. See *Africa Research Bulletin*, January 1–31, 1980: 5546C–5546A; Gertzel, "Uganda after Amin," 478.

<sup>43</sup>Respondents No. 80, three Baganda former members of Uganda Action Convention, conversation with author, London, December 19, 1992; *Africa Research Bulletin*, March 1–31, 1980: 5605BC.

<sup>44</sup>Cited in "Nyerere under Fire," *New African* (September 1979): 12.

in the country. Next, Binaisa turned his attention to reducing the power of some of his cabinet ministers who had become a major threat to his survival. He did this by demoting some of them, including Museveni, Paulo Muwanga and Ateker Ejalu. The reshuffle, which was not ratified by the NCC, however, nearly brought down Binaisa's government. In fact, the government was only saved by the intervention of President Nyerere.<sup>45</sup>

The growing power rivalries between the NCC and Binaisa coincided with the growing reports about corruption, embezzlement of funds and nepotism by the President and his close associates. The reports forced Nyerere to publicly criticize Binaisa for corruption and incompetence in March 1980. Nyerere was also forced by the chaotic power rivalries between the President and the NCC to propose that Obote be made Vice-President of the country. However, Binaisa rejected the idea. Instead, he suggested that Obote should become Uganda's Permanent Representative to the UN.<sup>46</sup>

The problems Binaisa faced with Nyerere suggested to him the need to curtail the latter's power by sending back the TPDF. It also suggested the need to block Obote from returning to power. These plans could only be carried out with a strong military and political support. Since he lacked support in the UNLA and NCC, he turned to the two neighboring countries that were publicly opposed to the presence of Tanzanian troops in Uganda: Kenya and Sudan. While discussions for military and political assistance from Kenya and Sudan were underway, he initiated a dialogue with the radicals and some sympathizers of UPC and DP who did not want Obote to participate in the forthcoming election. The dialogue allowed anti-Obote forces in the parliament to table a motion on March 19, 1980 to the effect that the forthcoming general election be held under a "no-party" system or one-party system: the UNLF umbrella. According to the proponents of the UNLF umbrella,

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<sup>45</sup>Interview with Vice President Muwanga, Kampala, September 1984; Interview with President Binaisa, New York, March 2001; "From Hate to Love," *New African* (September 1979): 15; Ingham, *Obote*: 161–162; *Africa Research Bulletin*, February 1–29, 1980: 5584ABC; *Africa Research Bulletin*, February 1–29, 1980: 5585A-C; UNLF anti-Dictatorship, *The New Military Dictators in Uganda*: 27; Tindigarkayo, "Uganda, 1979–85": 612; Uganda Government, *Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights in Uganda*: 32.

<sup>46</sup>See Ingham, *Obote*: 161–162; *Africa Research Bulletin*, February 1–29, 1980: 5584ABC; *Africa Research Bulletin*, February 1–29, 1980: 5585A-C; UNLF anti-Dictatorship, *The New Military Dictators in Uganda*: 27; Tindigarkayo, "Uganda, 1979–85": 612.

the proposed resolution was intended to avoid the type of violence that characterized the 1962 elections and to contain political violence that resulted from the use of unregulated arms by political contestants:

The proposal that the December elections be held under the umbrella of the UNLF, was based on the realisation that having regard to the prevailing security and socio-economic realities in the country, it was inadvisable, "indeed a disaster," if elections were to be held under the parties. This realisation was based on the experience of the last election of 1962 and District Council elections that followed those elections under parties. This experience had revealed extensive violence among supporters of different parties including deaths that had occurred during campaigning. It was realised that in 1980 with so many guns floating around the country as a result of the extensive looting of armouries that had taken place during the war, any campaigning under parties would be tantamount to accepting a chaotic election which would lead to so much intimidation and killing that the whole democratic process would be in shambles.<sup>47</sup>

Having justified the need for the one-party or no-party dispensation—in the name of security and national unity—Binaisa, Nabudere, Ojok, Tandon, Rugumayo, Museveni and their supporters in the NCC passed the motion. Thereafter, the group, which had no popular support in the country, banned political parties from organizing and participating in the election.<sup>48</sup>

However, the DP challenged the new law as undemocratic and repressive. It also accused the self-appointed political leaders of trying to block the party from winning the elections and forming a legitimate government. In a similar vein, the UPC opposed the decision on the grounds that it was undemocratic and was intended to undermine the efforts of the party to regain power through a democratic election.<sup>49</sup> The position of the UPC was hypocritical because on July 19, 1970, the party had justified its resolution to turn the country into a one-party state

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<sup>47</sup>UNLF Anti-Dictatorship, *The New Uganda we Want*. Mbale: UNLF Anti-Dictatorship, 1980: 17. See also, UNLF Anti-Dictatorship, *Ibid.*: 22–69.

<sup>48</sup>See *New Africa*, 154, June 1980: 28; *Africa Research Bulletin*, March 1–31, 1980: 5610C; *Africa Research Bulletin*, April 1–30, 1980: 5954A; "Uganda: Opposition within the UNLF," *Africa Confidential*, 20, 17 (August 22, 1979): 3; "Uganda: Funny Cargo," *Africa Confidential*, 21, 7 (March 26, 1980): 7.

<sup>49</sup>See "Uganda: Turmoil as usual," *Africa Confidential*, 21, 10 (May 7, 1980): n.p.

because, according to the party, the one-party system was democratic. It also claimed in 1970 that UPC was the only legitimate representative of the masses. The reasons it had given for its version of dictatorship and repression were, as such, the same as those presented by the proponents of the UNLF umbrella. In any event, the DP, the UPC and other supporters of multi-party politics defied the regime and began to prepare for the forthcoming election. This increased the crisis of legitimacy of the fragmented regime and its fragmented parliament and intensified political instability and violence in the country.<sup>50</sup>

The situation was exacerbated by the news that Obote would return to the country on March 27, 1980, and launch his campaign for the general elections. The news presented an unprecedented threat to President Binaisa who was now determined to stay in power. It also sent shock waves to the radicals who had expected Nyerere to stop Obote from returning to the country before the elections. The news compelled also some opponents of Obote to circulate rumors in various anti-Obote newspapers, such as *The Citizen* and *The Economy*, that the UNLA was planning to topple President Binaisa.<sup>51</sup>

These developments made both the President and the radicals so restless that they began to plan to remove Obote's closest and most powerful military ally, Brigadier Oyite Ojok, to ensure that Obote was prevented from returning to national politics.<sup>52</sup> Accordingly, in mid-May 1980, President Binaisa dismissed Oyite Ojok from the army and appointed him to become Uganda's ambassador to Algeria.<sup>53</sup> President Binaisa offered the following reasons for his decision to remove Oyite from the army:

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<sup>50</sup>See UNLF Anti-Dictatorship, *The New Military Dictators in Uganda*: 19. For a similar strategy that the UPC employed while it was in power, see Obote, *Proposals for New Methods of Elections of the People to Parliament*: 1; *Africa Research Bulletin*, July 1–31, 1969: 1473; *Africa Research Bulletin*, September 1–30, 1969: 1533A.

<sup>51</sup>UNLF Anti-Antidictatorship, *The New Military Dictators in Uganda*: 21, 24.

<sup>52</sup>Respondent No. 81, Aide to former President Binaisa, interview by author, London, December, 29, 1992; "Uganda: No end of Trouble," *Africa Confidential*, 21, 5 (March 27, 1980): 5.

<sup>53</sup>Interview with President Binaisa, New York, March 2001; *New Africa*, 154, June 1980: 28; *Africa Research Bulletin*, March 1–31, 1980: 5610C; *Africa Research Bulletin*, April 1–30, 1980: 5954A; UNLF Anti-Dictatorship, *The New Military Dictators in Uganda*: 31.

The reason why I removed him from the post was his insubordination and disobedience to lawful orders. For instance he refused to release civilians who had been arrested and detained under his orders. I told Ojok in my letter that the army is not authorized in time of peace to detain civilians for whatever reason. If they detain civilians for any reason those civilians have to be handed over to the civil authorities, in this case the police. But in this case, Oyite Ojok had issued orders detaining a journalist and some 72 other civilians who are at present in detention without trial. This is a terrible tragedy for a country like Uganda, which had gone through eight years of terrible dictatorship.<sup>54</sup>

He also explained the message he delivered to President Nyerere on this matter: "I pointed out to him (President Nyerere) that former Chief of Staff Brig. Oyite Ojok together with a few other army officers, including a few civilians, have come out in open defiance and revolt against the established legitimate government... They have defied everybody (including) all executive organs of the UNLF."<sup>55</sup>

However, Oyite Ojok—with the overwhelming support of the TPDF, UNLA and the NCC—defied President Binaisa's order, and retained his job.<sup>56</sup> This crisis was compounded by Binaisa's feverish attempt to obtain military reinforcements from Kenya to replace the TPDF.<sup>57</sup> The crisis was further exacerbated by Binaisa's attempt to demote Obote's close political ally, Paulo Muwanga, who had also become a strong defender of Tanzania's presence in the country.<sup>58</sup> The result was that the Military Commission of the UNLF removed Binaisa from power on May 11, 1980. According to Uganda Government's *Report of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights*, "The Coup turned out to be the work of Oyite Ojok and Paulo Muwanga, with Museveni's quiet blessings."<sup>59</sup> The Commission comprised the following: Paulo Muwanga (Chairman), Yoweri Museveni (Vice-Chairman), Tito Okello (Army Commander),

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<sup>54</sup>Cited in UNLF Anti-Dictatorship, *The New Military Dictators in Uganda*: 25.

<sup>55</sup>Cited in Ibid.: 26.

<sup>56</sup>Tito Okello, interview by author, Nairobi, July 23, 1992; Ingham, *Obote*: 162; UNLF Anti-Dictatorship, *The Military Dictators in Uganda*: 31.

<sup>57</sup>Tito Okello, interview by author, Nairobi, July 23, 1992; Uganda Government, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights in Uganda*: 32.

<sup>58</sup>For a similar view, see UNLF Anti-Dictatorship, *The New Military Dictators in Uganda*: 30.

<sup>59</sup>See Uganda Government, *Report of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights*: 33.

Oyite Ojok (Army Chief of Staff), Colonel Zed Maruru and Colonel William Omaria (members).<sup>60</sup>

The Commission justified its coup on the grounds that Binaisa had betrayed those who died to liberate the country, disregarded the TPDF and the UNLA, promoted corruption and ethnicity, and violated rules regarding appointments, promotions and removals of army officers.<sup>61</sup> With the approval of Nyerere, the Commission then promised to organize a free and fair election in which political parties would participate. To be sure, the most vocal member of the Commission, Museveni, did not sanction the promise to allow political parties to participate in the elections.<sup>62</sup>

### THE UNLF MILITARY COMMISSION

The removal of Binaisa from power sparked off another mass anti-regime demonstration in Buganda for a number of reasons. First, the Baganda had gradually accepted him as a legitimate leader because he had demonstrated his opposition to perceived opponents of Buganda, especially Obote and Oyite Ojok. Secondly, the Baganda embraced him for the very reasons that the Military Commission deposed him: his anti-TPDF and anti-UNLA activities, and for promoting Buganda “nationalism” or protecting Buganda’s interests. Thirdly, the coup was seen as a prelude to Obote’s return to power. In that instance, the demonstration was not so much in favour of Binaisa as it was against the anticipated return of Obote. Finally, some Baganda took to the streets simply because the removal of Binaisa provided them with the opportunity to openly destabilize the UNLF-without-Lule. Indeed, Baganda-based armed insurgency groups, including UJUL, took advantage of the crisis and killed some members of the UNLA, TPDF and the Tanzanian police force. These assassinations, together with other violent anti-UNLF activities, provoked unrestrained regime violence against the Baganda. The result

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<sup>60</sup>See *Africa Research Bulletin*, May 1–30, 1980: 5682C–5683C; Ingham, *Obote*: 163.

<sup>61</sup>See Ingham, *Obote*: 163; Uganda Government, *Report of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights*: 33.

<sup>62</sup>See Ingham, *Obote*: 163. Y. Museveni, *Selected Articles on the Uganda Resistance War*. 2nd edition. Nairobi: NRM Publications, 1986: 76, suggested that Museveni never endorsed the idea of holding a multi-party election. Furthermore, that he blamed the DP and UPC for dismantling the UNLF.

was that the UNLF faced the most severe crisis of legitimacy in Buganda and in the genocidal war zone of West Nile in the post-Amin era.<sup>63</sup>

The coup had a number of other implications for the country. Firstly, it effectively brought to an end the UNLF umbrella experiment of the no-party (one-party) dispensation. Secondly, it sent the most articulate radicals: Nabudere, Ojok, Rugumayo and Tandon, back to exile. Thirdly, it led to the creation of many more anti-regime armed opposition groups. For example, the radicals formed the UNLF Anti-Dictatorship to overthrow the regime.<sup>64</sup> Fourthly, it paved way for the return of Obote, and the resumption of party politics. Finally, it set the stage for the opponents of Obote to disregard any election result that might declare Obote the winner. This sentiment was reinforced by the popular but erroneous claim that the Commission was filled with Obote's supporters: Paulo Muwanga, Oyite Ojok, Maruru, Omaria and Tito Okello. The claim was erroneous because Maruru and Tito Okello were not supporters of Obote. In fact, some close supporters of Obote wanted the two to be removed from the army and the Commission. Obote's influence in the Commission reflected the fact that his Kikosi Maalum was the largest single armed group at the time of the formation of the Military Commission in Tanzania.<sup>65</sup>

Against this background of increased crisis, the Military Commission appealed to the international donor community to assist in the financing of the general elections. The appeal received a favourable response, partly because the international donor community wanted to have a government that could restore stability, law and order in the country. Thereafter, the Commission requested the Commonwealth Organization to send a team of electoral experts to observe and supervise the elections. This request was intended to allay the fears of the other major political party, the DP, that the elections might be rigged by its major rival,

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<sup>63</sup>Respondents No. 82, two prominent members of DP from Buganda (former members of parliament), conversation with author, Kampala, September 22, 1985; Brigadier Basilio Okello, Brigade Commander of the 10th Brigade (former Brigade Commander of Central Brigade/Buganda region), conversation with author, Kololo, Kampala, May 2, 1985.

<sup>64</sup>See UNLF Anti-Dictatorship, *The New Military Dictators*: 1–18.

<sup>65</sup>See Ingham, *Obote*: 149–150; "Uganda: Not so Clear," *Africa Confidential*, 21, 11 (May 21, 1980): 7; "Uganda: Beyond the Coup," *Africa Confidential*, 21, 12 (June 4, 1980): 6; *Africa Research Bulletin*, May 1–31, 1980: 5683A. For such a claim, see Uganda Government, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights*: 33.

the UPC. The invitation was also intended to confirm or deny post-election international legitimacy to the UPC. This was particularly important because the prevailing anti-Obote sentiment in the country suggested that Obote's political opponents were determined not to concede electoral defeat to his party.<sup>66</sup>

The Commonwealth accepted the invitation, and appointed a Ghanaian, Ebenezer Deborah, to lead a team of 70 members drawn from countries such as Canada, Britain, Australia, India, Cyprus, Sierra Leone, Barbados and Botswana. As soon as the Commonwealth Observer Group (COG) arrived, the Commission met with the political parties and finalized arrangements for general elections. The elections were scheduled for December 1980.<sup>67</sup>

Four political parties participated in the elections: the UPC, the DP, the Uganda Patriotic Movement (UPM) and the Conservative Party (CP).<sup>68</sup> The UPC was led by its veteran leader, Obote. The party began its campaign as soon as Obote returned from Tanzania on May 27, 1980. Obote's return, which took place at Busenyi in Ankole, was witnessed by tens of thousands of UPC supporters from all over the country. From that moment, it became very clear that the UPC was not only the most organized political party in the country, but that it also enjoyed considerable access to government facilities, such as Uganda Television and Radio Uganda. This access, however, became a double-edged sword: while it speedily cleared the thorny path to electoral victory, it also undermined the fairness and legitimacy of the electoral process.<sup>69</sup>

During the campaign, Obote focused on the role that the UPC had played in the 8 years of "liberation" struggle against the Amin regime, as the most important criterion of legitimacy in the post-Amin Uganda. He also focused on a number of other issues: the need to restore law and order, with the claim that only the UPC had the required competence and experience to do so; the need to protect tens of thousands of orphans and widows, the majority of whom were in the UPC strongholds of Teso, Bugishu, Acoli, and Lango; the need for national reconciliation; and the

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<sup>66</sup>See *Africa Research Bulletin*, August 1–31, 1980: 5779C.

<sup>67</sup>See Tumusiime, ed., *Uganda 30 Years*: 56.

<sup>68</sup>See *Africa Research Bulletin*, June 1–30, 1980: 5708C–5709A.

<sup>69</sup>See, for example, Tumusiime, ed., *Uganda: 30 Years*: 57; Ingham, *Obote*: 164; "Uganda: Obote again?", *Africa Confidential*, 21, 24 (November 26, 1980): 1–2.



urgent need to rehabilitate the decaying social services and the economy. With regard to the last point, the party presented its records of having built more hospitals, health care centres and schools in the 1960s than the British colonial government had built during the entire colonial period.<sup>70</sup>

Like any other political party that was desperate to win an election, the UPC came up with a desperate plan to discourage the electorates from considering voting for the UPM. This strategy presented Museveni as a Tutsi refugee whose father came to Uganda as a refugee. In fact, many prominent Baganda politicians and leaders of Buganda-based insurgency groups, and many prominent UPC leaders from Ankole, including Dr. Adonia Tiberonda, and Chris Rwakasisi, also maintained that Museveni has never been a citizen of Uganda. The UPC then presented the UPM as a party led and dominated by Tutsi refugees. To be sure, similar claims were made by the DP and the CP. The only difference was that the UPC used the strategy more effectively against Museveni than the other political parties. This strategy not only undermined the legitimacy of Museveni and the UPM, but also escalated anti-Rwandese sentiment in the country. Some of those who were targeted for persecution as Tutsi refugees were Ugandan Tutsi (Hima) and Ugandan Banyarwanda.<sup>71</sup>

The UPC employed a similar strategy to undermine the credibility of the DP and the CP. For example, it told the nation that the two parties not only celebrated the massacre of tens of thousands of Ugandans when Amin took over power, but also worked very closely with him until the dying moment when he turned against them. This message was particularly disturbing to people in Teso, Lango, Bugishu and Acoli who lost many relatives during the Amin rule. Indeed, the message made it extremely difficult for members of these ethnic groups to openly support the DP. For example, in Kalongo (Kitgum) and Lacor (Gulu), where the DP was strong because of the dominance of the Catholic Church,

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<sup>70</sup>Dr. Tiberonda Adonia, Minister of Industry, conversation with author, Uganda Airline flight from Entebbe to London, May 1985; Okeny Atwoma, Leader of the Liberal Party (former Vice-President of the DP), interview by author, Kitgum, May 27, 1983.

<sup>71</sup>See Otunnu, "Uganda as a Regional Actor in the Zaire War": 37–41; *The Monitor*, Kampala, Friday, November 9, 1993: 13; *The Monitor*, Wednesday, June 28–30, 1995: 5; Uganda Democratic Alliance, *An Open Letter to His Excellency, Yoweri Museveni* (February 6, 1989): 4; Uganda People's Front, *Who is Yoweri Museveni, his attitudes and views, past and present?* Kampala (February 1988); N. Kabukol, *The Challenge of a New Generation: Recolonization of Uganda*. n.p., 1991: 11–14.

many DP supporters refused to vote for the party because of its complicity in the murder of tens of thousands of Acoli. While this strategy was effective for electoral politics, it was extremely dangerous for national reconciliation and national unity. The strategy would also preserve the profound crisis of legitimacy of the state.<sup>72</sup>

During the campaign, the UPC also attempted to mobilize the support of the UNLA. However, the success of this strategy was somewhat tempered by the response of three high-ranking military officers: General Tito Okello, Colonel Basilio Olara Okello and Colonel Peter Oboma. For example, Tito Okello asked some high-ranking Acoli military officers not to get entangled in the campaigns because the UNLA did not fight for a particular political party. This message was restricted to high-ranking Acoli officers because Tito Okello did not want Obote to mistake it to mean opposition to the UPC.<sup>73</sup> Basilio and Oboma, for their part, publicly challenged the claim made by the UPC that the UNLA was a UPC army. The two senior UNLA officers were also strong members of the DP. Basilio, for example, also declared at public rallies in Kampala, including at Kamwokya, Bukoto, Ntinda and Kibuye, that Ugandans should disregard the erroneous claim by the UPC that the UNLA was its army. Basilio's outspokenness during this period compelled the UPC supporters in the government to facilitate his transfer from the sensitive Central Brigade (Buganda) to the Northern Brigade (Gulu).<sup>74</sup>

The next political party, the UPM, was led by Yoweri Museveni. The party was formed on the eve of the 1980 elections. As such, it did not have sufficient time to mobilize popular support in the country. The party also had another shortcoming: it was generally perceived

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<sup>72</sup>Okeny Atwoma, Leader of the Liberal Party (former Vice-President of the DP), interview by author, Kitgum, May 27, 1983.

<sup>73</sup>Lieutenant General Basilio Okello, Commander of the Defence Forces (CDF), interview by author, Kololo, Kampala, September 3, 1985; Tito Okello, interview by author, Nairobi, July 25, 1992.

<sup>74</sup>Brigadier Basilio Okello, Brigade Commander of the 10th Brigade, conversation with author, Kololo, Kampala, May 2, 1985; "Uganda: Rising Tension," *Africa Confidential*, 21, 18 (September 3, 1980): n.p.

as UPC-without-Obote because most of its leaders, including Museveni, were former devoted members of the UPC and had worked for the Obote regime in the 1960s. This image made it impossible for the UPM to win support from those who did not like the policies of the Obote regime in the 1960s. This left the UPM without any constituency because the overwhelming majority of those who did not like UPC's policies of the 1960s were now with the DP. Another problem the party encountered was that it was presented by the other parties as a predominantly Rwandese party.<sup>75</sup>

Against these insurmountable obstacles, the UPM told the country that the old political parties had not only run out of ideas to govern the country, but were also inherently oppressive, sectarian and exploitative. The only party that represented the interests of the peasants and workers, and was capable of bringing about meaningful liberation, the leadership of the party insisted, was the youthful self-identified socialist UPM. During the campaign, Museveni, who like Obote had a personal army, warned Obote against claiming that the UNLA was a UPC army. He also warned Obote against claiming that only the UPC had participated in the liberation of the country.<sup>76</sup>

Despite the claim the UPM made of being the only legitimate representative of the peasants and workers, the party knew that it did not have the support of these groups. This meant that the party had no popular support to win the election. Thus, P. Mutibwa noted that the UPM "never, of course, believed that it would win the election and form the government since it was formed only 5 months before the elections were actually held."<sup>77</sup> This political reality frustrated Museveni so much that he resorted to describing his opponents that had a popular following as "backward" and "anti-people criminals." These insults, however, did not translate into more support for the UPM. The result was that Museveni became even more frustrated because the peasants and the workers

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<sup>75</sup>Okeny Atwoma, Leader of the Liberal Party (former Vice-President of DP), interview by author, Kitgum, May 27, 1983; Dr. Tiberonda Adonia, Minister of Industry, conversation with author, Uganda Airline flight from Entebbe to London, May 1985.

<sup>76</sup>Okeny Atwoma, Leader of the Liberal Party (former Vice-President of DP), interview by author, Kitgum, May 27, 1983; Dr. Tiberonda Adonia, Minister of Industry, conversation with author, Uganda Airline flight from Entebbe to London, May 1985; *Africa Research Bulletin*, June 1–30, 1980: 5708B.

<sup>77</sup>Mutibwa, *Uganda since Independence*: 139.

remained stone-deaf and “blind” to the danger of embracing those he referred to as anti-people criminals. Aware of the danger of becoming more irrelevant in the post-election era, Museveni proposed to form a joint front with the DP to defeat the UPC. However, the DP rejected the proposition because there was nothing to gain by allying with a political party that had no popular support in the country. In addition, the DP, like the UNLF-Anti-dictatorship, had presented Museveni as a refugee from Rwanda who believed in militarism, not democratic rule.<sup>78</sup>

After this major political setback, Museveni, who, according to Professor Mutibwa, had been contemplating waging a guerrilla war against the UPC since mid-1980,<sup>79</sup> began to prepare to “go to the bush”<sup>80</sup> to fight against the UPC and Obote. The problem, however, was how to justify declaring war against Obote and the UPC in the middle of the campaign. At that point, Museveni decided to tell the country that he would only go to the bush if the elections were rigged. This meant that Museveni would declare war if the UPC and Obote formed the next government. However, if the DP formed the next government, he would not go to the bush because it would become impossible to suggest that elections were rigged by a party that had no personal army and had no presence on the Military Commission. He would also find it difficult to go to the bush if the DP won because the DP, which had no personal army, would not pose a major threat to his security. Museveni’s sense of insecurity, in the event that the UPC won the election, was exacerbated when he was detained by some Acoli soldiers at Pajimo barracks in Kitgum during the campaign.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>78</sup>Respondents No. 82, two prominent DP leaders, Kampala, September 22, 1985; UNLF-AD, *The New Military Dictators in Uganda*: 1–18. Mutibwa, *Uganda since Independence*: 145, suggests that “the UPM’s offer to the DP to form a united front against the UPC was dismissed as a maneuver to rob the DP of victory!”

<sup>79</sup>Mutibwa, *Uganda since Independence*: 139: suggested that “Around this time in mid-1980, when it was more or less clear that Obote and his supporters were determined to impose themselves on the people of Uganda, Museveni’s supporters urged him to go to the bush and fight Obote’s group. Museveni however declined, arguing that if he did so people would see him as an ambitious young man anxious to capture power for its own sake. It would be better, he seemed to be arguing, to wait until Obote and his men stumbled into some political blunder, which would give his opponents a *casus belli* to rebel against him.”

<sup>80</sup>In Uganda, “to go to the bush” means to wage guerrilla wars against a regime.

<sup>81</sup>Respondents No. 83, two former UNLA officers who witnessed the incident at Pajimo, interview by author, London, October 3, 1995.

The third party, the DP, ran into a serious problem on the eve of the campaign when a section of its members demanded that Lule should return to the country and lead the party in the election. This demand was not met partly because some leading members of the party did not want Lule to lead the party. The opposition to Lule was based on the fact that he had not demonstrated any commitment to the policies and ideals of the party. The binding decision on the matter, however, was made by Tanzania. According to Tanzania, Lule would only be allowed to return to Uganda if he withdrew the criticisms he made against Nyerere and Tanzania when he was overthrown from power. However, Lule refused to withdraw the criticisms on the grounds that he did not need permission from Tanzania to return to his country. He was wrong: Tanzania denied him entry into Uganda.<sup>82</sup> Thereafter, Dr. Paul Kawanga Ssemogerere assumed the leadership of the party.<sup>83</sup>

As in the past, the party drew most of its support from Buganda. Unlike in the 1950s and 1960s, it attracted both the Catholics and Protestants in Buganda. This new development was due to the fact that Baganda Protestants decided to support the DP because it was the only party that had a good chance of defeating Obote in the election. In the rest of the country, the DP also attracted the support of some Protestants who wanted nothing to do with Obote. By and large, however, the party remained popular only among the Catholics outside Buganda.<sup>84</sup>

During the campaign, the DP received substantial financial and political support from a number of organizations based in West Germany, Britain, Italy and the USA. This assistance allowed the party, which had no access to the resources and power of the predatory and despotic state, to offer a serious challenge to the UPC. The main messages of the party during the elections were the restoration of law and order, respect

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<sup>82</sup>According to Lule, Nyerere all along wanted Obote to return to power so that socialism would be imposed in the country. For his criticism of Nyerere and Tanzania's policy in Uganda, see "They objected to my right-of-centre appointments," *New Africa*, September 1979: 12–15.

<sup>83</sup>See "Uganda: Beyond the Coup," *Africa Confidential*, 21, 12 (June 4, 1980): 7–8; "Uganda: the Unending Muddle," *Africa Confidential*, 21, 15 (July 16, 1980): 7.

<sup>84</sup>Respondents No. 81, two prominent DP leaders, Kampala, September 22, 1985; Ingham, *Obote*: 165; *Africa Research Bulletin*, June 1–30, 1980: 5709A; Mutibwa, *Uganda Since Independence*: 144.

for human rights, economic development and democratic rule. It countered the UPC accusation about its support for the Amin regime by suggesting that Obote's dictatorship was directly responsible for the rise of Amin to power. According to this line of campaign, Obote and the UPC should hold themselves directly responsible for creating Amin and the political violence that characterized the Amin regime. The party then presented the records of the UPC and Obote as those of intrigues, nepotism, corruption, dictatorship and political violence. These records, it told the country, disqualified both the UPC and Obote from seeking legitimacy in the country. As the campaign drew to a close, it complained that the UPC was actively terrorizing and assassinating its supporters throughout the country.<sup>85</sup>

The last party, the Conservative Party (CP), was led by a former Katikiro of Buganda, Elizaphan Joshua Nkangi. The party was essentially the Kabaka Yekka (KY)-without-the-monarchy and without the machinery of political violence that the KY possessed and controlled in the 1960s. The absence of the two factors that had made the KY a political force in Buganda in the 1960s made the CP the weakest of the parties contesting the leadership of the country. Other factors that contributed to the weakness of the party were the weak party organization, lack of support among Baganda monarchists who had joined the DP to block Obote from regaining power, and total lack of support from the UNLA. The only messages the party delivered were the need to restore the 1962 constitution and to decentralize political power in the country. During the campaign, it complained about the intimidation and harassment of its supporters by the DP and UPC.<sup>86</sup>

Throughout this period, armed insurgencies escalated in West Nile. According to Professor B.E. Harrell-Bond, the objectives of this wave of insurgencies were: the destabilization of the Uganda government and disruption of the general elections; revenge for the humiliation suffered

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<sup>85</sup>Immediately after its annual delegate conference in Kampala, the DP claimed that it had become a truly national and democratic party because its executive included people from various parts of the country and members of other religious denominations. See *Africa Research Bulletin*, June 1–30, 1980: 5709A. About violence against DP supporters—Uganda People's Congress (UPC) violence against DP in West Nile, see *Africa Research Bulletin*, August 1–31, 1980: 5778C–5780A; *Africa Research Bulletin*, October 1–31, 1980: 5832A–C; "Uganda: Rising Tension," *Africa Confidential*, 21, 18 (September 3, 1980): n.p.

<sup>86</sup>See Tindigarukayo, "Uganda, 1979–85: Leadership in Transition": 613; "Uganda: the Unending Muddle," *Africa Confidential*, 21, 15 (July 16, 1980): 5.

in the 1979–1980 war and revenge for mistreatment of their relations by the UNLA; looting; and military adventurism (craziness).<sup>87</sup> The result was that insurgencies encouraged counter-insurgency terror that made West Nile extremely unstable. Against the prevailing instability and terror, UPC leaders in West Nile appealed to the UNLA and the militia to detain some DP candidates at the roadblocks until the nomination period was over. Those DP candidates who were not detained were denied nomination ostensibly because they failed to produce the School Leaving Certificates and Income Tax Clearance that were required for nomination.<sup>88</sup> The result was that by the time the rest of the country went to the polls on December 10 and 11, 1980, the UPC had already secured 8 uncontested seats in West Nile. This strategy was also employed by the UPC youth-wingers and officials in Lango. Unlike in West Nile where the DP was capable of winning some seats because of the strong presence of the Catholic Church and the intense opposition to the UNLA and the UPC, the UPC enjoyed overwhelming support. In this instance, the objective of political violence against DP candidates and supporters in Lango was to demonstrate that there was no opposition to the UPC in Obote's home area. In any event, the terror the UPC employed against its opponents in Lango, combined with the unrivalled popularity of the party in Lango, allowed it to secure 9 uncontested seats in the area. By the time the rest of the country went to the polls, therefore, the UPC had already secured 17 uncontested seats in the country.<sup>89</sup>

The terror tactics that the UPC employed in Lango and West Nile suggested that the party secretariat had lost total control of the party machinery of violence. This was so because the party did not need to employ terror against its opponents who had no popular support in Lango. The UPC also did not need to employ the indiscriminate and intense terror in West Nile because it had enough popular support, especially among the Alur and Jonam, to secure at least one seat. Together with the overwhelming popular support it had in Acoli, Lango, Bugishu, Teso, and some parts of western Uganda, the party would have formed

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<sup>87</sup> Harrell-Bond, *Imposing Aid*: 42.

<sup>88</sup> See Uganda Government, *Report of Inquiry into Violations of Human Rights*: 33–34.

<sup>89</sup> Respondents No. 82, two prominent members of the DP, Kampala, September 22, 1985. For a different view, see Mutibwa, *Uganda since Independence*: 141.

a government without further undermining the legitimacy of the electoral process. Indeed, the 1967 constitution would have allowed it to form a government even if it had tied with the DP in the election. In any event, the terror tactics suggested that the UPC was determined to use whatever means it could marshal to win the elections. Such tactics undermined the legitimacy of both the UPC and the elections.<sup>90</sup>

Against this background, the country went to the polls on December 10 and 11, 1980. While the votes were being counted in most constituencies, the Secretary of the Electoral Commission, Sonko, conspired with the DP political strategists and declared that the DP had won the elections. This claim was not new because some supporters of the DP from Makerere University Students' Guild had made a similar public announcement before voting had ended in many parts of the country. The announcements were intended to achieve three related objectives. The first was to make the Electoral Commission or the Military Commission panic and act in a manner that would suggest that the DP had been denied electoral victory by the Commission. This objective was achieved when the Chairman of the Military Commission, Paulo Muwanga, responded by declaring that the results of the elections would only be valid if and when they were announced by the Military Commission. This declaration violated the electoral law, which empowered only the Electoral Commission to announce the results of election. When Muwanga was warned by Commonwealth Observer Group (COG) against taking such an action, he immediately withdrew it. Although he withdrew the statement before the Military Commission had gained access to the electoral results, the statement, together with the claims that the DP had made, eroded the legitimacy of the electoral results. The second objective was to make it easy for the DP to dispute the preliminary results, which the COG had just completed compiling, and which, like the final official results, had given the UPC a comfortable victory. This objective was achieved because the announcements by the DP created enough confusion to deprive the UPC of electoral legitimacy. The third objective was to provide the Baganda insurgents, which a faction of the DP supported, with the legitimacy to escalate their war against the UPC and Obote. This objective would also be achieved.

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<sup>90</sup>Okeny Atwoma, Leader of the Liberal Party (former Vice-President of DP), interview by author, Kitgum, May 27, 1983; Dr. Tiberonda Adonia, Minister of Industry, conversation with author, Uganda Airline flight from Entebbe to London, May 1985.



Museveni, who wanted to wage a war against the UPC in the middle of the campaigns, would take advantage of this objective as well.<sup>91</sup>

When the results were officially announced, the UPC was declared the winner. The results were largely in keeping with the independent assessment made by of the Commonwealth Observer Group (COG). For example, the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Shiradah Ramphal, pointed out that the Commonwealth Observer team of 70 men and women:

[W]ere able to sample the poll in 92 of the 109 constituencies in which a contest was taking place. They were able to convey this to our headquarters staff in Kampala so that an initial provisional estimate was compiled that afternoon. This indicated that the results were 68 seats for Mr. Obote's UPC, 51 for the DP, and 1 other. The final result, as we now know, was 72 UPC, 51 for the DP, and 1 other. By any reckoning, this is pretty good.<sup>92</sup>

Accordingly, the team unanimously declared that the elections were valid, free and fair. The 35-page document signed by the team also indicated that the DP had jumped the gun when it distributed inaccurate results to the press and the public. The team further claimed that, immediately after it had learnt of the false landslide victory of the DP, "We contacted the DP to advise it of the position as we understood it to be. Subsequently the DP confirmed to us that some of its information from outlying districts had been incorrect."<sup>93</sup>

The confession the DP made to the team compelled the party to withdraw its threat to boycott parliament. This decision, which was announced on December 18, 1980, was influenced by the fact that the confession the DP made to COG would make it difficult for the party to win any international credibility, if it contested the overall results of the elections. The decision was also influenced by the fact that, even if the

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<sup>91</sup>Interview with Vice President Muwanga, Kampala, September 1984; interview with Dr. Evaristo Nyanzi, Kampala, May 1984; Okeny Atwoma, Leader of the Liberal Party (former Vice-President of DP), interview by author, Kitgum, May 27, 1983; *Africa Research Bulletin*, December 1–31, 1980: 5897A–5898A.

<sup>92</sup>Cited in *Africa Research Bulletin*, December 1–13, 1980: 5901A.

<sup>93</sup>*Ibid.* See also, Mutibwa, *Uganda since Independence*: 139.

DP had been awarded all 8 seats in West Nile, it would have still failed to form a government because the 1967 constitution required a party that had not been in power to obtain a landslide victory before it could form a government. Another factor that influenced the decision to join the parliament had to do with the demand by a faction of the DP that was already supporting armed opposition against Obote and the UPC. This faction demanded that the presence of the party in parliament was necessary to conceal and protect its support for armed insurgency. The decision to join the parliament was also influenced by the demand made by a section of the party: that the DP needed to join the parliament while it reorganized and rebuilt itself in preparation to assume power. To reorganize itself also meant to gain support in the army or to raise its own army to reinforce any popular support it might get from the electorates in another election. The idea of gaining support in the army or raising a private army was based on the conviction that a popularly elected government required the support of the army to stay in power. To be sure, given the history of protracted crisis of legitimacy and political violence in the country, only a political party with a strong backing of the army and the police would be declared the winner of elections. What that meant was that popular or electoral legitimacy did not guarantee access to state power.<sup>94</sup>

The UPM, on the other hand, suffered a humiliating defeat, winning only one seat. Indeed, even Museveni, who stood in Mbarara North, was defeated by a popular DP candidate and his brother-in-law, Sam Kutesa. This defeat made it impossible for Museveni to claim that the election was rigged in his constituency. This meant that the only way he could justify declaring war against the UPC and Obote was to claim that the elections were rigged against the DP “elsewhere” in the country.<sup>95</sup>

The UPC, for its part, received the results of the elections with mixed feelings. On the one hand, it felt vindicated by the international community. On the other, it was quite disturbed about the delegitimization of the electoral results caused by the DP announcements, Muwanga’s statement, and the terror the party unleashed in West Nile and Lango. In

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<sup>94</sup>Okeny Atwoma, Leader of the Liberal Party (former Vice-President of DP), interview by author, Kitgum, May 27, 1983.

<sup>95</sup>Ibid; “Uganda: Obote Again,” *Africa Confidential*, 21, 24 (November 26, 1980): 3; Mutibwa, *Uganda Since Independence*: 144.

an attempt to address the crisis of legitimacy that resulted from the elections, Obote asked the DP to go to court and challenge the result of the election in any constituency. He then told the nation that UPC would abide by the verdict of the courts.<sup>96</sup> Obote's words of assurance, however, did not reduce the crisis of legitimacy that confronted him and the in-coming government.<sup>97</sup>

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<sup>96</sup>See *Africa Research Bulletin*, December 1–31, 1980: 5898B.

<sup>97</sup>Gertz, "Uganda after Amin: The Continuing search for Leadership and Control": 489.

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