

London's culture of the gun

To maintain control over Uganda, British intelligence relies on a political environment which functions as a petri dish for one politically ineffectual armed insurgency after another, thus ensuring that the viable alternative of the qualified political parties coming to the fore, is prevented.

This tragic reality was identified by Mrs. Cecilia Ogwal, then Assistant Secretary General of the Ugandan Peoples Congress, in her 1995 paper "Dictatorship and Donor Policy on Uganda." She wrote:

"In Uganda, it is the gun in the hand of Lt. General Museveni and that gun alone which had made him last so long. He is a gunman *par excellence*. The *New Vision*, which is the mouthpiece of his dictatorship, of 26 November 1990, reported him as having told a funeral gathering that he began to conspire in 1969 and undertook overt action to rule Uganda by force of arms. He achieved his objective, through the gun and much blood in 1986 and

has since with the support of the donor community ruled through the same means.

"Because of how Uganda is governed, the authorities announce from time to time the emergence of a new rebel group which 'has been or will be crushed.' This development of rebel groups emerging from time to time to take the place of the political parties to show opposition to the dictatorship, does not equate with any belief that there has been, under the dictatorship, much improvement in human rights observance or peace and stability. It is, on the contrary, a definitive demonstration, though still feeble, of resistance against the intensive oppression in Uganda under the dictatorship. *The growth of this form of opposition to the dictatorship and not the growth of the political parties is what the new constitution and the policy of the donor community to collaborate with the dictatorship in all schemes, will promote. . . . The donor community are eager and willing to side with the dictatorship and to make Uganda the suzerainty of a despot which, in turn, will encourage the rise or growth of gun-men groups as the only alternative voice against the Museveni dictatorship*" (emphasis added).

Spirit movement.

In 1991, the successor to the Holy Spirit, the Lord's Resistance Army of Joseph Kony, went into full operation in the north. Museveni and the National Resistance Army launched a counter-offensive against the LRA, but especially against the northern population, under the rubric that it was supporting Kony (see documentation below).

To this day, this war in northern Ugandan continues; its horrific toll on the northern populations continues. Hundreds of thousands of people in the northern districts of Kitgum and Gulu have been herded into "protected villages," surrounded by barbed wire, unable to farm or eke out an existence. In Gulu district, most of the population of 390,000 people have been forced to live in "protected villages" at 15 different sites.

On Aug. 16, 1996, Africa Features Network reported a scene that is familiar to northern Ugandans: "More than 10,000 people were rounded up in a pre-dawn operation jointly mounted by the army and the police in an effort to nab rebel collaborators over the weekend. Men, women, and children were reportedly tortured during the operation in which they were herded into a park near the town where the screening was conducted, the local press said. It was not disclosed whether any alleged rebel collaborators were identified during the operation. Maj. Gen. Salim Saleh, commander of the northern army, told the press that the swoops are among the strategies the Uganda People's Defense Forces is to use in an attempt to end the eight-year rebellion in the north."

In March of this year, according to Minister of State for International Cooperation Dr. Martin Alier, cholera broke out in the "protected villages" in the northern Kitgum district. On April 28, the United Nations openly questioned the existence of the camps: "The villages are a risky strategy, by gathering people in crowded conditions with little to do except wait for the next relief handout."

Furthermore, none of these tactics have worked to arrest the insurgency. The brunt of the attacks of both the LRA and the Ugandan Armed Forces appears to be against the population, as the community leaders of Gulu and Kitgum have protested. However, Museveni has rejected any and all calls for a negotiated settlement. Member of Parliament Ken Lukvamuzi reported on March 20, 1997, that he had been served with death threats at his home, for his demands that the government end the war in the north.

Last December, Ugandan Maj. Gen. David Tinyefunza, who led the Operation David assault on the north in 1991, left his post as military adviser to Museveni. Commenting on Museveni's self-deployment to the front, he asked: "Now the President is in Gulu in sandbags. If all these big commanders can't fight Kony and it requires Museveni to go into sandbags, this country is in trouble. It shows there is something basically wrong with this country. If you go into that area [the north], you can't imagine that it is part of Uganda. If you do not end a war in 11 years and your people are dying, are you worth being a government?"