

**THE ACHOLI RELIGIOUS LEADERS' PEACE INITIATIVE IN
THE BATTLEFIELD OF NORTHERN UGANDA**

**An Example of an integral, inculturated and ecumenical
Approach to Pastoral Work in a War Situation**

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*'Let us be proud that we were able to ultimately
rise above our intense political and other differences
in a renewed determination as a people to foster
dialogue instead of violence, promote unity rather
than disharmony, and engender hope rather than
disillusionment and despair.'*

Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf

President of Liberia (First African Woman President)

Suffering is the law of human beings; war is the law of the jungle. But suffering is infinitely more powerful than the law of the jungle for converting the opponent and opening his ear, which are otherwise shut to the voice of reason.

Nobody has probably drawn up more petitions or espoused more forlorn causes than I and I have come to this fundamental conclusion that if you want something really important to be done you must not merely satisfy the reason, you must move the heart also.

The appeal of reason is more to the head but the penetration of the heart comes from suffering. It opens up the inner understanding in man.

Suffering is the badge of the human race, not the sword.

Mohandas K. Gandhi

*To my parents and all
women and men who yearn and work for peace,
especially members, friends and well-wishers of the
Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative: Shalom!*

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I would like to thank all who have contributed to make me reach this moment of my life. Special thank goes to my parents, brothers and sisters who provided me with the first human community where I could grow and develop. More thanks go to my teachers, beginning from my brothers Marino Obita and Masson Ojok and my bosom friend Walter Francis Komting Obita, who were my first teachers before I had even gone to school; then my primary, secondary and university teachers. Special thanks go also to my Christian community of Dure Chapel, Christ the King Parish and Gulu Archdiocese, where I have come into and been in contact with the world of faith, lived and grown in it and also had my first call to religious life. My other thanks go to my religious congregation, the Comboni Missionaries, especially the community of the Scholasticate of Innsbruck that has provided me with all the spiritual, moral and material needs, in these years of my study-sojourn in Innsbruck. Equally, I thank all friends, personal and those of our community in Innsbruck, who have opened for me not only the doors of their homes and/or stores, but also of their hearts and consequently enabled me to enjoy a friendly and homely time here in Tirol, Austria and in Europe. *Euch allen gilt mein herzliches Vergelt's Gott und ein großes Dankeschön!*

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I thank all those whose names I have not mentioned here, but have been and are still part of my life journey. May you all be rewarded abundantly with good health, happiness and all that you need. *Apwoyo-wu ducu!*

Robert Ochola-Lukwiya,

Innsbruck, June 2006.

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Acronyms and Abbreviations

ACCORD	A publication series of Conciliation Resources reviewing peace initiatives
ACORD	Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development
AFER	African Ecclesiastical Review
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
AMECEA	Association of Members Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa
APG	Acholi Parliamentary Group
ARLPI	Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
Brig.	Brigadier
CD-ROM	Compact disc – Read only memory
CMI	Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence
ESO	External Security Organisation
ISO	Internal Security Organisation
CID	Criminal Investigation Department
CMS	Church Missionary Society
COPE	Client-Oriented and Provider-Efficient.
CSOPNU	Civil Society Organization for Peace in Northern Uganda
DFID	Department for International Development (the UK's Aid ministry)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRPT	District Reconciliation and Peace Team
EAC	East African Community
ECHO	Economic Commission Humanitarian Office
EU	European Union
FRONASA	Front for National Salvation (a military force led by President Museveni, which collaborated with the UNLA in the overthrow of Amin)

FUNA	Former Ugandan Army (Rebels of former Amin's soldiers)
Gen.	General
GoU	Government of Uganda
GS	<i>Gaudium et Spes</i> , Vatican II Document
GUSCO	Gulu Support for Children Organisation
HDI	Human Development Index
HIV	Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus
HSM	Holy Spirit Movement
HURIFO	Human Rights Focus
HURIPEC	Human Rights and Peace Centre
IBEAC	Imperial British East African Company
ICC	International Criminal Court
IDA	International Development Agency
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMRs	Infant Mortality Rates
IRC	International Rescue Committee
IRIN	Integrated Regional News of the United Nations
KAP	Kalangala Action Plan (a paramilitary group started and led Maj. Ronald Kakooza Mutale, a presidential advisor)
KJPF	Kitgum Joint Peace Forum
LC	Local Council (These are councils introduced by President Museveni's government. They used to be called Resistance Councils. There are councils at each level of administration, from the village – LC1 to the district –LC5)
LDUs	Local Defence Units
LG	<i>Lumen Gentium</i> , Vatican II Document
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army

LThK	<i>Lexikon für Theologie und Kirche</i>
Maj.	Major
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
MoH	Ministry of Health
MP(s)	Member(s) of Parliament
NGOs	Non Governmental Organisations
NRA	National Resistance Army
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
NRM	National Resistance Movement
NSDS	National Service Delivery Survey
NUSAF	Northern Uganda Social Action Fund
O. Univ.-Prof.	<i>ordentlicher Universitätsprofessor</i> , a regular university professor occupying a teaching-stool.
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
RDC	Resident District Commissioner (representative of the central government in a district)
SECAM	Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar
SPLM/A	Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army
STDs	Sexually Transmitted Diseases
TPDF	Tanzania People's Defence Forces
U5MR	Mortality rate in children under 5 (deaths per 10,000 children under 5 years of age per day)
UBOS	Uganda Bureau of Statistics
UCE	Uganda Episcopal Conference (The national conference of the Catholic Bishops of Uganda)
UDCF	United Democratic Christian Force
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations

UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nation Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNHS	Uganda National Household Survey
UNICEF	United Nations International Children Education Fund
UNLA	Uganda National Liberation Army
UNRF	Uganda National Rescue Front
UPDA	Uganda People's Democratic Army
UPDF	Uganda People's Defence Force
UPE	Universal Primary Education
US	United States
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
YCS	Young Christian Student(s)

Preface

This thesis could be described as an analysis of violence and an attempt by the multi-faith consortium, the ARLPI, to counter violence by non-violence and dialogue. The *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English* defines violence as 'violent behaviour that is intended to hurt or kill somebody' as well as 'physical and emotional force or energy'.¹ The dictionary defines further the adjective 'violent' as

- (1) involving or caused by physical force that is intended to hurt or kill somebody
- (2) showing or caused by very strong emotion
- (3) very strong and sudden and
- (4) (of a colour) extremely bright.²

In this thesis, even if aware that there are various forms of violence, I have concentrated on the first definition, that is, use of physical force that is intended to hurt or kill somebody – what Gertraud Putz characterises as '*rohe*' *Gewalt* (*violentia*) and defines as

'form of aggression, which manifests itself as physical or psychological pressure, coercion, or intimidation from outside as a means of oppression. Raw violence is always directed towards the oppressed by the oppressors, against the will of the oppressed and requires some authority or power as a precondition. It is a sign of misuse of power where the recipient of the power abuse is always arbitrarily mishandled.'³

Thus in describing the history, instances and escalation of violence in this thesis, I mean almost exclusively the brutal use of force resulting in physical injuries or death of persons unless otherwise stated. This is not to ignore or to divide them from one another, the accompanying psychological or emotional violence that is inevitably meted upon a victim of physical, domestic or sexual violence, but to focus on one and thereby magnify and elucidate the problem here at hand. The reader is invited to imagine for themselves what amount of other forms of violence could be there in a situation where brutal, crude physical violence has taken an upper hand.

¹ A. Hornby, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, Sally Wehmeier and Michael Ashby (ed.), (Oxford et al.: Oxford University Press, 6th ed. 2000), p. 1445.

² Ibid.

³ Gertraud Putz, „Gewalt“ in: Hans Rotter und Günther Virt (Hg.), *Neues Lexikon der Christlichen Moral*, (Innsbruck – Wien: Tyrolia Verlag, 1990), 275.

For the explanation of violence, I take the position of René Girard's mimetic theory, where he contends that violence, like many human behaviours, is a reality of mimetic crisis, learned, acquired and perpetrated by imitation (Greek *mimesis*) of those we hold as role models or mediators. Thus, when a father is violent, it is most likely that his children will also imitate and learn, voluntarily or involuntarily, to be and act violently; when the head of state is one who extols violence, it is most likely that the citizens of such a given state will look upon violence as a value. Another aspect of Girard's theory is how this mimetically acquired violence from a few model figures spread to all the others, imitators of the models, leading to scape-goating of imagined or a perceived course of suffering of the others, the phenomenon of the surrogate victimage mechanism present in society.⁴ 'With all scapegoats [there are] *obligatory crimes*'⁵ bestowed on them by the society for which they must be punished. For instance:

Although the UNLA was a national and multi-ethnic army, the NRM/A held the Acholi exclusively responsible for the atrocities committed and this disputed perception was to shape subsequent attitudes toward the conflict in Northern Uganda.⁶

From a theological point of view, we talk of original sin (better expressed in German as *Erbsünde*, inherited sins) that we acquire and live with because of the fact that we human beings are weak and oriented to sin. This is not to refute the fact that we are free for our subsequent deeds.⁷ And so violence is perpetuated because partly someone has a violent background, lives in a violent environment, has been brought up to live that way and partly because the person has chosen to act so.

⁴ For elaborate introduction to René Girard see Chris Fleming, *René Girard: Violence and Mimesis*, (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2004); for expansion and application: Gil Bailie, *Violence Unveiled: Humanity at the Crossroads*, (N.Y.: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1997) and for the application of his theory to Theology see Raymund Schwager, *Must there be Scapegoats? Violence and Redemption in the Bible*, trans. Maria L. Assad, (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1987) and *Jesus in the Drama of Salvation*, trans. James G. William, (New York: Herder & Herder, 1999) as well as William M. Swartley (ed.), *Violence Renounced: René Girard, Biblical Studies and Peace Making* – Studies in Peace and Scripture, Vol. 4 Institute of Mennonite Studies, (Telford, Pennsylvania: Pandora Press U. S., 2000) among others. Also relevant here is Diarmuid O'Murchu, *Poverty, Celibacy and Obedience: A Radical Option for Life*, (N. Y.: The Crossroad Publishing Company, 1999).

⁵ Chris Fleming, op. cit., p. 122.

⁶ Ogenga Otunnu, 'Causes and consequences of war in Acholiland' in: Okello Lucima (ed.), *Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end violence in Northern Uganda*, Accord issue 11, 2002, <http://www.c-r.org/accord/uganda/accord11/theconflict.shtml> (20.12.2005).

⁷ See Raymund Schwager, *Erbsünde und Heilsdrama im Kontext von Evolution, Gentechnologie und Apokalyptik* Beiträge zur mimetischen Theorie 4, (Münster: LIT; Thaur: Dr.- und Verl.-Haus Thaur, 1997).

The biblical quotations used in this thesis are taken from various versions as the author deems them most fitting for a given situation and the version name, where known, is given in brackets. The source of these different versions, otherwise stated, is the CD-ROM *BibleWorks 5* of the BibleWorks, LLC, <http://bibleworks.com>, also available at the intranet of the University of Innsbruck (see also the website of the *Bibelwissenschaftliche Literaturdokumentation Innsbruck* of the Theological Faculty: <http://bildi.uibk.ac.at>).

0 Introduction

The title of our thesis is 'Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (ARLPI) in the Battlefield of Northern Uganda: An Example of an integral, inculturated and ecumenical Approach to pastoral Work in a War Situation'. Personal experience of war has contributed to selecting the theme of, and writing on, this thesis. It is about the activities, difficulties and little rays of hope of the interreligious and ecumenical group that has been working since 1997 for peace, justice and non-violence as the only holistic and realistic alternative approach to end the inhuman tragedy which has been unfolding in Northern Uganda since 1986, thus fulfilling the Christian call to be advocates and workers for peace: *Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God* (New American Bible, NAB Mt 5:9).

I recall with horror and sometimes with a sense of shame my own experiences of the beginning of the conflict in Northern Uganda and its evolution up to the present state – how we had to sleep under trees or in the open air of the savannah bushes (quite often under heavy rainfall during the rainy season and risking all the wild creatures that roam in the bush); how we would avoid all mothers and small children, for they might sneeze or cough in the night and would thus reveal the hideouts; and how many still have to run miles every afternoon and evening to go to the relative security of the open places such as bus stations, markets, hospitals, schools and mission yards to sleep, in order to escape abduction from marauding rebels [the phenomenon of the 'night commuters'⁸], the children losing thereby too much of their valuable time of learning and playing. In the nights, far away from the care of their parents, they are at the mercy of unscrupulous people who not only exploit them, but also sexually abuse young girls⁹ and many others.

⁸ 'When the sun sets, we start to worry . . .': *An account of life in Northern Uganda* (new edition, Nairobi: A United Nation OCHA/IRIN Publication, 2004 here) from the website: <http://www.irinnews.org/webspecials/NorthernUganda/When-the-sun-sets-Revised-Edition.pdf> retrieved on 30.11.2005

⁹ Cf. P. Carlos Soto Rodriguez, 'Child prostitution is rife in Kitgum', in: *The Weekly Observer*, 21st October 2004: <http://www.ugandaobserver.com/new/archives/2004arch/oped/oct/oped200410212-.php>; (24.05.2006); cf. Global March against Child Labour, 'Worst Forms of Child Labour abundant throughout most of Africa' and for Ugandan case, see the website link: <http://www.google.at/search?hl=de&q=Child+prostitution+in+Kitgum&meta=> (22.05.2006); Cf. Chris Dolan, 'Which children count? The politics of children's rights in northern Uganda' in Okello Lucima (ed.), op. cit., <http://www.c-r.org/accord/uganda/accord11/children.shtml> (22.05.2006).

The international community and the Church – both in Uganda and the Universal Church (and when I talk about the Church here, I mean the institutional Church, what the Germans call the *Amtskirche* as opposed to the Church of the simple, ‘. . . the oppressed Church, the poor and oppressed Christians . . . and all those other Christians who have recognised the cause of the oppressed as the cause of God’¹⁰) - on their part had been indifferent to the situation of Northern Uganda for a long time. In fact, at various moments, people of all walks of life have interpreted the issues of Northern Uganda more positively than they really are: the army and the government had always denied any troubles in Northern Uganda existed;¹¹ some international communities simply sang the praises of Museveni and his government for democracy, economic recovery as well as prosperity and fight against HIV/AIDS.¹² The Church also followed suit as will be seen here:

‘To give some examples; the late Bishop Mikairi Kawuma and Cardinal Emmanuel Nsubuga, both stood in their sanctuaries and praised God for returning peace to Uganda through the NRM. These two men of God came to the then West Germany and addressed a meeting of several people, including Ugandans - the main question to them was the situation in northern Uganda. Both stated that Uganda was now a new and peaceful nation. After the meeting, the Cardinal sat with several Ugandans, and in Luganda said to them: **“Mwe mubuuza ki ebyolutalo ffe kasita twebaka”** [Why ask about the war, at least for us we can sleep soundly]. In

¹⁰ Albert Nolan, *God in South Africa: The challenge of the gospel*, (Cape Town & Johannesburg: David Philip; Grand Rapids, Michigan, Wm. B. Eerdmans; Gweru: Mambo Press; London: CIIR, 1988), p. 211

¹¹ Cf. A. G. G. Gingyera - Pinyawa, *Northern Uganda in National Politics*, (Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd, 1992), pp. 3ff.

¹² Cf. BBC, ‘Profile: Uganda’s Yoweri Museveni’, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4463410.stm> Last Updated: Friday, 24 June 2005, 14:29 GMT 15:29 UK Retrieved on: 23/11/2005 20:59, where Bill Clinton on his state visit to Uganda in 1998 described Museveni as ‘the head of a new breed of African leaders’. This idea was/is shared by many of the Western donor countries. Cf. Linda de Hoyos, ‘Baroness Chalker’s Minions Are Plunging East Africa Into War’, in: *Executive Intelligence Review*, September 8, 1995, p. 46-47, on the web address: http://www.aboutsudan.com/dossiers/-british_monarchy/chalker_minions.htm retrieved on 23.11.2005; Cf. LaRouche, ‘Don’t Be a Pawn for London’s Genocidal Games against Nigeria’, in: Report by *Executive Intelligence Review*, Aug. 31, 1995; on the web address: <http://www.larouchepub.com/other/1995/nigeria.html> and retrieved on: 23.11.2005; cf. Linda de Hoyos, ‘British revive old blueprint for Africa’, Theodore Myles Publishing (323) 296-1760 Copyright 2000 *Afrocentricnews*, Source: http://www.afrocentricnews.com/html/blueprint_for_africa.html, retrieved on: 23.11.2005; Cf. *ibid.*, ‘Baroness Cox’s Ugandan mercenary’, in: *Executive Intelligence Review*, June 9, 1995, pp. 53-55, here from the website: www.aboutsudan.com; A sentence in this article citing a source in Britain about Chalker’s eulogy for Museveni reads: “‘He is,” said one British source, “the blue-eyed darling of the British in Africa.””; cf. Wayne Madsen, ‘America’s African Beachhead: Uganda’ in *Genocide and Covert Operations in Africa 1993-1999*, Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: the Edwin Mellen Press, 1999, pp.37 - 47.

fact, for the record, the statement, '*Ffe kasita twebaka*' was not introduced in Ugandan speak by Buganda locals, but Cardinal Nsubuga and Bishop Kawuma.¹³

The local official Catholic Church of Northern Uganda had also done or said nothing or very little at the start of the unrest or, simply blamed the people for their suffering. Other Ugandans, be they Christians or government officials or ordinary citizens, have referred to the problem as an Acholi problem, '... an Acholi affair, something they deserved for what the Acholi people in the UNLA did in the infamous Luwero Triangle massacres between 1981 and 1986'¹⁴. Just two years ago a former senior Ugandan government official, now working with international agency, still made such a remark in Austria. There were times when coming from Northern Uganda became identical with being an abomination to the nation Uganda. Many had to change their names and deny their origin to survive inside or outside Uganda - a situation similar to that of the Serbs during and after the war in their country. Many Ugandans are still living in exile albeit the assumed tranquillity and peace in the country. We shall come to this point later in the main work.

The idea for this thesis developed during the lecture of Intercultural Pastoral Theology, conducted by O. Univ. Prof. P. Dr. Franz Weber, MCCJ, during the summer semester of 2004. At the beginning of this lecture he invited all the students present to reflect on their own biography and that of their local churches. He further urged them to ask themselves: How did I experience my Church during my childhood and adolescence? How do I live this Church now? What are the signs of life and signs of death in this Christian community that constitutes my local church? In what social situations does my given local Church exercise her ministry of announcing the good news of the Gospels to her own faithful?

¹³ Edward Mulindwa, 'Buganda: part of the problem or solution?' in: *The Monitor* (Kampala: September 11, 2003) here from the website address: <http://myuganda.co.ug/discussion/read.php?f=-51&i=265&t=12&v=t> (05.11.2004).

¹⁴ Cosmas Lam Oryem, 'Breaking the Cycle of Violence', in: *Fighting History in Uganda: Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Peace Office Publication*, (April-June 2004 Volume 34, Number 2), p. 5; available as PDF-file on the internet address: http://www.mcc.org/respub/pon/pon_04_02.pdf retrieved on 07.12.2005; cf. Cipriano Dr. Kihangire, the then Catholic Bishop of Gulu, in his Easter homily of 1987 as reported by Robert Gersony, *The Anguish Of Northern Uganda: Results Of A Field-Based Assessment Of The Civil Conflicts In Northern Uganda* Submitted to: United States Embassy, Kampala USAID Mission, Kampala August 1997, p.14 of the PDF file retrieved from the internet website: http://www.usaid.gov/regions/afr/conflictweb/reports/gersony/gersony_uganda.pdf on 07.12.2005.

In answering those questions and carrying out my biographical reflection as well as that of the local Church of the Catholic Archdiocese of Gulu and then by giving my subsequent presentation (German: *Referat*) on the same to the class, it became clear to me to write about this experience with my own local Church, describing the signs of life and death there and how these have affected me personally as a faithful member who in turn is a member of the universal Church. Although this is an academic thesis, I am not a disinterested researcher or academic considering this project. I write this thesis as one affected with the situation researched and described herein.

This is also why the thesis is being written at the institute of *Praktische Theologie*, Practical Theology – department of Pastoral Theology and Missiology, rather than in the department of either Systematic theology, of Moral theology or of Social Teachings of the Church. The main aim of this thesis is to show what the concrete activities – practice - of this local Church in that concrete social milieu of present day Northern Uganda are. It is an emphasis on *orthopraxis*, without any bias towards *orthodoxies*, which would have been the realms of the other departments. Orthopraxis, after all, is the application and concretisation of a sound orthodoxy in the day-to-day life of every single individual and unique person; most times of those simple men and women with ‘flesh and blood’ who have to eat through the sweat of their brow (cf. Gen. 3:19). Here we don’t want to emphasise doctrines. Like St. James, we want to emphasise and show that good deeds the fruits of true faith (cf. Jam. 2: 20, 26).

The experience described here is what I share with so many children, youth, men and women and the elderly of Northern Uganda who are victims of over 20 years of civil unrest with physical as well as psychological, cultural, economic and political torture, total collapse and demise, which when not stopped, will lead to systematic annihilation of the affected people. It is a slow, but a steady genocide:

‘The human rights catastrophe unfolding in northern Uganda is a methodical and comprehensive genocide. An entire society is being systematically destroyed - physically, culturally, socially, and economically - in full view of the international community.’¹⁵

¹⁵ Olara Otunnu, ‘Saving our children from the scourge of war’ The Sydney Peace Prize 2005 lecture delivered on 10 November 2005 at the University of Sydney here published on the University address: <http://www.usyd.edu.au/news/84.html?newscategoryid=17&newsstoryid=764> (09.01.2006); cf. The international appeal of the Comboni Missionaries during their XVI. General Chapter, Rome, September 2003 entitled ‘Stop the genocide in Northern Uganda!’ published on the internet website: <http://www.comboni.org>; cf. German version: ‘*Aufruf des Generalkapitels*’ on the website:

Since coming to Europe and having at my disposal the many possibilities of communication, I have keenly followed (and still do follow) the development of the unrest in Northern Uganda and in Uganda, Africa and the world as a whole. I have also extensively read the history of Uganda to come to grips with its past in order to understand the present. I have participated in many initiatives, especially those that concern the issue of peace and justice. I have given a number of talks and held discussions with a cross section of people in different forums, especially concerning the human rights situations in Northern Uganda. My own experiences and work with different organisations that are involved in the promotion and protection of human rights such as *ARGE-Schubhaft*, Amnesty International, *Pax Christi* or *Arbeitskreis der Schöpfungsverantwortung (AKS)*, the Catholic Diocese of Innsbruck's movement for the Attention to Creation, just to mention a few, have greatly enriched me and expanded my horizons. The realisations from those numerous interactions as well as those from my own experiences are the ones that are now developed and reworked for this thesis.

As a Ugandan I count myself among the many lucky ones who have the privilege to travel almost all over the country¹⁶, thus coming into contact and interacting with people and realities from the different communities and societies that make up our present nation, Uganda. I am blessed from these experiences that have enabled me to transcend my tribal microcosm, quite often riddled with ethnocentrism, prejudice, phobia, ignorance and sheer angst of the others. My sojourn in Europe is another value added privilege, for through it I have come to have a wider and global horizon, knowing the joys and hopes of other nations, but also their many fears and anguish (cf. GS. 1). All these have helped me to reach a certain realistic view of human situations and develop a *bodenständige*¹⁷, i.e. a down to earth Theology.

In the summer of 2004 (July-September), I had the privilege to visit my people back at home again and spend some time with them in the IDPs where they are. There I could live and experience at first hand, without any intermediary or middle

http://www.comboni.de/news/uganda/aufruf_generalkapitel.html, retrieved on the 6th December, 2005.

¹⁶ Cf. Robert Ochola-Lukwiya, 'Pushing children out of the Church!' in: *Leadership: A magazine for Christina leaders in Africa* No.406, (Kampala: June 2002), pp. 20-22.

¹⁷ Cf. Józef Niewiadomski, „Bodenständig. Ansprache des Dekans bei der Promotions- und Sponsionsfeier“ im Kongresshaus, Innsbruck, am 19. November 2005 in: *Der Innsbrucker Theologische Leseraum* <http://theol.uibk.ac.at/itl/614.html> (12.Dezember 2005).

man, the agony and the desperation as well as the destitution of the displaced people, refugees in their own counties. I managed also to visit other IDPs. In the course of those visits I was able to talk with so many people on so many issues. I have also steady contact with the ARLPI, the voice of the voiceless of Northern Uganda. The fruits of those talks will also feature in our present thesis.

Our thesis will be expository and analytical of the situation herein presented and also prescriptive of what should be done. Being a member of the Young Christian Students' (YCS) movement from the first days in the secondary school, I learned already from that early age the methodology of SEEING - JUDGING - ACTING [-INVOLVING]¹⁸ employed first by Cardinal Cardijn in his pastoral involvement with the young Christian workers during his years of chaplaincy among them – at such a difficult time that could also be compared with the present day situation of Northern Uganda. This approach of seeing-judging-acting, now commonly accepted and used methodology in all pastoral activities in the Catholic Church,¹⁹ will be employed for our thesis.

Thus the first chapter will give an expository analysis of the country Uganda beginning from her history and foundation as a nation state. In fact, this imposed unity ignored the diversity of this country and has been a cause of the violent conflict there. The second chapter will analyse the present Ugandan society with respect to Northern Uganda in order understand what is going on there as part of the whole.

In chapter three, we shall judge this situation in the light of the gospel (cf. GS 4) and thereby connect the message of the scriptures from the Old as well as the New Testaments. The scripture, as we believe, is the word of God. We shall examine and ask ourselves: What does God say in such a situation? Is God still then with his children of Northern Uganda, or has he forgotten them? If he has not forgotten them, why should they suffer that much? Will this suffering ever come to an end? What role should we Christians play to reduce this inhuman tragedy? Have we done all that our faith compels us to do? From the teaching of the Scriptures we move on to the Social teachings of the Magisterium of the universal Church on the social issues of our time, applying them rigorously to the situation of Northern Uganda. We shall also look at

¹⁸ Cf. *Y.C.S. Handbook*, Kampala: Uganda National Youth Secretariat, 1983.

¹⁹ Cf. Paul M. Zulehner, *Pastoraltheologie Band 1 Fundamentalpastoral*, Düsseldorf: Patmos Verlag, 1989, especially the summary on pages 293-306.

the teachings of some local churches and, especially those of the SECAM, AMECEA as well as that of the Uganda Catholic bishops, the UCE; thus moving from the universal to the local and the particular. At the end, we shall find a missing link between the *teaching* and *doing* of the Ugandan Episcopal conference vis-à-vis the present Ugandan situation with particular reference to the situation in Northern Uganda. This will lead us to see the unfortunate discrepancies that exist between words and deeds not only of the simple Christians, but also of their pastors.

The next chapter is about the activities, struggles and daily desperation of the interreligious ecumenical peace body, the ARLPI. It is a concrete example of a successful translation of faith into action (without putting on any air of *triumphalism*) for peace, which has overcome the tribal and religious divisions that have prevented Ugandans from working together. 'It is to be admitted that in many places Catholics and Protestants were taught to see each other as open enemies'.²⁰ This unfortunate state of affairs was and/or is fully real and active in Ugandan society. The group, ARLPI, is unique and convincing in overcoming this barrier and also taking inculturation seriously, for it comprises not only of members of the believers in the God of Abraham (Christians and Moslems), but also members of the traditional Acholi communities, a group that with the dawn of colonialism and Christendom, had significantly suffered alienation and oppression. We do not have to trace the history of Christian missionaries to know how the traditional communities in Africa and other parts of the world have suffered in order to 'become children of God'. We do not need to stress how many communities have been alienated from themselves and their own cultures in order to receive baptism. We could arguably say this kind of alienation has in one way or another contributed to present waves of violence we see across the globe, for the modern man wants to rebel against everything that has kept him enslaved.

The Church of the colonial time has not only accepted the slavery of Africans as a necessary economic evil, but also had and still has the guilt of having used the Bible to justify slavery and slave labours. In this way she became an accomplice in slavery and slaves' ownership for the production of the then needed goods. This was necessary so for a society that had understood

²⁰ Vincent Emmanuel Okot Oburo, *Reconciliation: A moral therapy for Uganda. A search for Peace and Unity in the Socio-pastoral Teaching of Ugandan Catholic Bishops (Dissertatio ad Doctoratum in Theologia Morali consequendum*, Rome: Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, 1987), p.139, footnote 101 quoting A. Hastings, *Church and Mission in Modern Africa*, (Fordham University Press, 1967), p.239.

itself as Christian in order to soothe their moral feelings that it had to use theological arguments to justify slavery of millions of people.²¹

Unfortunately in wading in such an un-chartered path many end up throwing out the baby with the bathwater. Our conviction, however, is that true Christianity has brought about peace and good interpersonal, inter-communitarian and interstate relations. We will come then to see that it is the unity in diversity of the different faith groups in dialogue with the tradition of the Acholi of Northern Uganda that accounts for, and may guarantee the, survival of this endangered community.

In the conclusion, we invite everyone, man and woman, to embrace the incumbent task of reconciliation²² while working for peace and justice, for in the words of Pope John Paul II, justice alone without love which brings about forgiveness and reconciliation, is not Christian.²³ At this point we will have reached our forth and last stage of involving everyone, prescribing to us all what we believe is fundamental and indispensable for the future of the mother land Uganda, once the pearl of Africa,²⁴ but now a 'vale of tears' for quite a many of its own children.

In clinical psychology, *catharsis* is defined as encouraging and allowing a patient to freely talk over their experiences with the hope that through it the patient will experience a relief from their anguish and finally receive healing. Likewise, in writing this thesis, I have two main focuses in mind: first, as an affected person who has borne the brunt of this war right from its beginning up to its present form, I want to express my sorrow and solidarity with all who mourn. You're not alone in your suffering. Every true brother and sister of yours is at your side. Therefore, this thesis is a message that God has seen our tears and heard our cry: *The LORD said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering.'* (NIV Ex. 3:7) and has

²¹ Franz Weber, Text für eine Ausstellung im *Haus der Solidarität*, Brixen, 2003.

²² Cf. A joint report from different authors on the website for Federo. i.e. those who are advocating for the federal form of government in Uganda entitled: *Reconciliation in Uganda*. Here on the website address: http://www.federo.com/Pages/National_Reconciliation/.html retrieved on 06.06.2003; cf. Vincent Emmanuel Okot Oburo, op. cit., pp. 69-94.

²³ Pope John Paul, 'No Peace without Justice; No Justice without Forgiveness: Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace', 1 January 2002.

²⁴ Cf. Sir W. C. Churchill, *My African Journey*, London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1908, p. 197 as quoted by Vincent Emmanuel Okot Oburo, op. cit., fn 6, p.4

come down to liberate us from these years of untold sufferings, these years of humiliation, of death, of genocide and fratricide.²⁵

Secondly, I narrate the ordeals of my brothers and sisters, my mothers and fathers and our children with the hope that I receive healing. I also lend this thesis to the many voiceless in the Northern Uganda of today that this thesis may become for them a mouthpiece narrating and denouncing the culture of death, the conspiracy of silence from some circles of the human family and the indifference of many, that their voice may be heard and also their trauma may be healed. We make the text of the Latin American painter our own when he painted and wrote: '*La Gloria de Dios es la vida del Hombre; Anunciamos al Dios de la vida; Denunciamos a los idolos de la Muerte*'.²⁶ In the words of the Prophet Jeremiah, quoted also by Matthew, this is our situation in the eyes of God our Creator: *This is what the LORD, JAHWEH, says: 'A voice is heard in Ramah, mourning and great weeping, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because her children are no more.'* (Jer 31:15, cf. Mat 2:18) May there be some one to come over and console Rachel, by ensuring that her children remain alive.

²⁵ Cf. Archbishop John Baptist Odama's Pastoral Letter, *I have seen the Humiliation of my People and heard their Cry*, Gulu: 29th June, 2003. available also on the website address: <http://www.-archdioceseofgulu.org/JPC/Pastoral%20letter.htm> (20.12.2005) – the German version of this pastoral letter is published as 'Uganda: „Ich habe das Elend meines Volkes gesehen'. Hirtenbrief von John Baptist Osama, Erzbischof von Gulu" in: *Weltkirche* 5/2003, 107-9; cf. John Paul II, 'Do Not Be Overcome by Evil but Overcome Evil with Good: Message for the Celebration of the World Day of Peace', 1 January, 2005.

²⁶ Sanguano (artist), Painting from Ecuador in *Missio-Calender*, Aachen: Missio1994.

1 Seeing the Past and the Present of Uganda

In the process of examining whether the activities of the ARLPI are a special and unique example of an inter-religious work for peace, we will first have to present the nation Uganda and its people. Thereafter we shall go on to present a concise history of this nation. This will not be a conventional history, but a chronology and analysis of the history of violence; and the big question that will accompany us is: why this violence? What has gone amiss with the once 'Pearl of Africa'? The answer(s) to this question will give us a clue then to the uniqueness and role of the ARLPI.

1.1 The Nation Uganda: Land and People

Uganda lies along the equator, between the great East African Rift Valleys. It is a landlocked country, bordered by Sudan in the north, Kenya in the east, Tanzania in the south, Rwanda in the southwest and the Democratic Republic of Congo in the west. With a landmass of 241,143 km² and a population of about 24.4 million in 2002 and 26.4²⁸ so distributed according to the 2002 Population census: Baganda 4,126,370 (17.3%), Banyankore 2,330,21 (9.8%), Basoga 2,062,920 (8.6%), Bakiga 1,679,519 (7.0%), Iteso 1,568,763 (6.6%), Langi 1,485,437 (6.2%), Acholi 1,145,357 (4.8%), Bagisu 1,117,661 (4.7%), Lugbara 1,022,240 4.3 and **Other Ugandans** 7,340,257 (30.7%)²⁹. Uganda is one of the most densely populated countries of Africa, with a National Population Density of 124persons/km². Within the territory of Uganda are included the following lakes: Victoria, Albert, Edward, Kyoga and George. These lakes, together with several elaborate networks of river drainage constitute the headwaters of the River Nile. The country's economy is primarily agrarian, comprised mostly of smallholdings though pastoralism is dominant in Karamoja and Ankole.

The name 'Uganda' is a result of a mispronunciation by the first Europeans to visit the region who spoke Swahili, the language of the coast. Instead of pronouncing *Buganda* they pronounced 'Uganda' which apparently was retained as the written name of the whole territory.³⁰ Uganda is the name of the country, *Buganda* is the name of one of the ancient kingdoms within the present-day nation Uganda; *Luganda*

²⁸ According to *Wikipedia* encyclopaedia, German edition: <http://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uganda>, stand as of July 2004. This figure corresponds to those given in the next footnote.

²⁹ Uganda Bureau of Statistics, *2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census- Main Report*, p.8 (here PDF-file from the internet website: <http://www.ubos.org/> retrieved on 30.11.2005)

³⁰ Cf. G. W. Kanyeihamba, *Constitutional Law and Government in Uganda*, (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1979), p.11.

is their language, *Kiganda* is an adjective pertaining to anything that has to do with Buganda. *Muganda* is a native of Buganda; *Baganda* is the plural from Muganda and *Ganda* is an adjective relating to all of the above.³¹ This is from the onset an indication of how artificial the nation Uganda is. Like many other countries of Africa, Uganda is a product of the colonial misfortune whereby the continent was 'cruelly sliced as a Christmas cake by the unkind, sharp colonial knife . . . [in] the International Agreements in the Berlin West African Conference (1884-1885)'³².

Lake Kyoga forms both the physical and linguistic marker. South of Kyoga is the Bantu-region, with the centralised pre-colonial states of Buganda as elaborated above. Along with these were also the kingdoms of Bunyoro, Busoga, Toro and Ankole (Nkore). North and east of Kyoga are the non-Bantu territories of the Acholi, Alur, Langi, Iteso and Karamojong.³³ The Acholi inhabit present-day northern Uganda and southern Sudan, where, in the pre-colonial era, they constituted decentralised states. In the 1970s, the Acholi district of Northern Uganda was divided into Gulu and Kitgum districts. In 2001, Kitgum was subdivided to create a third district of Pader. The three districts constitute an area commonly referred to as Acholiland. At the time of writing our thesis there is debate going on that Gulu district will also be subdivided into Gulu and Amuru districts.

In the other regions of Uganda there are the sudanic tribes of Lugbara, Madi, Kakwa and Okebu in the West Nile region. East of Uganda has groups such as the Bagisu, Japadhola, the Samia and many other smaller ones. The 1995 Constitution of Uganda acknowledges a total of 50 tribes or communities³⁴ that form the present-day nation.

Uganda is multicultural as well as a multi-religious society. The religious distribution in the country is: Catholics 41.9 %, Protestants 35.9%, Muslims 12.1%, Pentecostals 4.6% and the rest (5.5%) belonging either to Bahai, Independent Churches or

³¹ Cf. Paolino Twesigye in *The Gun and the Cross as the Root of Violence: An Evaluation of the Response of the Catholic Bishops to Violence in Uganda* (unpublished *Dissertatio ad Licentiam in Theologia Morali consequendam*, Rome: Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, 1990), p. XI.

³² Vincent Emmanuel Okot Oburu, op. cit., p.4.

³³ Cf. Ogenga Otunnu, op. cit.

³⁴ *The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda* promulgated in October, 1995 (Entebbe: Uganda Government Publishing Corporation, 1995).

to their primordial cultural religions, commonly known as the African Traditional Religions (ATR)³⁵.

The facts given above are important for our thesis, as in the following chapters we shall be seeing how this heterogeneity has played and still plays a decisive role in the lives of every Ugandan.

1.2 The history of violence in Uganda

1.2.1 Pre- and colonial violence

There are many chronologies that try to give different time-events in the unfolding of events in Uganda. One of those stereotyped presentations from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), for example, gives these as the major events in the formation of Uganda.³⁶

A chronology of key events: 1500 - Bito dynasties of Buganda, Bunyoro and Ankole founded by Nilotic-speaking immigrants from present-day south eastern Sudan; 1700 - Buganda begins to expand at the expense of Bunyoro; 1800 - Buganda controls territory bordering Lake Victoria from the Victoria Nile to the Kagera river; 1840s - Muslim traders from the Indian Ocean coast exchange firearms, cloth and beads for the ivory and slaves of Buganda; 1862 - British explorer John Hanning Speke is the first European to visit Buganda; 1875 - Buganda King Mutesa I allows Christian missionaries to enter his realm.

British influence: 1877 - Members of the British Missionary Society arrive in Buganda; 1879 - Members of the French Roman Catholic White Fathers arrive; 1890 - Britain and Germany sign a treaty giving Britain rights to what was to become Uganda; 1892 – the British East India Company agent Frederick Lugard extends the company's control to southern Uganda and helps the Protestant missionaries defeat their Catholic counterparts, who had been competing with them, in Buganda; 1894 - Uganda becomes a British protectorate; 1900 - Britain signs an agreement with Buganda giving it autonomy and turning it into a constitutional monarchy controlled mainly by Protestant chiefs; 1902 - The Eastern province of Uganda is transferred to

³⁵ Uganda Bureau of Statistics, op. cit., p.8

³⁶ Timeline: Uganda from the BBC website: http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/country_profiles/1069181.stm, retrieved from the internet website on Sunday 13.11.2005. The following chronology presented here relies entirely on this website timeline.

the Kenya; 1904 - Commercial cultivation of cotton begins; 1921 - Uganda establishes a legislative council, but its first African member is not admitted till 1945; 1958 - Uganda is given an internal self-government; 1962 - Uganda becomes independent with Milton Obote as prime minister and with Buganda enjoying considerable autonomy; 1963 - Uganda becomes a republic with Mutesa as president; 1966 - Milton Obote ends Buganda's autonomy; 1967 – A new constitution vests considerable power in the president and divides Buganda into four districts.

Idi Amin years: 1971 - Milton Obote is toppled in a coup led by Idi Amin; 1972 - Amin orders Asians who were not Ugandan citizens - around 60,000 people - to leave the country; 1972-73 - Uganda engages in border clashes with Tanzania; 1976 - Idi Amin declares himself president for life and claims parts of Kenya; 1978 - Uganda invades Tanzania with a view of annexing the Kagera region; 1979 - Tanzania invades Uganda, unifying the various anti-Amin forces under the Uganda National Liberation Front and forcing Amin to flee the country; Yusufu Lule is installed as president, but is quickly replaced by Godfrey Binaisa; 1980 – Binaisa is overthrown by the army; Milton Obote becomes president after elections; 1985 - Obote is deposed in a military coup and is replaced by Tito Okello; 1986 - the National Resistance Army rebels take Kampala and install Yoweri Museveni as president.

Beginnings of recovery: 1993 - Museveni restores the traditional kings, including the king of Buganda, but without giving them political power; 1995 – A new constitution legalises political parties but maintains the ban on political activity; 1996 - Museveni is returned to office in Uganda's first direct presidential election; 1997 - Ugandan troops help depose Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire, who is replaced by Laurent Kabila; 1998 - Ugandan troops intervene in the Democratic republic of Congo on the side of rebels seeking to overthrow Kabila; 2000 - Ugandans vote to reject multiparty politics in favour of continuing Museveni's 'no-party' system; 2001 January – The East African Community (EAC) is inaugurated in Arusha, Tanzania, laying foundations for common East African passport, flag, economic and monetary integration. Members are Tanzania, Uganda and Kenya; 2001 March - Uganda classifies Rwanda, its former ally in the civil war in DR Congo, as a hostile nation because of fighting in 2000 between the two countries' armies in DR Congo, Museveni wins another term in office, beating his rival Kizza Besigye by 69% to 28%.

Campaign against rebels: 2002 March – Sudan and Uganda sign agreement aimed at containing the Ugandan rebel group, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), active along common the border. LRA wants to run Uganda along lines of the biblical Ten Commandments. Led by 'prophet' Joseph Kony they kidnap thousands of children and displace many civilians; 2002 October – the Army evacuates more than 400,000 civilians caught up in the fight against LRA which continues its brutal attacks on villages; 2002 December – A peace deal is signed with the Uganda National Rescue Front (UNRF) rebels after more than five years of negotiations; 2003 May - Uganda pulls out the last of its troops from eastern DR Congo. Tens of thousands of DR Congo civilians seek asylum in Uganda; 2003 August - Former dictator Idi Amin dies in hospital in Saudi Arabia; 2004 February - LRA rebels slaughter more than 200 people at a camp for displaced people in the north; 2004 December – The Government and LRA rebels hold their first face-to-face talks, but there is no breakthrough in ending the insurgency; 2005 April - Uganda rejects accusations made by the DR Congo at the International Court in The Hague. The DR Congo says Uganda invaded its territory in 1999, killing citizens and looting; 2005 July - Parliament approves a constitutional amendment which scraps presidential term limits. Voters in a referendum overwhelmingly back a return to multi-party politics; 2005 October – An International Criminal Court issues arrest warrants for five LRA commanders, including LRA leader Joseph Kony; former Ugandan President Apollo Milton Obote dies in a hospital in South Africa. Here ends the chronology.

Stereotyped, as this BBC account is, it nevertheless gives some indication of the history of violence in Uganda, namely, the expansion of Buganda at the expense of Bunyoro. There had always been wrangles and petty wars among these two rivaling kingdoms, but only on the basis to settle disputes or, because there were shortages of resources that both were competing for.³⁷ This is a natural phenomenon. We all struggle for our own survival, but with the coming of colonialism, Buganda was given an upper hand to subdue and even take a big piece of the land of Bunyoro as we shall see later.³⁸

³⁷ Cf. S.R Karugire, *A Political History of Uganda*, (Nairobi, London: Heinemann Educational Books, repr. 1987), chapter 1 'The Pre-Colonial Setting 1500-1860), pp. 17-48.

³⁸ For elaborate detail on this issue, the so-called 'lost counties', see the professionally written work of S. R. Karugire, op. cit, pp. 107-109;199-207; 218-221; 236 and from the same author, *Roots of Instability in Uganda*, (Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd, 2nd edition 1996), pp. 45, 51, 65.

Another instance of violence mentioned in this chronology is the involvement of Captain Frederick Lugard of the Imperial British East African Company (IBEAC) in the religious war that had erupted between the Baganda followers of the British Church Missionary Society, CMS, and the followers of the Catholic French Missionaries of the congregations of the White Fathers, founded by Cardinal Charles Lavigerie. These two Christian denominations had come to Uganda at different intervals, but already with tough competition, suspicion, distrust and rivalry.³⁹ It is already interesting to note that the group of the Church Missionary Society comprised of a retired navy officer as the leader of the expedition, Lieutenant Shergold Smith, Alexander Mackay was an engineer (expert in shoe making), Thomas O'Neill was an architect, George James Clark and William Muir Robertson were both mechanics, James Robertson was a builder while John Smith was a member of the medical personnel and the only clergyman (?) among them was Charles Thomson Wilson who was a graduate in Business studies from Oxford University.⁴⁰

But to go back to the violence of Lugard - it was after all, only the tip of the iceberg - : after serious quarrels and wars that had already been fought in Buganda i.e. the Baganda fighting each other for reasons unknown to them, to say the least, Lugard added insult to those injuries by declaring war on Buganda on the 24th January 1892. Here are the demands he put on the king of Buganda and the Catholics as a condition to be fulfilled, lest there be war:

'The King and Catholics should declare for England, and take the flag [of his company], and let those who wished read what religion they like[d] (sic). With regard to Mugobola's case [he had murdered his pursuer, one of Lugard's mercenaries], In these days when a single outrage by a small man [is] (sic) sufficient to plunge the whole country in war there must be no leniency and in every case where a man ha[s] (sic) been killed the murderer should be executed no matter to what party he belongs'.⁴¹

³⁹ Cf. Mario Cisternino, *Passion for Africa: Missionary and Imperial Papers on the Evangelisation of Uganda and Sudan, 1848-1923*, (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2004), pp. 154-162.

⁴⁰ cf. *ibid*, p.123; cf. Paolino Twesigye, *War and Morality in Uganda: An analysis and evaluation of the Teaching of the Uganda Catholic Bishops on wars and its consequences* unpublished *Dissertatio ad Doctoratum in Theologia Morali consequendum*, (Rome: Pontificia Universitas Lateranensis, 1991), p.148 in footnote 8 where he also quotes from Tom Tuma, *A Century of Christianity in Uganda*, (Lusaka: Afro Press, 1976), p. 17 and John V. Taylor, *The Growth of the Church in Buganda*, (London: SCM Press, 1958), pp. 30-38

⁴¹ Lugard's diaries, p. 26, quoted by Mario Cisternino, *op. cit.*, p. 188.

Hereafter Fr. Cisternino gives a detailed account of how the events unfolded on that day leading to the repulsion of the King and the Catholics at his side from the land:

'Above the white wall of the fort, pointing down the road, those who know the difference between types of guns are able to spot two heavy machine guns, one for Lugard and the other for his second-in-command Williams. . . Gabriel Kintu the General (a baptised catholic, according to power sharing agreements) is flanked by his bodyguard and is chatting with a Catholic chief. Gabriel is eager to know about Lugard's final stand and the messenger stops to answer his question; but at that very moment when the two meet, a couple of shots are heard and the Chief who is standing by and the General's bodyguard drop dead! A very tense silence follows, then the sound of another four shots, fired from Mengo's guards commanded by Gabriel; and Sembra Mackay, the first of the seven deacons of the Anglican Church, drops dead'.⁴²

It was like the situation described by Chinua Achebe in his famous novel, *Things fall apart*:

'The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart'.⁴³

This act of violence in Buganda, a legacy of the infamous tactic of *divide et impera*, divide in order to rule, a confirmation of the common African saying 'united we stand, divided we fall', was then not only used in Buganda, but all over the region which was later to become the nation state Uganda. This method succeeded well, according to Pillipo O. Oruni, because the British colonisers shrewdly managed to distort the identity of each group they brought under their rule.⁴⁴ A quotation from Oruni's book should serve to illustrate our point:

'The author next traced a former recruiting officer, Mr. W. Richards to his home in Wiltshire county, in West England. After the War, Richards became the British Resident in Buganda and afterwards a minister in the Protectorate Government until 1961. In a letter to the author dated 28th May, 1992, Richards explained the military policy pursued by the colonial authorities in Uganda in the following terms: "I think that the reason why most of the Uganda Protectorate soldiers and police used to come from the north was because they were likely to be members of *tribes* who were grain-eaters and hunters of wild animals, which meant that they were

⁴² Mario Cisternino, op. cit., p. 188.

⁴³ Chinua Achebe, *Things fall apart*, (London, Ibadan, Nairobi, Lusaka: Heinemann Educational Books, reprint 1975), p.160.

⁴⁴ Pillipo O. Oruni, *What is Right for Uganda*, Great Britain: Local Government Publication, 1994. See especially Part One, Chapter One: 'The Nilotic-Bantu Identity Distortion', pp. 3-16.

physically strong but less likely to have good education; the Baganda and the other tribes in the south of the country, who were usually banana-eaters, had little or no opportunity to go hunting, but took every opportunity to get a good education. I remember that in the early days of World War II. Recruiting Officers tended to think that suitable men would be found in northern Uganda than in southern Uganda; but recruiting very soon took place through out the country”⁴⁵.

With such manipulation and distortion, a group would be told how superior, better or stronger they were in comparison to the others, hence making their ego exaggerated and causing them to behave ruthlessly towards the others when asked to do so. It was the psychoanalyst Alfred Adler who informed us that underneath every arrogance, self-exaltment, *facit*: beneath every superiority complex is a deep-seated inferiority feelings and complex – a maniac that desperately stares one in the face while relentlessly grasping for recognition. ‘If we inquire into a superiority complex . . . we can always find more or less a hidden inferiority (feeling) complex.’⁴⁶ This manipulative play on complexes was an additional system that Captain Lugard used in Buganda with the Sudanese soldiers of Emin Pasha to commit more violence on the Baganda. The Baganda in turn were later used to inflict violence on the Banyoro and the rest of the other parts of the land that would become the Uganda Protectorate in 1894.⁴⁷ About a mutiny in Busoga Cisternino writes:

‘Berkeley and Macdonald in order to punish the surrounding collaborationist populations [the Basoga] annulled their independence and suppressed their Chiefs’ traditional authority. They imposed on them [instead] a group of brutal Baganda, just as they had already allowed Kungulu to do in Bukedi’.⁴⁸

We see here an example of how a group would be manipulated and used against the others.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 14

⁴⁶ Heinz and Rowena Ansbacher (eds.), *Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler. A systematic Presentation in Selections from his Writings*, Harper & Row: Torch Books, 1986, pp. XXIII, 503; cf. Hellmut Benesch, *dtv-Atlas zur Psychologie*, Bd. 2, (München: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, 1987), 377.

⁴⁷ Cf. Mario Cisternino, op. cit., parts 5, 6 and 7 sub-headed ‘The British “status quo” and the Christian mission during the conquest of Uganda, 1893-1902’, ‘The quiet after the storm: White Fathers and the Anglican CMS in North Uganda, 1903-1909’ and ‘Evangelical humility and colonial arrogance: The beginnings of the Catholic evangelisation in Northern Uganda, 1910-1913’ respectively, pp. 239-409.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 247.

Since our thesis does not intend to write another history of Uganda, it should suffice to note that the violence that bedevils Uganda is a colonial legacy inherited right from the birth of this artificial nation state. This, however, should not be interpreted to mean that those Ugandans who have been and are still behaving toward their fellow Ugandans like hungry wolves are not to be held responsible for their deeds. No! On the contrary! We would like to refer here to the Myth of Orestes as summarised by Dr. M. Scott Peck in his book, *The Road Less Travelled*, to explain that everybody has the responsibility for their deeds and if they wish, they could transform a situation of desperation or of upheavals into that of success, joys and blessings. If Ugandans want, they could transform their sad history of colonialism and subsequent oppressions into a multicultural and peaceful state, united in its divergence. To do justice to this myth and to underline its importance for the Uganda of today, we shall reproduce the whole myth as summarised by Dr. Scott Peck:

'Orestes was a grandson of Atreus, a man who had viciously attempted to prove himself more powerful than the gods. Because of his crime against them, the gods punished Atreus by placing a curse upon all his descendants. As part of the enactment of this curse upon the House of Atreus, Orestes' mother, Clytemnestra, murdered his father and her husband, Agamemnon. This crime in turn brought down the curse upon Orestes' head, because by the Greek code of honour a son was obliged, above all else, to slay his father's murderer. Yet the greatest sin a Greek could commit was the sin of matricide. Orestes agonised over his dilemma. Finally he did what he seemingly had to do and killed his mother. For this sin the gods then punished Orestes by visiting upon him the Furies, three ghastly harpies who could be seen and heard only by him and who tormented him night and day with their cackling criticism and frightening appearance.

'Pursued wherever he went by the Furies, Orestes wandered about the land seeking to atone for his crime. After many years of lonely reflection and self-abrogation Orestes requested the gods to relieve him of the curse on the House of Atreus and its visitations upon him through the Furies, stating his belief that he had succeeded in atoning for the murder of his mother. A trial was held by the gods. Speaking in Orestes' defence, Apollo argued that he had engineered the whole situation that had placed Orestes in the position in which he had no choice but to kill his mother, and therefore Orestes really could not be held responsible. At this point Orestes jumped up and contradicted his own defender, stating, 'It was I, not Apollo, who murdered my mother!' The gods were amazed. Never before had a member of the House of Atreus assumed such total responsibility for himself and not blamed the gods. Eventually the gods decided the trial in Orestes' favour, and not only relieved him of the curse upon the

House of Atreus but also transformed the Furies into the Eumenides, loving spirits who through their wise counsel enabled Orestes to obtain continuing good fortune'.⁴⁹

We would like to turn now to the time after the colonial rule, when the land was plunged again into a series of violence that we still live unto this day.

1.2.2 Post colonial violence

As already mentioned in the previous section, violence that Uganda would experience in the years after the attainment of independence on the 9th October, 1962, is a continuation of that, which had already been borne by the forbears of the nations. It is also necessary to notice here, that had there been no political agitations which often resulted in bloodshed, Uganda would not have attained its independence so soon.

What were then the factors leading to the immediate escalation of violence in the time after independence? There are many answers to this question just as there are many political theories in and over Uganda. The colonisers would say they had not yet had enough preparation for the independent state Uganda.⁵⁰ Those on the side of the Kabaka (King of Buganda) and the Baganda generally insist that Obote had made all the trouble by abrogating the constitution in 1967⁵¹. Those on the other side vehemently detest this postulation and come to conclude that the problem lies somewhere else. We shall return to this point at an appropriate time, but it seems suitable to mention here the issue of the constitution that, according to Pilipo O. Oruni, was very wanting. He notes:

'Most serious [of the problems of immediate post independent prime minister and the country] however were the basic flaws in the young nation's constitution. The constitution only made note of Buganda, Ankole, Bunyoro and Toro and only with much reluctance and in a cavalier spirit. As far as the constitution was concerned the other communities, "the rest of Uganda", neither had identity nor local loyalties. What the "constitution" contained was simply a set of the authority, regulations and controls of bureaucracy and government over the peoples and communities. And although individual's rights were theoretically guaranteed by the constitu-

⁴⁹ M. Scott Peck, M.D., *The Road Less Travelled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth*, (N.Y.: Touchstone, 2nd ed., 1998), pp.293-294.

⁵⁰ Cf. Sir Peter Allen, *Interesting Times: Uganda Diaries 1955-1986*, (Sussex: The Book Guild Ltd., 2000), pp. 163, 200 etc.

⁵¹ Cf. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, *Sowing the Mustard Seed: The Struggle for Freedom and Democracy in Uganda*, edited by Elisabeth Kanyangonya and Kevin Shillington, (London: Macmillan Publishers Ltd, 1997), p. ; cf. S. R. Karugire (1996), pp. 88, 98-117.

tion, these could and would be fatally wounded and nullified as part of the community whose identity and heritage as a whole the constitution did not recognise. Who would support such a constitution, lacking in the legitimacy and sovereignty behind it, and offering no opportunity for the community? Only an armed lot, by force of the guns!’⁵²

In looking at the history of violence within this period, the best summary is perhaps that given in the article of Mr. M. Kibuka entitled ‘The Need of Apologies’. Here Mr. Kibuka lists the different moments of violence in the post-colonial Uganda where grave violations of human rights were committed:

‘This is a summary of mistakes that need to be addressed in a reconciliation dialogue: (i) The 1964 Mutiny (ii) The 1966 Lubiri Crisis (iii) The 1967 Pigeon Constitution (iv) The 1969 One Party declaration (v) The Lugogo Assassination Attempt (vi) The 1971 Coup d’état (vii) The 1979 Liberation War (viii) The 1979 Lule issues, accompanied with Muwanga, Binaisa, etc. (ix) The 1980 Controversial General Elections (x) The 1980 West Nile Armed Incursion (xi) The 1985 Okello-Okello case (xii) The 1986 Museveni Takeover (xiii) The 1990 Broad base government prolongation (xiv) The 1995 NRM Constitution (xv) The 1996 Presidential Elections (xvi) The 2001 Presidential Elections (xvii) The Acholi Tragedy (xviii) Obote wanted dead on sight (xix) Besigye, wife, son and family pursued (xx) Harassment of Reform Agenda Activists’.⁵³

1.2.2.1 The time of Obote’s I. regime (1962-1971)

The time of Obote’s first regime was marked by a series of serious violence; that perpetrated by individuals and that perpetrated by the state. The most remarkable among these is the 1966 attack on the Palace of the Kabaka of Buganda, Sir Edward Mutesa II., who at independence in 1962 had become the titular President of Uganda, whereas Obote was the executive Prime Minister.

It is widely believed that this early period of self-governance of Uganda was marred by political intrigues, which first took the form of manipulations, but later on degenerated into violence when manipulations could not hold anymore. The list above from M. Kibuka shows that the first four violent incidents fell within this time. After elaborating on many incidents in the political life of the early post-independence in Uganda around the personality of Obote, here is what the publishers of the above cited *Wikipedia* encyclopaedia say:

⁵² Pilipo O. Oruni, op. cit., p. 241 (my own emphasis added).

⁵³ M. Kibuka, ‘The Necessities of Apologies’ in: *Reconciliation in Uganda*, Federo Publication on the internet website: http://www.federo.com/Pages/National_Reconciliation/.html, (06.06.2003).

'Because he [Obote] was faced with a nearly unanimous disavowal by his governing party and national parliament, many people expected Obote to resign. Instead, Obote turned to Idi Amin and the army, and, in effect, carried out a coup d'état against his own government in order to stay in power. Obote suspended the constitution, arrested the offending UPC ministers, and assumed control of the state. He forced a new constitution through parliament without a reading and without the necessary quorum. That constitution abolished the federal powers of the kingdoms; most notably the internal autonomy enjoyed by Buganda, and concentrated presidential powers in the prime minister's office. The Kabaka objected, and Buganda prepared to wage a legal battle. Baganda leaders rhetorically demanded that Obote's 'illegal' government remove itself from Buganda soil'.⁵⁴

This demand that Obote and the central government should leave Buganda was not only an oral threat, but a physical violent reality that resulted in the infamous attack on Lubiri, the Kabaka's palace on the 23rd May, 1966. Here we quote in full two diary entries from Peter Allen, a former colonial officer whom we shall quote more in this section, regarding the same.⁵⁵

Monday 23 May: There have been riots in various parts of Buganda following the Lukiiko's [Buganda's local parliament] trouble-stirring efforts. These have involved violent attacks on several police stations in which a corporal and two constables were killed; one each at Nagalama, Buikwe and Luwero. One of them was tied up and thrown into the back of a truck filled with dried thatching material which was then set alight and the poor chap burned alive. Reinforcements have been sent out and arrests made, including three Baganda chiefs who were busily stirring things up; no doubt on orders of the Lukiiko.

Tuesday 24 May: I was driving into Kampala this afternoon and near the fire station saw four army lorries, apparently coming down from Mengo, filled with bodies trailing blood from the tail-boards. Apparently there has been a battle at Mengo, where Colonel Idi Amin led some troops in an attack on the Kabaka at his palace, resulting in the slaughter of most of the Baganda living and working in that area. Presumably Obote sent him there on this mission, since he wouldn't do something like that on his own initiative.

At the state funeral of Obote in October 2005, his widow, a Muganda herself (now elected President of the Uganda People's Congress, UPC, the party her hus-

⁵⁴ Ibid. This position is now accepted by almost all Ugandan historians. See here, for example, Samwiri Rubaraza Karugire, *Roots of Instability in Uganda*, (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1996), pp. 49ff; cf. S. R. Karugire (1996), pp. 98-117; cf. Phares Mutibwa, *Uganda since Independence: A Story of Unfilled Hopes*, (Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd, 1992), pp. 37ff; cf. *Spectrum Guide to Uganda*, (Nairobi: Camerapix Publishers International, 1998), pp. 50-1.

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.262.

band co-founded and led until his death), would support this position, when she passionately pleaded her husband's true love for Uganda and for Ugandans and blamed the Buganda establishments for the occurrence of the 1966 Kabaka's attack. The media reported:

'She attacked the Mengo establishment for distorting the 1966 crisis and accepting to be used by divisive forces. "Mengo itself was not an innocent party in this confrontation. That is what many people forget. Kabaka Mutesa had requested the British Government for massive military assistance including arms and ammunition. He had also placed an order for a large quantity of weapons with a company called Gailley and Roberts," Miria said. She recalled that after the Lukiko had passed a motion that Buganda had seceded from Uganda, Mengo encouraged Baganda to ambush army lorries, dig trenches across roads and attack Police posts. "Government had to act," she said. "They have portrayed my husband as a person who hates Baganda. That is not true, I can testify. My husband loved Ugandans. . .".⁵⁶

Whatever political motive was behind this attack and the corollary ensuing confrontations, the end result was that violence erupted and many lives were lost. This event was and still remains an important landmark in the political landscape of Uganda as we shall unfold more and more in the coming sections.

1.2.2.2 Idi Amin Dada and the reign of terror (January 1971- April 1979)

The time of Idi Amin could rightly be called the *dark ages* of Uganda. Apart from the recent reign of terror meted by the LRA, it appears violence reached its zenith at this time. We do not need to elaborate further on all that happened that time, for Amin is certainly an internationally known 'butcher of Ugandans'. As such he became a celebrity in his own way. I still meet people here in Europe who, when I introduce myself as coming from Uganda, immediately ask me how Amin is and where he lives; even today two years after his death.

⁵⁶ Charles Etukuri and Alfred Wasike, 'Miria blasts Govt' in: *The New Vision*, Kampala: Saturday, 22nd October, 2005 retrieved on the same day from the internet website: <http://www.newvision.co.ug> ; cf. Hussein Bogere & Simon Kasyate, 'Nation bids farewell' in: ***The Monitor***, Kampala: Saturday, 22nd October, 2005 retrieved from the website: <http://www.monitor.co.ug>

Idi Amin Dada Oumee, as his official name was, was born allegedly on the 17th May, 1928 as a Kakwa in Koboko. Some claim he was born in Kampala.⁵⁷ In any case he was deserted by his father at an early age and brought up in Buganda by his mother, who claimed to be a sorceress. He received little formal education. At some point in his early youth he also lived among the Acholi of northern Uganda, specifically in a small village, Lobolatek⁵⁸ where the author also comes from. And if this information is true, it is also to suppose then that Amin might have attended the local school, Dure Primary School, located a kilometre away from Lobolatek.

Amin joined the King's African Rifles of the British colonial army as a private in 1946, rising to the rank of lieutenant after seeing action during the Mau Mau revolt in Kenya. He was considered a skilled soldier; however he also had a reputation for cruelty. (Mzee Fabio Oroma alias Olelo once narrated how they as small children were always mistreated by Amin. Whenever he was coming back from the gardens with the oxen, he would force any lad who came his way to sit on the ox-plough and 'take a ride' - an act that was very cruel and risky. Many children ended up getting serious cut-wounds from the ox-plough.) He rose through the ranks, reaching sergeant-major before being made an *effendi*, the highest rank possible for a Black African in the British army. Amin was also an accomplished sportsman. Besides being a champion swimmer he held Uganda's light heavyweight boxing title from 1951 to 1960 and later, as President, participated in the 1972 Uganda Motor Rally and 'won', of course, since he would not have been a keen second to anyone. He remained President and was removed by a combined force of the TPDF and UNLA on the 11th April, 1979. Once again there was a war meting violence and suffering on the people of Uganda and tainting its history with human blood.

⁵⁷ Cf. 'Idi Amin' in: *Wikipedia* encyclopaedia on line: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Idi_Amin (7th Dec., 2005). This information is confirmed by Miranda Twiss, 'Idi Amin: The Butcher of East Africa' in: *The Most Evil Men and Women in History: the Book of the Channel 5 TV Series 5*, (London: Michael O'Mara Books Ltd, 2002), p. 177-198.

⁵⁸ This information was given by many elders during interviews that the author conducted between 1992 and 1993 when he was writing a short history of their clan of Lukwo-Kal/Kilyanga. Those interviewed were, among others, Wazee Yusero Oyoo alias Adikilii and Mikele Opobo alias Cuku. Years before (1987-1990) when living displaced in another village, Ngekidi – Bar-ayom I heard the same story from elders there. Among those were Wazee Fabio Oroma alias Olelo, Marino Ojoo, Alfredo Lacek alias Olule, etc. Unfortunately many of these elders were either brutally murdered or have naturally died due to the insecurity that prevails nowadays in Northern Uganda's Acholiland.

Turning from Amin's biography as this is not the focus of our thesis, we now want to show some of the brutal acts of violence committed at this time. It is generally estimated that from 300,000 up to 500,000 Ugandans were murdered during Amin's presidency. These were mainly from the Acholi, Lango, and other tribes in Uganda. Two quotations from the diaries of Peter Allen, who survived this period (how exactly?!) will help us to understand the magnitude of those acts of violence. Allen wrote:

Tuesday 9 March [1971]: 'On Radio Uganda news yesterday evening it was announced that the huge explosion heard all over Kampala a short time before came from the Lubiri barracks, where the Army was destroying a damaged bomb and, as there are other damaged bombs to be destroyed, there will be more explosions and people should not panic. This evening my informant dropped in and told me that Amin had arranged for 32 Acholi and Langi senior army officers to be brought out of Luzira Prison, where they were being detained, and taken up to a room in Malire barracks which had been wired with a large quantity of explosive, which was then detonated and they were all killed. These were the 'damaged bombs' to be destroyed, but there had been overkill by the incompetents who arranged it and too much explosive had been used. Hence the fact that everyone in Kampala had heard it and a lot of panic ensued in town. He said that Amin has ordered a different method to be found for disposing his 'damaged bombs'. Many of the Acholi and Langi soldiers who were either stationed around Gulu or on leave in the area after the January coup were hunted down and shot in that area. Amin is apparently using units made up of West Nilers and Nubians to do this grisly work'.⁵⁹

Another entry on Sunday, 11 July 1971 details further the orgy of this period where former army officers and men, recruited from Acholi and Langi tribes, were massacred:

'On Amin's orders, those belonging to these two tribes are being slaughtered all over the country, including at Simba barracks here in Mbarara. In a recent announcement Amin said that 70 officers and 600 other ranks were killed by the Tanzanian Army, but there has been no battle of any sort down on the border with Tanzania.... He has used troops from other tribes to carry out this killing- from West Nile and also from the Western and Eastern Provinces and, of course, his Nubians. It's very sad that Ugandans have sufficient tribal hatred or lack of concern that they are apparently willingly killing each other in large numbers. Information about this is difficult to obtain but there was certainly a massacre here and there has been another at the huge Jinja barracks. . . .'⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Peter Allen, op. cit., 312.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 318-19; cf. Y. K. Museveni, op. cit., p. 40.

The list of killings and violence during the reign of terror of Amin and the names of his victims is enormous. No one knows exactly. But perhaps it is worth mentioning that among the most prominent people killed by Idi Amin were: Ben Kiwanuka (September 1972), the former Chief Justice; Janani Luwum (February 1977), the Anglican Archbishop; Joseph Mary Mubiru, the former Governor of the Central Bank; Frank Kalimuzo, the Vice Chancellor of Makerere University; and Byron Kawadwa, a prominent playwright.

To conclude this sketchy presentation of the time of Idi Amin, one could ask oneself, where was the International community or human rights organisations when Amin was wielding terror on the helpless? What was wrong with the world? One answer comes from David Owen who was the United Kingdom's Foreign Secretary (1977–1979). He suggested that Amin should be eliminated by assassination, but his idea was rejected. He concluded saying: 'For sheer personal callousness and bitterness, it's an appalling record and it's a disgrace on us all that he was allowed to stay in office for as long as he did.'⁶¹ No wonder his idea was 'directly rejected', for the 'last government to want to be rid of Amin is the British one'⁶². And indeed it is a big shame, when one takes into consideration the now known fact that Amin was brought to, and maintained even up to the final hours of his power by direct intervention of many western powers including the United Kingdom itself, Israel, the USA, etc, to stop Obote from implementing his infamous 'The Common Man Charter' and nationalisation drive in which the state had taken 60% of the parastatals and businesses!⁶³ At the time of Amin's death, it is reported that Lord Owen talked about how former US President Jimmy Carter said that Amin's policies 'disgusted the entire civilised world'. Owen added further his own conviction: 'I'm not ashamed of considering it [assassinating Amin], because his regime goes down in the scale of Pol Pot as one of the worst of all African regimes'⁶⁴, then we can only see the hypocrisy of those who

⁶¹ Said Lord David Owen, UK's former foreign secretary, in August 2003 to an interviewer for BBC Radio 4; See: 'UK considered killing Idi Amin' Story from *BBC News*: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/3157101.stm> Published: 2003/08/16 17:56:24 GMT retrieved on 14.12.2005.

⁶² Pat Hutton and Jonathan Block, 'The making of Idi Amin', in: *New African*, (No. 391, February 2001), p. 43.

⁶³ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 38-43; cf. Peter Allen, *op. cit.*, p.311, 572; cf. Daniel K. Kalinaki, 'Where UK, Israel involved in the 1971 coup? The answer...' in the series 'Obote Focus October 23-29, 2005' in: *The Monitor* (Kampala: October 23, 2005).

⁶⁴ 'UK considered killing Idi Amin', *op. cit.*

groomed, brought up and maintained Amin in power.⁶⁵ In any case, Amin was 'like a dog infected with rabbits that would even bite (the very hand of) its owner that feeds it' as the Acholi in their wisdom would say.

1.2.2.3 The post-Amin conflicts and the 1980 general elections

That the days of Amin were numbered was obvious, especially when he became desperate and started attacking neighbouring countries. The last straw was when in 1978 he invaded the Republic of Tanzania with the intention of 'annexing' its Kagera region, claiming it originally belonged to Uganda before the colonialists arbitrarily apportioned it to Tanzania. His argument might not be false, but who was he to undo the fate that colonialism had destined on Uganda, the same colonialism that brought him to power since he was 'a little short of the grey matter, though intensely loyal to Britain' and thus could be easily manipulated to fulfil the interests of the neo-colonialists?⁶⁶ In this extended violence that led to political provocation of Julius Nyerere, the then President of the Republic of Tanzania and friend of deposed Ugandan President Dr. Apollo Milton Obote, Tanzania People's Defence Forces and a combination of exiled Ugandans under the umbrella of UNLA/F marched in to Uganda and eventually took over power from Idi Amin in April 1979 as already elaborated above.

The time after Idi Amin was not to become the immediate return to paradise for Ugandans, instead there was an escalation of violence caused not only by the retreating defeated Amin soldiers, but also from the incoming and already settled liberators, *wakombozi*, the TPDF & UNLA soldiers. Within a matter of few months there were successive Presidents: Prof. Yusufu Lule, Godfrey Lokongwa Binaisa, QC. 'Binaisa managed to stay in office longer than Lule, but his inability to gain control over a burgeoning new military presence proved to be his downfall.'⁶⁷ And finally Paul Muwanga, who was also the Chairman of the Military Commission set to make an interim government and prepare for general elections in December 1980, took over after many instances of violence, mistrust and counter accusation of the returnees. Two particular people were singled-out at this moment for building up personal ar-

⁶⁵ For a full debate on this see Mahmood Mamdani, *Imperialism and Fascism in Uganda*, Trenton, N.J: Africa World Press of the Africa Research and Publications Project, 1984.

⁶⁶ Cf. Pat Hutton and Jonathan Block, op. cit., p. 39.

⁶⁷ 'Uganda After Amin' under http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uganda_since_1979 (08.12.2005)

mies: Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the then Vice-Chairman of the Military Commission and Minister of Defence, and Major General David Oyite Ojok, later Chief of Staff during the Obote II government and who later died in a mysterious helicopter crash in December 1983. 'Museveni's 80 original soldiers grew to 8,000; Ojok's original 600 became 24,000!'⁶⁸

The violence and the insecurity building up in the post-Amin Uganda were to be symbolised by the campaign before and during the general elections of 10th December, 1980. There was widespread violence not only from the side of the *wanainchi* (simple folk), but from the top politicians as well. My father recalls Museveni who was contesting as a presidential candidate shooting at DP-supporters in Lacek-ocot, Aruu County, now Pader district. With at least one person dead and many injured, he stated: 'Play with Obote, but not with me. I'm a soldier!'⁶⁹ The 1980 general election was marked with outrageous violence, intimidation of opposition politicians and their supporters and wanton rigging. Obote was returned to power and thereby began a period commonly known as Obote II in the history of Uganda's violence.

1.2.2.4 Obote II. and the NRA bush war (December 1980 – July 1985)

In the run-up to the parliamentary and presidential elections of 1980 the two main contesting Parties were the UPC of Apollo Milton Obote and the DP of Paul Kawanga Ssemogerere. There were also other small political parties - not really contesting for any big win - such as the Conservative Party of Mayanja Nkangi and Uganda People's Movement, founded by Yoweri Museveni, after he fell out with UPC & DP.

As already noted, the 1980 elections were clearly rigged and the truly deprived party was the DP led by Paul K. Ssemogerere, who in the opinion of some observers, were the true winners.⁷⁰ This claim, as to be expected, was and is denied by the UPC die-

⁶⁸ Ibid.

⁶⁹ Interview the author personally conducted with his father, Mzee Justo Ocen, in Acholibur IDP camps on 28th July 2004.

⁷⁰ See foot note no. 42; where Prof. Karugire has displayed the whole results of the 1980 elections; cf. Onyango Odongo, *A Political History of Uganda: Yoweri Museveni's Referendum 2000*, (London: WiCU Publishing Press Ltd, 2000), p.53-54; cf. Alex B. Bukenya, *Inside Luwero Triangle*, (Kampala: Kitata Publishing and Trading Co. Ltd, 1992), p. 10; cf. the analysis offered by the research *Hidden War, The Forgotten People: War in Acholiland and its Ramifications for Peace and Security in Uganda*, by Human Rights and Peace Centre (HURIPAC), Kampala, Liu Institute for Global Issues-Canada in Partnership with Afrika Study Centre-Mbale, Human Rights Focus, Gulu District, NGO

hards. In any case, many Ugandans believed it was better to live with a civilian government, even if it came to power through rigged elections, than to enter into another war after the eight or nine years under Idi Amin. Distancing himself from this general inclination, there was Yoweri Kaguta Museveni with a group of his followers, who argued that because the elections were rigged, he decided to wage war against the Obote II government in the Luwero Triangle of Buganda region. This war, for good or bad, was later to steer and determine the fate and future of Uganda.

Although it is not our intention to argue a political case in this thesis, it is important we reject the commonly held opinion that the war waged in 1981 in Luwero was a popular resistance against the election rigging of 1980. Sir Peter Allen, a former colonial police constable who was in Uganda from 1956, slowly but surely ascending the career ladder until 1986, leaving at this stage as the Chief Justice of Uganda, with a very typical although liberal colonial attitude towards Uganda – we have widely quoted him in the course of this thesis – has this to say about Museveni's waging war in 1981:

Tuesday 23 December [1980]: The new MPs were sworn in at Parliament today The awful Muwanga, having stepped down as Chairman of the Military Commission, is unfortunately now to be Vice-President. That is very bad news and does not bode well for us. It seems he's too politically powerful to be kept out. Oh dear. The UPM did very badly in the elections and won only one seat - in Toro. Their leader, Museveni, who was not elected, has announced in a fit of pique that he is taking to bush and will fight a guerrilla war against Obote's Government. That's just what Uganda needs now. Instead of being able to use all our resources for the much needed rehabilitation and rebuilding of the country, we have a totally unnecessary civil war on our hands because of personal political ambitions of one man. How many people are now going to die just for that? A very expensive sulk!⁷¹

And indeed it was a prophetic expression: 'a very expensive sulk' if we take account of the costs of this war. We will refer further to Allen's diaries to make us count these costs, which actually explains and measures the amount of violence Ugandans meted on Ugandans during this period.

Forum, Gulu, ACCORD, Gulu, Norwegian Refugee Council, HURINET- Kampala, ABETO- Kampala and GUSCO, Gulu, October, 2003. p. 26.

⁷¹ Sir Peter Allen, op. cit., p.544.

Tuesday 10 February [1981]: 'For the last three nights there have been explosions and gunfire around the city. These are apparently caused by Museveni's guerrillas attacking various buildings. A very useful contribution to Uganda's recovery....'⁷²

Thursday 19 November [1981]: 'Whoever is responsible for training the present UNLA army is not doing a very good job of it; especially with regards to weapons discipline. All over Kampala there are military sentries guarding the residences of ministers and senior army officers. Constantly these sentries loose off shots from their weapons because they persist in carrying them around loaded and cocked. So, an accidental touch or pressure on the trigger and away the bullet goes often into the foot of the sentry; sometimes into a comrade while they are playing about with their weapons. There's a report in the paper of a foolish young recruit going on leave by train to Kabale who took a live grenade into the railway carriage and actually played with it on the journey, like an ignorant child. The pin came out and, in the resulting explosion, he and the other passengers sitting with him were all killed, including a young woman with a baby. . . I hear that in the Bombo area, about 30 miles north-west of Kampala, a large group of Museveni's NRA has been wiped out after heavy fighting. They were conducting guerrilla attacks in and around Kampala from their strategically placed camp there'⁷³.

Thursday 16 March [1982]: 'There appears to be an unusual amount of trouble around Kampala at the moment and a lot of Baganda have been rounded up and carted off by people working in the office of Vice-President Muwanga, who seems to have set up a sort of secret police organisation. The thugs he uses are acting in the same way as those in Amin's SRB and quite probably some of them are the same people. A Commonwealth Military Training Team (CMTT) has arrived to begin instruction on everything ranging from mechanics to ordnance and ambush techniques. But this is largely a waste of time in my view as the UNLA is an undisciplined, untrainable rabble and the best thing to do with it is to disband it.'⁷⁴

Wednesday 20 April [1983]: 'Museveni and his NRA are very active in an area forming a triangle between the main roads from Kampala to Gulu and from Kampala to Hoima. In these hundreds of square miles, known as Luweero Triangle, the NRA is in control and telephone communications between Kampala and Hoima, Masindi and Gulu have been cut for months. The power supply to Masindi and Hoima is also cut. All this is a great discomfort and inconvenience for the people who live there or who wish to travel to or to communicate with the area. It doesn't seem to matter to Museveni that his action of taking to the bush in petulance after being totally rejected in the 1980 elections has cost the country so much in lives and property and delayed or prevented Uganda's recovery and rehabilitation after the destructive years of Amin's regime. And what is it all for? It can't be a difference in policies. Any Uganda government must have the same aims of rebuilding and rehabilitating the country and people. So it just comes down to personalities and ambitions for power. How many people must suffer and

⁷² Ibid., p. 548.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 563-4.

⁷⁴ Ibid., p. 567-8.

die to satisfy this desire? And for how long? Nothing in Uganda is now better than it was at independence 21 years ago; indeed everything is in a very much worse state and Uganda has merely achieved negative growth. Even this present awful government would not be anywhere near so bad as it now is if it wasn't being constantly attacked and harassed by guerrillas and violent opponents. If everyone had the sense to put aside personal quarrels and political ambitions for the time being while rebuilding this beautiful country, they could do wonders. But there is no hope of that.⁷⁵

We could go on infinitely quoting from those worthy pages of the diaries of Mr. Allen, but it should suffice to give a last quotation in this section to underline the violence committed in this period of war between Ugandan government troops, the UNLA, and the rebel group under Museveni, the NRA. Personal interests and sheer greed for power were the sole reasons on the sides of both warring parties who were blindly and mercilessly sacrificing many lives to meet the costs of their ambitions. Here Allen writes:

Wednesday 2 January [1985]: 'Last August Vice-President Muwanga visited North Korea and, as a result, they have sent somewhere around 700 military personnel to train the UNLA. Amin did the same for his army. Their expertise is in cruel and painful interrogation and unarmed killing methods. We really don't need this sort of thing, whatever Muwanga thinks. Now we have them here again teaching Ugandans how to be more efficient killers of their own people. They have been active up in the Luweero Triangle against the NRA, which has been getting the upper hand recently and has established its HQ in Ssinga County around the area of my old station Mityana. A short while back the NRA claimed to have killed about 140 UNLA troops and three North Koreans and to have taken seven North Koreans as prisoners in fire-fights in that area. Why on earth can't these people call off this stupid, senseless civil war and just talk together about sharing government and rebuilding this wonderful country instead of continuing with this meaningless killing and useless destruction?'⁷⁶

Those questions of 1985 are as relevant today as ever before: 'why on earth this meaningless killing and useless destruction'? We will see that both parties were engaged in wanton killing, each side calling itself either liberators or government, unlike the present-day opinion that the UNLA troops committed atrocities in the Luweero Triangle. China Keitetsi, a former child-soldier during and after the NRA bush war now turned into ambassador of good will to fight for the respect that all children are due and against their misuse as soldiers, narrates in her heartrending autobiography, *Child Soldier: Fighting for my Life*, how she and other children were brain-

⁷⁵ Ibid., p. 578-9.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p. 606.

washed, misused and turned into tools of death by the guerrilla movement of Museveni: the NRA. In one incidence where she experienced a bloodbath for the first time she recalls:

‘A month had passed since I’d left the training grounds. I was picked for a special assignment along with a few other children. I was excited because I would be seeing the action I had heard so much about from the other children. . . . But it didn’t happen quite as I had been told. The sound [of the fighting] was terrifyingly loud and everything on the road seemed to splinter into pieces as rocket-propelled grenades (RPG) hit the trucks. . . . Our side won, and after the battle everybody ran to the road and began undressing the dead soldiers. Every one of us, except the senior officers, needed something to wear. . . . My excitement turned into sadness when I saw the wounded enemy scattered around and crying for help, and suddenly it became hard for me to think of them as my enemy’⁷⁷

She continues to narrate how brutal the NRA rebels were to the captured ‘enemies’, the captured UNLA soldiers. ‘We were involved in everything – killing and torture was the most exciting job for many of us. We thought it was the way to please our commanding officers. We would increase our brutality towards our prisoners to get rank, which meant more recognition and authority’⁷⁸. The officers themselves had their own way of killing the captured ‘enemies’:

‘When we got back to our camp, the prisoners were ordered to dig their own graves and some of our officers told us to spit in their eyes. The enemy was told that no bullets would be wasted on them. I could feel tears dropping in my heart while I watched the enemy being told how they were to be killed. “After you have dug your graves, I will call for the best men who will hit you on your head with an *akakumbi*” – a short but heavy hoe. After the men had finished digging they were ordered to stand next to their graves. They were hit on their foreheads and on the back of their heads until they dropped into the graves and died.’⁷⁹

The period of Obote II was marked with brutal violence on the sides of warring parties: The government soldiers committed grave atrocities on the civilians in the Luweero Triangle – many were forced into displacement camps or brutally murdered when found outside those camps.⁸⁰ It is even claimed that writings such as ‘A good

⁷⁷ China Keitetsi, *Child Soldier: Fighting for my Life*, (Bellevue: Jacana, 2002), p. 97; cf. *ibid*, *Sie nahmen mir die Mutter und gaben mir ein Gewehr. Mein Leben als Kindersoldatin*, (München: Econ Ullstein List Verlag, 2002), 113.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 104.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 101.

⁸⁰ For details see the small book of Alex B. Bukenya already mentioned above.

Muganda is a dead one'⁸¹ were inscribed on walls of school or Church buildings by the UNLA soldiers.

The NRA guerrillas, while enjoying support from the local population on the one side, were implanting tribal hatred and disunity on the other side. China Keitetsi, cited above, narrates how they were told of the government soldiers and, in fact, the whole people of Northern Uganda: They are swarthy and red-eyed cannibals, killers, like animals and thieves with numbers and tattoos on their foreheads! They have killed your parents and once they find you, they will eat you all! 'I always think of those children who went to the North. I wonder what they might have done there'⁸², she laments. There are serious claims that even the brutality meted on the local people was not only from the side of the government soldiers, but also from the side of the NRA rebels. They did this, it is claimed, in order to incite the population against the government (read the northerners) and thereby win their own support: 'the war in Acholiland was not the result of the atrocities committed in the Luwero Triangle, but rather the atrocities committed in the Luwero Triangle were the consequence of an ethnic-oriented war that was initiated by the NRM/A in Luwero Triangle against the northerners'⁸³.

Robert Gersony whom we have already quoted in this work puts it this way when describing the war in Northern Uganda: 'In a sense, the struggle initiated by the NRA in Luwero in the early 1980s has never been concluded. It continued in Luwero through 1985. In early 1986 it was fought in Kampala and has continued in Gulu and Kitgum since that time. In essence, the opposing parties remain the same, as do some of the tactics'⁸⁴.

⁸¹ See the second photo and its caption in A. B. K. Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda, 1964-1985*, (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1994), p. xi.

⁸² Cf. China Keitetsi in interview with Radio Rhino International Africa on 31.03.2003 here on the web-site: www.radiorhino.org then go to audio of 31.03.03; cf. ibid (2002), p.103; cf. ARLPI, *Bedo Piny pi Kuc, Ribe aye Teko: Declaration of the Bedo Piny on Peace and Reconciliation in Acholiland, Religious Leaders Peace Initiative with Support of the UN System*, Gulu, 28th June, 1998 here from Okello Lucima (ed.) *Protracted conflict, elusive peace: Initiatives to end the violence in northern Uganda*, Accord 11 2002 op. cit., <http://www.c-r.org/accord/uganda/accord11/keytexts.shtml> (24.11.2005)

⁸³ *The Hidden War, the Forgotten People: War in Acholiland and its Ramifications for Peace and Security in Uganda*, op. cit., p. 26.

⁸⁴ Robert Gersony, op. cit., p. 17.

In the West Nile region there were similar instances of grave violence. In fact there, the whole region was desolated as the population fled either to the Sudan or to the then Zaire/DR Congo. The rebels on the other side brutally and mercilessly killed the government troops, employees as well as anyone who was suspected of being a government agent. The end results were then the skulls and bones which were and are displayed in the Luweero Triangle or the mass grave on the compound of the Comboni Missionaries in Ombaci, Arua. On the side of the government troops we shall see the number of losses when we come to the next section. We cannot list all the atrocities and violence committed at this time, but we can only pray that violence itself may reduce.

1.2.2.5 Okello military junta and the NRA victory (July 1985 – Jan. 1986)

This period is a continuation of the escalation of violence and atrocities we have seen before. Now we can begin to observe how the violence had reached its peak and would begin even to devour its own perpetrators: Obote who had not only fallen out with Museveni and other politicians also began to lose support from his own army that had previously helped to keep him in power. Many factors, both external and internal, were responsible for this change. On the side of Museveni was the ulterior motive, namely the sheer craving to become the President himself as Sir Peter Allen describes it. Later when Museveni succeeded in taking power in Kampala and was sworn in as the President, Allen wrote this about him: ‘I walked with Museveni outside to the table. . . . The CR took him through the oaths of office and he signed the book and became the President. . . . So here he is: what he couldn’t achieve by the ballot he has gained by the bullet’⁸⁵. This position is supported by another finding of a research project from the Makerere University already cited above. The research team was led by Professor Dani Wadada Nabudere who also compiled it. It was reviewed and discussed first by the research team and then by the stakeholders who constituted the Steering Committee of the research. The report is therefore a collective product of the sponsors, the researchers, and the stakeholders,⁸⁶ entitled *The Hidden War, the Forgotten People: War in Acholiland and its Ramifications for Peace*

⁸⁵ Peter Allen, op. cit., p. 638.

⁸⁶ See the section on ‘Background to the Research’.

and Security in Uganda. Unfortunately this publication is now prohibited in Uganda. The publishers of the work go into detail to trace the origins of the war in Acholiland and come to a conclusion that Museveni had already aimed from the beginning to take away power at any cost. The cost of this was violence meted on Ugandans beginning in Luwero. It is perhaps to be said here that Luwero was only a continuation of the ambition already shown from the early days as narrated in the autobiography, *Sowing the Mustard Seed*.

Okellos' claims that the President was favouring his own tribe, the Langi, have to be treated with some suspicion. It is now common knowledge in Uganda that the two generals in arrangement with the Catholic Church and the DP colluded with the Museveni's bush war.

'The Catholic establishment, a traditional support base for DP played its part and it is now common knowledge that some of the key planning of the [two] Okellos' coup were carried out in Bishop's house in Gulu and with knowledge, support and active participation of none other than the Archbishop of Kampala, the late Cardinal Emmanuel Nsubuga. . . .'⁸⁷

Museveni himself tells us in his autobiography how he lost contact with Paul Muwanga, the then Vice-President and Minister of Defence and General Tito Lutwa Okello, the Army Commander. This was caused by a certain betrayal that he was unaware of at the time of writing his biography. 'With [the death of Sam Katabarwa], our delicate line of contact with Muwanga and Okello was broken. Up to now I have not been able to identify who betrayed him.'⁸⁸

Here Allen gives a piece of material to ponder over when he reports of one incident involving Muwanga, Okello and the army:

'When Amin was in power his Nubians, aided by Ugandans from western and eastern tribes, massacred many Acholi and Langi soldiers, who were thus fellow victims then. Now that Obote is President his Langi are on top and they and the Acholi have resumed their former intertribal hatred and are killing each other again. This, of course, is of considerable assistance to Museveni and the NRA westerners aided by the Baganda. They are carrying out a guerrilla warfare against an army that is also fighting itself, and all for no good reason.

⁸⁷ Joseph Pinytek Ochien discussing on the Mulinda's *Ugandanet* (*The Mail Archive*) found on the address <http://www.mail-archive.com/ugandanet@kym.net/msg02210.html> (12.01.2006)

⁸⁸ Y. K. Museveni, op. cit., p. 161. Compare with the details of meeting with Muwanga in Germany as reported on pages 165-6.

'Some time back [Peter] Otai, the Minister of State for Defence, went to Bulgaria and purchased a large consignment of weapons destined for Langi units based around Lira. These were intercepted at Entebbe airport by Vice-President Muwanga's security officers and sent to an Acholi unit based at Mbuya barracks, just outside Kampala. So what is Muwanga up to?

'Brigadier Opon Acak, a Lango and the Chief of Staff, sent Langi soldiers to collect the arms consignment, and there followed a fire-fight between Langi and Acholi soldiers. Muwanga tried to quell public alarm at the fighting by using gobbledegook and describing it as 'uncoordinated troop manoeuvres.' The Army Commander, Major-General Tito Okello, has left Kampala and gone to Gulu, where many Acholi in the Army have joined him, including the powerful Lieutenant-Colonel Bazilio Okello, who Opon Acak has announced on the radio, has been dismissed from the Army. In reply Tito Okello from Gulu has demanded Bazilio's reinstatement and that Opon Acak should be the one dismissed instead. Things are hotting up, it seems, and it doesn't look good for Obote now as all around him everything seems to be falling apart.' ⁸⁹

That was why they had to call Museveni to report to Kampala as soon as the coup leaders, the two generals with their supporters, had taken over the government in Kampala, to the surprise of many. Nonetheless this attempted marriage of convenience did not materialise as subsequent events such as the unfulfilled Nairobi Peace Agreement between Museveni's NRA and the military junta of the Okellos' and the subsequent overthrow of the same military junta by Museveni's NRA on January 26, 1986 showed. ⁹⁰

A final statement in this section is to reiterate the fact that many parties have played various roles in violating the rights, especially that to life and security, of many people. In fact many people lost their lives and property. It is so disheartening to know of how many human lives have been sacrificed to fulfil political ambitions of one or another politician. It is also disheartening to see how Ugandans have become so brutal so that they can butcher each other without a second thought!

⁸⁹ Peter Allen, op. cit., p. 614 (entry from Friday 19 July 1985).

⁹⁰ Cf. *The Hidden War, the Forgotten People: War in Acholiland and its Ramifications for Peace and Security in Uganda*, op. cit., p.22-27; cf. Peter Allen, op. cit., pp.616, 627, 630: 'Museveni and Tito Okello signed a peace treaty in Nairobi today and everyone is carefully rejoicing but, although we're sure that Okello wants it, nobody is quite so sure about Museveni. The feeling is that he wants all the cake and is not a sharer' cf. Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat, 'Reaching the 1985 Nairobi Agreement', in: Okello Lucima (ed.), op. cit. <http://www.cr.org/accord/uganda/accord11/reaching-agreement.shtml> (24.11.2005); cf. Museveni's own explanation and reasons for aborting the treaty in op. cit., pp. 166-171.

1.2.2.6 The period from January 1986 to date (NRM/A era)

The military victory of Museveni and his NRA-guerrillas was a continuation of the violence and counter violence that had haunted Uganda right from the first instant of its formation as a modern state as we have seen in the preceding part. To draw a connection between that time and the present which we shall then analyse in the next part, we give here a modified chronology of events published by IRIN, a UN humanitarian news and information service.⁹¹

1986 saw remnants of the Uganda National Liberation Front/Army – the national army of the government toppled in January by President Yoweri Museveni's guerrilla National Resistance Movement/Army (NRM/A) reorganised themselves to form the Uganda People's Democratic Army (UPDA). The newly formed UPDA launched a bush war against the NRA, with the first significant attack in Gulu on 20 August. Consequently, by the end of 1986, many schools and dispensaries in rural areas of northern Uganda were closed, and some roads blocked.

1987: At the peak of fight between the NRA-government troops and the UPDA-rebels, a self-proclaimed Acholi priestess, Alice Lakwena, mobilised uneducated youths and linked up with the UPDA to form the Holy Spirit Movement.

1988: Lakwena gained support quickly and her movement advanced across northern and eastern Uganda and finally was defeated near Jinja. She fled to neighbouring Kenya. Here we have to assert a point brought forward by A. M. Obote, former and twice deposed President of Uganda. In his inaugural broadcast for the official launching of Radio Rhino International Africa this is what he said:

‘The dictatorship raised an army in the name of its victims under the name of the Holy Spirit Army which marched from Sudan border for 300 miles to within 50 miles from Kampala, the capital, where it was routed and its nominal leader was escorted by the NRA to the Kenya border and was enabled to enter Kenya peacefully. The idea behind the Holy Spirit Army was

⁹¹ IRIN/OCHA, *Uganda: A Chronology of events in the northern Uganda conflict*, Nairobi, 9 Jun 2005 available on the internet address: <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=47576> (20.12.2005). Compare this with the Ugandan time line from the BBC, already quoted above; cf. Robert Gersony, op. cit., especially his summary named ‘8 Prominent Human Rights Incidents’ on pages 103-107; cf. Okello Lucima (ed.), *Chronology in: Protracted conflict, elusive peace*, op.cit, [<http://www.c-r.org/accord/uganda/accord11/chronol.shtml>] (04.05.2006)]

to lure more than a million people to join, supposedly, an invisible army and to massacre them all.⁹²

The dictatorship meant here is the NRA/M government.

It is necessary to make some observations about this Movement or Army led by Alice Auma 'Lakwena' at this point. Firstly, Alice Auma, daughter of Severino Kiberu Lukoya, is not a pure Acholi. Her father is of Madi origin. This detail is necessary to see the connection with Moses Ali, a Madi and former high-ranking officer in the Amin's army and regime, who had already allied with the NRA in order to fight Obote-Lango/Acholi for having fought Amin.⁹³ The same document reports here the preamble of the treaty between Moses Ali and Yoweri Museveni as follows:

'Firmly believing that social order is a sacred right which serves as a basis for all other rights; Believing that the strongest man can never be strong enough to be master all the time unless he transforms might into right and obedience into duty; Having concluded that recourse to armed struggle is the only means open to us to dislodge the Obote repressive and dictatorial regime and restore democratic and human rights of the people of Uganda. Now, therefore, we on our behalf and on behalf of our respective groups do solemnly and truly resolve and declare . . . to dedicate our lives and those of the members of the respective groups to the service of Uganda.'⁹⁴

Secondly, Lakwena's force became a rivalry force and actually a neutralizing force for the UPDA-rebellion in Northern Uganda as best described by Heike Behrend.⁹⁵ Thirdly, after Lakwena's defeat, there was no legal action taken by the NRA/M Ugandan government to extradite her for possible treason charges in Uganda. Until today, Lakwena is a free woman, allegedly, living in a refugee camp in Northern Kenya. It is interesting at this point also to recall what the President says about this movement and its leader. Violence has become a brag word. One example should suffice:

⁹² Personal transcription of the above mentioned broadcast on Radio Rhino International Africa (www.radiorhino.org) broadcast on 23.09.2003. It is available as an mp3 file, aw030923, downloaded on 25.11.2005.

⁹³ Cf. *Hidden War, The Forgotten People: War in Acholiland and its Ramifications for Peace and Security in Uganda*, op. cit., pp. 31-37.

⁹⁴ Ibid., p. 33.

⁹⁵ See Heike Behrend, *Alice und die Geister. Krieg im Norden Ugandas*, (München: Trickster Verlag, 1993) and its English translation, *Alice and the Holy Spirit Movement: War in Northern Uganda 1986-97*, (Fountain, EAEP, James Curry, London, Kampala.); David Westbrook, 'The Torment of Northern Uganda: A Legacy of Missed Opportunities' in: *OJPCR: The Online Journal of Peace and Conflict Resolution*, (Issue 3.2 June 2000 ISSN 1522-211X) available also as www.trinstitute.org/ojpcr/ (08.12.2005) and many other sources describing the conflicts of Northern Uganda.

'From 1989, the groups in northern Uganda became criminal. Lakwena confused people about shea-oil protecting their bodies. The army mowed them down at Corner Kilak when they tried to attack it. We counted 1,000 children who tried to attack the army. But she did not commit crimes.'⁹⁶

Remnants of the Holy Spirit Movement regrouped under the command of Joseph Kony, Lakwena's nephew, in Gulu, and her father, Severino Lukoya, in Kitgum.

1989 – 1990: Lukoya was arrested by the NRA and imprisoned. He remained in prison only for three months and was later released without any treason charges in spite of the fact that under his command, thousands of innocent people, especially children were killed! The author recalls a situation in 1987/8 where he was an eye-witness of a massacre of more than 500 people in a day. These children and young men and women were sent with mere stones and/or grass bundles to stop the barrels of the '14' bombers. The army would wait for them to come as near as only 20 metres away from their trenches and at once, they would be 'mowed' down! All this and other similar examples such as the arresting and hacking to death of many innocent people were conducted under the command of Severino Lukoya. Such facts beg the question as to what roles Alice Lakwena, her father Severino Lukoya and now her cousin Joseph Kony have in the conflict of Northern Uganda.⁹⁷ Lukoya is now a freeman, leading a self-founded sect in Gulu.⁹⁸ It is worth adding here the opinion of many who strongly believe that even Joseph Kony and the LRA have some connection with Amin's former soldiers and later rebels, FUNA, who, led by Moses Ali and others, fought the government of Obote II as shown above.

Joseph Kony's group started ambushing and looting civilians and burning schools. Another 'noticeable' fact of violence was that an Italian Comboni Missionary priest, Fr Egidio Biscaro, was killed in a rebel ambush along Pajule-Kitgum road on the 29th of January, 1990.

⁹⁶ Appendix I of the research document, *Hidden War, The Forgotten People: War in Acholiland and its Ramifications for Peace and Security in Uganda*, entitled, 'Remarks By H.E. President Yoweri K. Museveni On The War In The North' footnote 176 which gives these details to this remark: His Excellency, The President of Uganda, Mr. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni's remarks were made at the One-Day "Dialogue on Conflict Management and Resolution" at the International Conference Centre, Kampala on the 22nd July 2003. Prof. Dani W. Nabudere, Principal Investigator, took these notes during the remarks. They should be read with the understanding that they were taken in long hand.

⁹⁷ Cf. A recent article by Andrew M. Mwenda, 'Are the NRM and LRA in an unholy alliance?' in: *Sunday Monitor*, May 6 - 12, 2006, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/sunday/oped/oped05072.php> (08.05.2006).

⁹⁸ Cf. ARLPI (2001), op. cit., pp. 32-33.

1991: The NRA launched a military campaign led by Maj.-Gen. David Tinnyefuza. From April to August it sealed off the northern districts of Apac, Lira, Gulu and Kitgum from the rest of Uganda. This was one of the most trying and violent moments in the history of Uganda. The population of Northern Uganda were attacked from three major fronts: the NRA-government force that accused the population of supporting the rebellion. There were then the rebels themselves and still the Karimojong cattle rustlers that continued attacking and raiding. In the operation launched by the NRA, code-named 'Operation North', many atrocities were committed: people were herded together in football stadiums, etc where severe conditions were inflicted upon them, brutal⁹⁹ and serious beating of the population took place and 18 prominent politicians, including ministers in the government of the day, were dubbed rebel collaborators, arrested and detained without trial. They later won their court case against the state for mishandling them. Regarding 'Operation North,' the literature suggests general agreement that it damaged the capacity of the LRA, but much more analysis is necessary. Assuming that Operation North was successful, Gersony raises a significant question. 'One of the enduring questions from this period—a source of concern to Acholi and non-Acholi alike—is why the NRA did not pursue these remnants and destroy the LRA when it appeared to have the chance.'¹⁰⁰ Apart from that, people lost so much of their property. Paul Donohue writes: 'The Acholi commonly refer to Operation North as "Operation Simsim," simsim being the word for sesame seed. The fact that the confiscation of Acholi harvest of sesame seed during this operation is not chronicled in the literature is a poignant example of NRA/M impunity endured by the people of northern Uganda'¹⁰¹.

The rebels began the practice of maiming and mutilating civilians, including cutting off lips, ears, breasts and hands. Here let us refer once again to A. M. Obote in his broadcast quoted above.

'The second brutal way by which the dictatorship behaved was that the soldiers of the dictatorship went to the villages and cut off the lips and breasts of many girls and took the victims

⁹⁹ Cf. David Westbrook mentioned above in footnote 95. This was another incident of violence to enter down the history of Uganda.

¹⁰⁰ Paul Donohue, 'Thinking Constructively about Northern Uganda', an unpublished article written in Cincinnati December 2005 and here quoting Robert Gersony, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁰¹ Ibid; cf. 'Operation North' under Maj. Gen. David Tinnyefuza begins in the north to finish the LRA' in: *The Monitor*, March 31, 1991.

to towns and exhibited them while claiming that they had been mutilated by those who had returned from the Sudan.¹⁰²

A further complication in the situation of Ugandan violence is that at this time tension between Sudan and Uganda increased after the Ugandan town of Moyo was bombed a number of times, reportedly by Sudanese government aircrafts, and rebel Sudan People's Liberation Movement/Army (SPLM/A) officials - including leader John Garang – were seen in Gulu and Kitgum. This was the beginning of the tit-for-tat relationship between Sudan and Uganda that culminated in the Sudanese government rendering military and logistic assistance to the LRA: for the support that Uganda renders the Sudanese rebels, SPLA, the Sudan retaliates by supporting the Ugandan rebel group, LRA.

1992: The minister for the Pacification of Northern Uganda, Betty Oyella Bigombe, and military officer, Major Okot Wii-lit, initiated village-based, self-defence, vigilante outfits, 'Arrow Groups.' These comprised of an assortment of male villagers without central command who were supposed to protect their communities against rebel attacks – actually everyone had to carry some weapons: men were to carry either spears or arrows and bows and women were to carry knives, machetes or whatever weapons they could carry. The rebels responded with more waves of violence: maiming and mutilating civilians, plucking out eyes and amputating legs and arms, etc. A village where a rebel was killed by this group was almost wiped out. The rebel group renamed itself the Lord's Resistance Army, LRA; the name with which it is known up to today.

1993: Pope John Paul II visited Gulu on 6 February. A lull in rebel activities followed until August, when groups of heavily armed insurgents came from Sudan under the new name of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and launched attacks on Ugandan army units. In March a Constitutional Commission endorsed a Draft Constitution, which would prohibit political parties for another seven years. The DP and UPC opposed the draft. Insurgency in the Teso district ended. Towards the end of the year, peace talks between the government and the LRA were initiated under the leadership of the minister for the pacification of the north, Betty Bigombe, which culminated in a government delegation led by her meeting with LRM/A representatives for face-to-face talks on 25 November.

¹⁰² See footnote 92.

1994: Peace talks continued until the 6th of February when Museveni gave the LRA a seven-day ultimatum to surrender or face military onslaught. The LRM/A responded by retreating into southern Sudan where they established camps and received more military support from the Sudanese government to launch intensified attacks in Acholi and plant landmines on roads and footpaths. On Saturday, 30th April a bus was ambushed on Gulu-Kitgum road near Lacek-ocot. Deacon Cyril Obol and many others were killed.

1995: Violence escalated throughout Acholi as the LRA stepped up its operations. A massacre on 22nd April by the LRA of more than 200 people in Atyak, Western Gulu, triggered the severing of diplomatic relations between Uganda and Sudan. In June the CA endorsed a 'no-party' political system. Deputy Prime Minister and long-time DP leader, Paul Ssemwogerere, resigned and announced his intention to contest presidential elections. In August, the LRA invaded Kitgum district and carried out the first large-scale abduction of children to expand their forces. During a retreat towards the Sudanese border Government helicopter gun-ships bombed and killed rebels and their captives on their way. The new constitution was introduced in October 1995, and the NRA was renamed the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF). The UPDF and the SPLA conducted a joint offensive against the LRA in southern Sudan lasting until early 1996, overrunning their camps in Palotaka in southern Sudan, capturing hundreds of LRA fighters and the fighting continued well inside Sudan.

1996: The security situation in Acholi worsened and civilian targets were attacked by the LRA. The attacks, ambushes, planting of landmines and child abduction occurred on an almost daily basis and several villages were wholly burned down. In a quest for peace, in March Rwot Achana led a delegation of Acholi chiefs and elders to Rwakitura, Museveni's home, to ask him to adopt a peaceful approach to ending the conflict, and to allow a delegation to establish contact with the LRA. The LRA on their part declared a unilateral ceasefire to allow people to vote for the Inter-Political Forces Coalition opposition led by Paul Ssemwogerere in the Presidential and parliamentary elections held in May. Over 90 percent of the Acholi people voted for opposition leader Paul Ssemwogerere. Soon after the elections, Museveni announced his determination to defeat the LRA militarily and appointed Gen. Salim Saleh to take charge of operations in Acholi, in total disregard of the proposal made by the Acholi chiefs and elders. Still around this time there occurred the Karuma/Pakwach convoy

ambush of 8th March in which more than 110 people (mostly business people) travelling to West Nile were killed, allegedly by the LRA rebels.

Two elders, Mr. Okot Ogoni from Cwero (in eastern Gulu), Chairman of the Peace Commission of the Council of Acholi Chiefs; and Mr. Olanya Lagony, a respected elder from Koc-Goma in southwestern Gulu, who attempted to go on a peace mission to talk to the rebels were murdered on 8th June on arrival at the venue. They had been commissioned by the Chairman and members of the Acholi Council of Chiefs and duly approved by the government. The question that remains unanswered is 'Who killed these elders?'

In July the Acholinet internet discussion group started out of York University in Toronto Canada, to link the Diaspora and homeland in discussions to forge a consensus for a peaceful settlement of the conflict. Also in July, the LRA attacked a refugee camp at Achol-pii, in Kitgum district, killing 115 Sudanese refugees.

On 16th August Col Kazini, the Division Commander in Gulu, handed over to a civilian-mob and incited it to lynch four suspected rebels in military custody. Still in August, the rebels killed 20 civilians in a market in Cwero.

In October, 139 schoolgirls were abducted from St Mary's College at Aboke in Lira District. Most of them were released after the deputy headmistress, Sr. Rachelle Fassera, followed the rebels and pleaded for the girls. More students were abducted from Sir Samuel Baker Secondary School and St. Mary's College Lacor in Gulu. In November the government, without any prior arrangements, instituted its policy of relocating the people of Gulu into 'protected villages'. Pabbo, the largest camp for internally displaced people, IDP, was opened. Food, sanitation, health and education facilities were inadequate for those displaced into the camps. The UPDF allegedly used violence to force the unwilling into the camps.

The year 1996 saw some of the worst atrocities committed by the rebels who lined up the bodies of their murdered victims along the Gulu-Kampala Road, etc, etc.

1997: The New Year started with a five-day killing spree in Lamwo County in Kitgum district, where armed attackers¹⁰³ (or the LRA?) killed between 7th and 12th January over 412 civilians, displacing thousands more. Later in January, the Parliamentary

¹⁰³ Robert Gersony, op. cit., p. 47.

Sessional Committee on Defence and Foreign Affairs chaired by MP Akida hence the resultant report commonly known as Akida Report, recommended the government continue to use military means to end the conflict in Northern Uganda and not engage in peace talks with the rebels¹⁰⁴. A Minority Report presented the opposite view claiming to reflect the majority view of Ugandans. In April Acholi living abroad and in the homeland met at the first large gathering of Acholi in a 'Kacoke Madit' (KM) in London. KM highlighted the human rights and humanitarian situation of the conflict in northern Uganda. It also brought LRM/A and government representatives face-to-face, where both sides were implored to seek a speedy and peaceful resolution of the conflict. In the same month another joint offensive by the SPLM/A and the UPDF inside Sudan forced the LRA to move its camp further north from Aruu to Jebelein.

In June Sr. Rachelle Fassera, and members of the Concerned Parents Association, (CPA),¹⁰⁵ met with LRA Commanders in Juba. Although the LRA initially denied holding the Aboke girls, they later offered to release them through the ICRC in return for a government ceasefire. When the government of Uganda refused, the LRA blamed them for the breakdown in talks and held them responsible for anything that might happen to the girls. In August Acholi religious leaders held an inter-faith prayer for peace in Kitgum. That was also the beginning of Catholic, Protestant and Muslim religious leaders' local peace initiatives.

1998: Kitgum's assistant resident district commissioner, James Canogura, was shot dead in a disputed ambush on the Kalongo-Kitgum Road. Thirty girls were abducted from a secondary school in Kalongo. The Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative, ARLPI, was officially formed.

1999: In January seventy LRA rebels were killed in a battle with Karimojong warriors near Morulem, Kotido, where they had gone to raid cattle and other goods from the Karimojong. After this loss on their retreat back to Sudan, rebels abducted more than 70 children and youths from Omiya Anyima, Kitgum. In February, rebels retreated to

¹⁰⁴ Cf. James B. Okee Obong, 'Peaceful resolution of the Conflict in Northern Uganda' in: Patrick Oguro Otto (report editor), *Kacoke Madit: The Quest for Peace in Northern Uganda (Articles, commentaries, statements, resolutions and documents from KM 1997 and 1998 conferences and other activities)*, (London: KM Secretariat, 2000), pp. 79-80.

¹⁰⁵ For elaborate information about the abduction of the Aboke School girls, Sr. Rachele and her role in releasing them and the formation and activities of the CPA, association of parents whose daughters were abducted from that school, see the book of Els De Temmerman, *Aboke Girls: Children abducted in northern Uganda*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd, 2001.

Sudan, and for about 10 months, there was almost complete peace. Many people attempted to leave the IDP camps to go back to their homes. The UPDF attempted to seal the border with Sudan. In May over 8,000 people demonstrated in Gulu against Maj. Ronald Kakooza Mutale, Presidential Advisor on Political Affairs and head of a paramilitary Civil Defence Unit, for calling district leaders rebel collaborators.

In August, with the mediation of The Carter Centre, the governments of Uganda and Sudan started negotiations to normalise relations and end the conflict. The LRA and the SPLA were excluded from the talks. In September Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative and the development agency, ACORD, convened a conference on the 'Peace Research & the Reconciliation Agenda' in Gulu. Uganda and Sudan signed a peace accord on 8th December. The return of all abductees and the restoration of diplomatic relations were pledged. Uganda's parliament passed an amnesty bill that offered immunity from prosecution to rebels who denounced the rebellion and voluntarily surrendered to the government. Hopes for peace collapsed as LRA made a come back and attacked Gulu at the end of December.

2000: Insecurity persisted in Acholi and approximately 400,000 people – approximately half the population – remained in the 'protected villages' where they came under repeated attack by LRA fighters. In February The Carter Centre representatives met with Kony and LRA leaders in Nsitu, Sudan. KM and Acholi civil society representatives made presentations to the negotiating parties through The Carter Center calling for an inclusive peace dialogue. In March Rebels attacked Padibe IDP camp, Kitgum district leaving 12 people dead. In the same month of March a second Nairobi Agreement implementation meeting was held in Nairobi. Kitgum's resident district commissioner, John Baptist Ocaya, died after being ambushed on the Kitgum-Gulu Road in June. A second peace deal between Uganda and Sudan, brokered by Former US President Jimmy Carter's peace programme, the Carter Centre, was signed in September. A Catholic Comboni Missionary priest, Fr Raffaele di Bari, was shot dead in an ambush near his mission in Pajule, just a kilometre away from an Army's unit on 1st October. His car with his body inside was set on fire and left to char. In the same month (6th-7th) The Carter Centre convened a ministerial implementation meeting of the governments of Uganda and Sudan in Khartoum on. Ebola broke out in Gulu. In November a follow-up ministerial meeting was convened by the Carter Centre in Nairobi. The third Kacoke Madit (KM2000) was relocated from Arusha, Tanzania to Nairobi, Kenya on 24 November. It was cut short by the Government of Kenya

due to concerns over Ebola. In December ARLPI organised a mass demonstration and prayer for peace in Gulu.

2001: The period leading to the presidential elections in mid-March was comparatively calm in northern Uganda. The campaigns, however, were marred with violence meted by the Security Forces and Major Kakooza Mutale's paramilitary group, Kalangala Action Plan (KAP). The Presidential elections were held in March. Again, the majority of the Acholi people voted against Museveni. Soon after, the LRA resumed attacks against civilian targets. Sudan repatriated 62 abductees who escaped from an LRA camp. Twelve people, including 11 students from a catering college in Kampala, were killed by the LRA near Paraa Lodge, in Masindi district in north-western Uganda.

In April the Amnesty Commission held a two-day workshop attended by a cross-section of leaders from the Acholi districts, the central government, UPDF officers and religious leaders. A UPDF Mobile Unit twice attacked religious leaders and elders who were meeting with LRA commanders to discuss the modalities for reporting under the amnesty. Military authorities blamed the 'mishaps' on miscommunication.

In July the ARLPI held a three-day consultative meeting of religious leaders from northern Uganda and Sudan, with the theme 'Standing together for Peace'. They asked the Ugandan government to dismantle the 'protected villages' in Acholi. They also released their research document of life in the IDP camps in Acholi entitled, *Let My People Go! The forgotten plight of the people in the displaced camps in Acholi*.

In December in a meeting with the Sudanese *Chargé d'Affaires* in Uganda, Museveni stated that unless the government of Sudan relocated Kony's rebels to the north of Sudan, the displaced population from Acholi could not go back to their homes.

2002: In January Museveni visited Sudan for the IGAD summit and met President Bashir in a pre-summit meeting. Both pledged their support to the war on terrorism. In February the LRA launched an armed attack on Agoro taking the Local Defence (LDU) soldiers stationed in the protected village and trading centre by surprise. Three soldiers and two civilians were killed, and at least one hundred camp dwellers abducted. The trading centre was looted and the military barracks burnt down. The LRA later withdrew to Sudan. In March Museveni set up camp in Gulu to personally oversee operations against the rebels where 10,000 UPDF troops or more were mobilised and there were reports of incursions into Sudan and fierce battles between the army

and LRA fighters. Army commander James Kazini vowed to resign if Kony was not captured or killed by 31 December. The building up of the forces was the beginning of the military operations code-named 'Operation Iron Fist'¹⁰⁶, launched by the UPDF against LRA in northern Uganda and extended to LRA sanctuaries in southern Sudan with the permission of the Sudanese Government. The LRA set up Richard Mat-sanga, also known as David Nyekorach, as its spokesman in London. In June, its field commander Vincent Otti sent a letter to the government seeking peace talks.

2003: In January, a newly created presidential peace team gave the LRA hotlines on which to conduct peace talks. In February, Uganda said it had ended its support of the SPLM/A, and Sudan allowed the Ugandan army to pursue Kony inside Sudanese territory. In April, the LRA abducted 290 people in Lira and in June it launched attacks in the eastern region, hitting Katakwi and then Soroti districts, causing the displacement of thousands. This was the first outspreading of the rebels across their traditional operation field of Acholiland. It caused a lot of uncertainty, almost leading to ethnic conflicts between the Itesot and Langi who accused the Acholi of invading them.

2004: In February, nearly 30,000 people were displaced and 4,000 huts burned in Pabbo IDP camp. Later, on 21 February, the LRA attacked Barlonyo IDP camp in Lira, killing over 200 civilians¹⁰⁷. Street protests followed the killings, with mobs hunt-

¹⁰⁶ See for example how *Operation Iron Fist* was used by the Apartheid government in South Africa to stamp off any uprising and suppress the local population as recorded by the Kairos Documentation of the Institute of Contextual Theology, 'Violence, The New Kairos: Challenge to the Churches' a publication of Institute for Contextual Theology, September 1990: <http://www.anc.org.za/-ancdocs/history/transition/kairos.html> (25.11.2005)

¹⁰⁷ This was perhaps the most widely covered incidence of violence in Northern Uganda since 1986. See for example: 'Mob deaths follow Uganda massacre' on the *CNN* website published on Wednesday, February 25, 2004 Posted: 5:22 PM EST (2222 GMT): <http://www.cnn.com/2004/WORLD/africa/02/25/uganda.massacre.rebels.ap/> (04.05.2006); Wairagala Wakabi, 'Massacre: Where Did LRA Get Guns?' in: *The East African*, Monday, March 1, 2004, <http://www.nationaudio.com/News/EastAfrican/01032004/Regional/Regional010320047.html> (04.05.2006); Ellen Teague, '250 killed in Ugandan massacre' in: *The Tablet*, World Church News - 28 February 2004, <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/cgi-bin/citw.cgi/past-00168> (04.05.2006); J .M. Aliro Omara, 'LRA Massacre of civilians at Barlonyo' in: *Uganda Human Rights Commission* website dated 26th February 2004, http://www.uhrc.org/new_detail.php?storyId=57 (04.05.2006); 'In pictures: Uganda massacre' on *the BBC News* Last Updated: Monday, 23 February, 2004, 16:55 GMT http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/photo_gallery/3514439.stm (04.05.2006); Christian Hauenstein, „Im Herzen der Finsternis" in: *Die Krone* vom 28 Februar 2003, 20-22; Sibylle Hamann, „Der Prophet vor dem Richter" in: *Profil* vom 15. März 2004, 78-9 and many other media news. Many put the number to about 200 whereas those on the ground estimated it at over 300. The President of Uganda, Yoweri Museveni, on the other hand said it was *only* 80.

ing suspects from Acholi and demanding that Museveni resign. In July, the army captured Kony's training commander, Brigadier Kenneth Banya. He was the first high-profile rebel captured by the army since the rebellion started. The Uganda army claimed to have the upper hand in the conflict. Betty Bigombe began a fresh peace initiative in November. A government ceasefire ended unsuccessfully on 31st December when the LRA refused to sign the unilateral government's draft of Memorandum of Understanding, saying that they needed time to study the document.

2005: 1st January Museveni began by immediately ordering the Army to resume operations and 'to kill Kony.'¹⁰⁸ Further in January, north and south Sudan signed a comprehensive peace agreement - both sides pledged to help the Ugandan government defeat Kony. In February, the government declared an 18-day truce to enable LRA soldiers to come out of the bush and seek amnesty. Brig. Sam Kolo, LRA spokesman, became the highest-ranking rebel so far to surrender to the UPDF.

In March, the LRA intensified its attacks on civilians, killing and maiming several IDPs in Kitgum, Gulu and Pader districts. In May, the UN put pressure on the government to seek a peaceful solution to the war. Bigombe said she is in regular contact with Kony and negotiations were 'on course'. The UPDF killed the LRA's chief of operations, Brig. Sam Okullu, near Gulu. In June, the rebels killed eight people in Kitgum, lining their bodies up on the road 10 km out of Kitgum town. Museveni said in the same month that Kony would benefit from the amnesty if he surrendered, in contrast to his previous statement that the LRA leadership should not be eligible for the amnesty. In September the Parliament passed the controversial amendment bill to the constitution, lifting the two-term limit on the presidency. In October the former President Obote died and was buried in his ancestral home in Apac. In November the exiled opposition leader, Col. Dr. Kizza Besigye returned home from his self-imposed exile in South Africa. After a short time he was arrested and charged with treason, illegal possession of weapons and rape. In December the nomination and campaign for presidential elections in February started. In Northern Uganda it was relatively calm, but still with several instances of ambush on the roads, abduction by the rebels and other forms of violence perpetrated on the local population.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. Denis Ojwee, 'Gen Museveni orders army to kill Kony' in: *The New Vision*, Kampala: Monday, 3rd January, 2005.

2006: The year started with election fever and several court sessions in which the arrested opposition politician was switched from civil to military court martial. All charges against him were later dropped, he embarked on the election campaigns and the elections were carried out on the 24th February. The results were rejected by the main opposition, FDC, claiming there were massive irregularities.

On Thursday, 6th April the Supreme Court dismissed Col. Kizza Besigye's petition seeking to nullify President Yoweri Museveni's re-election on the ground that it was not proved to the satisfaction of the court, that the failure to comply with the provisions and principles of the constitution and of the election laws affected the results of the presidential election in a substantial manner.

On Friday, 12th May Museveni was sworn in for another five-year period as President at the end of which he will have ruled Uganda for 25 years.

On the situation in Northern Uganda: as we write this page, there were no serious incidences of rebel attacks, but the people living in the camps continued to suffer lack of basic necessities resulting in a high death toll – 1,000 people every week. The attempt to forcefully send groups of the displaced people in Teso and Lango back to their homes failed because of insecurity still in place and lack of preparation for such a home-return.

In concluding this section, it suffices to state that violence continues to be the unfortunate part of everyday life. Brothers continue to murder brothers and many innocent lives continue to be lost as will be shown in the next section.

2 The present situation: Uganda vs. Northern Uganda

Having gone through this chronology of Uganda's longest conflict, we turn now to look at the present situation of the whole country with respect to the northern part of it where the war still rages. We do not claim to make any exhaustive observation and analysis, but a condensed and representative one that will enable us to know the situation in which the ARLPI as a peace initiative is working. It is from the knowledge of the present Ugandan situation that we may be able to appreciate the relevance and uniqueness of this peace initiative body.

The present situation of Uganda that we intend to describe in this section is that from January 1986 up to today, a time that corresponds with that of the present regime, or better described as the era of Museveni in Uganda. For when Museveni and his NRA-rebels took over power in Kampala, a new chapter in the history of Uganda was opened up. This new chapter has characterised the life of Ugandans so deeply that one could talk of a revolution, be it for positive or negative. There are no such clear cut divisions in the life of any society that one could describe social, political, economic or religious, but for the sake of simplicity we will use these broad divisions here for our description and analysis. It must be remembered from the onset, however, that violence has continued to guide the life of Uganda. The nature of Ugandan violence remains the same: the armed forces, the military and people in possession of fire arms are always its perpetrators. What changes is the location of violence: where the ruling group comes there is usually relative peace whereas the other parts, considered the enemy's territories will always be under intensive wrecking of violence. We saw this in the period from the colonial time up to the time of Okello's military junta.

2.1 *Social situation*

Uganda, as we saw at the beginning of last chapter, is a heterogeneous country. There are not only many ethnic groups, who are quite different from each others, but also a country of diversity in terms of social life. From the population structure, the majority belong to the younger generation, 'children below 18 years constituted 56% of the population.'¹⁰⁹ This means the majority of the population has not experi-

¹⁰⁹ 2002 *Uganda Population and Housing Census*, op. cit., p. vi.

enced the post-colonial violence which occurred up to Okello's fall in 1986. According to the same 2002 census results, 'only 12% of the population was living in urban areas, about half (49%) of the households used "word of mouth" as their main source of information and about half (48%) of the households owned a radio.'¹¹⁰ That means interethnic interaction was and is still minimal for Ugandans. It is no exaggeration to say that many Ugandans do not even know the names of their neighbouring ethnic groups. All that the majority of Ugandans know are the clichés and the tribal stereotypes passed on from generation to generation. This is compounded by the fact that Uganda as a nation has no national language. English, a colonial and *de facto* official language, is only a privilege of the few who have managed to go to school. Worse still is the fact that politicians and teachers have not really cared to uproot the clichés and stereotypes, but have even helped to compound them. 'Uganda is a country where racism is officially taught in school. The curriculum of Uganda's schools, colleges and even universities teach how groups of Ugandans are "racially different" from each other, even though they may all be Africans and Black.'¹¹¹ The President of Uganda, Mr. Museveni, is, for example, accused of using derogative language to describe his political oppositions and people of Northern Uganda. For him these former politicians were all 'swine'. In the opening pages of his autobiography already quoted in this work, he writes. 'When I was young, however, we only had arrows for bleeding cattle, whereas in the north of Uganda, for instance, they still use arrows for fighting.'¹¹² This statement must be understood in light of the chronology given above, where it is a fact that the then Minister Bigombe and Army-officer Okot Wili forced the population of Acholiland to pick up bows and arrows as their weapons to fight against the rebels who were, as now officially accepted, fully armed with the most modern weapons from the government of Khartoum. A lot of people still remember being rounded up and harshly beaten by the army under the command of Major Okot Wili. The father of the author, a man now well above 70 years of age, still narrates with pain and sadness in his voice his own ordeals in the hands of those unscrupulous soldiers, having been flogged 'like a child or criminal' for having carried no bow

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Pilipo O. Oruni, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

¹¹² Y. K. Museveni, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

and arrows in 1992.¹¹³ Instances of the President's derogative utterances are uncountable. We have already seen what the child soldiers during the Luwero war were told, for example.¹¹⁴ Another example is where it is claimed that the President said the people of Northern Uganda are biological substances to be destroyed.¹¹⁵ An eye-witness during the aborted Nairobi Peace Accord between Okello and Museveni, the then minister of foreign affairs of Kenya and mediator of the peace negotiation, reported this experience:

'They [Museveni and Okello] began the talks by hurling insults at each other and continued to do so throughout the proceedings. Museveni denounced previous regimes in Uganda as "primitives" and "backward". He initially refused to negotiate with the Military Council delegation, dismissing them as "criminals"'.¹¹⁶

These are just a few examples of the many insults resulting from stereotypical and stigmatizing attitudes that Ugandans have to one another.

It is no wonder then that Ugandans do not have any national identity, other than their tribal ones. It is also no wonder that there is no national language in Uganda, other than English which is the language of the elite. There is no sense of belonging to a nation, to a country. This is expressed in the many instances of tribalism and nepotism we find in public institutions. This in turn leads the high level of corruption that dogs Uganda. About corruption in particular, Rogers Nsubuga puts it best in his article, 'The Woes of an Upright Civil Servant' when he writes:

¹¹³ Interview the author personally conducted with his father, Mzee Justo Ocen, in Acholibur IDP camps on 28th July 2004. This is of course a family known fact that still brings memories of pains and sadness to all.

¹¹⁴ See footnote 82 to hear China Keitetsi narrating her own experiences in the bush. The precursor of the ARLPI has written in their report, 'Declaration of the *Bedo Piny* on Peace and Reconciliation in Acholiland' as one of the causes of war there: '*Witch hunting and use of abusive, derogatory language such as Anyanya, primitive forces, killers and the like against the Acholi.*'

¹¹⁵ Cf. Ken Opala, 'Visit to Alice Lakwena's humble abode' in: *Daily Nation* (on-line), Tuesday, July 3, 2001, http://www.nationaudio.com/News/DailyNation/03072001/News/News_Feature1.html (05.05.-2006); Adyanga Onok 'Genocide in Comparative Perspective: The Jewish And Acholi Experience', last updated on 08/02/2006 on the website of *StGiNU (Stop The Genocide In Northern Uganda)* <http://stginu.blogspot.com/archive/2006/02/08/genocide-in-comparative-perspective.html> (05.05.-2006); 'Uganda: Women take brunt of human rights abuse: Amnesty', Wednesday, May 25, 2005, on the website: http://ugandawatch.blogspot.com/2005_05_01_ugandawatch_archive.html (05.05.-2006); Menya Kilat, 'Prelude to Disintegration', posted on Sunday, March 27, 2005 on the website: <http://ngomrom.blogspot.com/2005/03/prelude-to-disintegration.html> (05.05.2006); Peter J. Quaranto, 'Is Genocide Happening in Northern Uganda?', January 17, 2006, on the website of Uganda-CAN: <http://www.ugandacan.org/item/859> (08.05.2006).

¹¹⁶ Ambassador Bethuel Kiplagat, op. cit.

'A lay Catholic in civil service seems to be ever walking between the devil and the deep blue sea, torn between the demands of his Catholic conscience and the realities of a corrupt society and a culture which was the fruit of an altogether different environment As a matter of fact, many people bearing clearly Christian names have been caught red-handed in shameful corrupt situations. And it is not a phenomenon limited to the poor trying to survive: some of the highest paid people are the most corrupt. . . . They help themselves to public funds, utilities and privileges at the expense of the state, church or company. They do not consider themselves as thieves, but as businessmen who clinch an extraordinary deal. . . . If you want to be recognised within the Church, generous giving is a sure shortcut. Nobody will ask you how you got that money, but you can bet that a wealthy man with two wives is more likely to sit at the high table than a poor faithful Catholic lay leader.'¹¹⁷

But this admiration of corruption is also what the others will show to a corrupt official: s/he will not be rebuked or resented for being corrupt, but praised as being quick witted. When Alhajji Nasser Ntege Sebaggala, former Mayor of Kampala City Council, was prosecuted and arrested for money laundering in the USA, on his return home after having served his sentence, he was not only accepted as a way-ward son who had brought international shame on the nation, but was given a hero's welcome – allegedly with the words, 'He did not steal our own money here, but that of those exploitative countries sucking us dry. He is not like our politicians here who embezzle money meant for our own development, but tried to steal to improve our lives here at home.' Looking at the reality of corruption and embezzlement on national level and that of the gap between '1st and 3rd worlds', one may be tempted to think like these ordinary citizens. But do two wrongs make one right? Sebaggala has now been newly re-elected as the Mayor of Kampala City in the just recently concluded Local Government Elections. A corrupt official may be envied, not for being corrupt, but that s/he is the one now eating. Others may try to remove such an official so that they themselves become the 'eaters'.¹¹⁸ 'Leaders who want to remain popular – and to stand a chance to be re-elected – must be willing to play up to the crowd. They can hardly have a mind of their own. And even if they have, they know which side of their

¹¹⁷ Rogers Nsubuga, 'The Woes of an Upright Civil Servant', in: *Leadership: For Christian Leaders*, (Kampala: No. 414, March 2003), pp. 19-20; cf. Jean-Marie Nsambu, 'Professional Misconduct' in: *Leadership*, No. 415, April 2003, pp. 28-30.

¹¹⁸ Cf. Dr. Kigongo, 'The Emotions vs. Intellectual Level of Public Debate' published together with other articles under the theme *Reconciliation in Uganda* http://www.federo.com/Pages-/National_Reconciliation/.html retrieved on 06.06.2003 where he talks about the struggle to be next to the 'eating'-table in politics.

bread is buttered, and will not rub their electorate up the wrong way.¹¹⁹ The sense of civil society, civil rights and civil duties, especially in the fight against corruption, is appallingly lacking in Uganda!

Recent media reports give us the following picture: Transparency International in their annual report of 2006 reports: 'Despite an extensive legal framework and ample opportunity for participation by media and civil society, the lack of political will to curb corruption has led Uganda to the brink of institutional failure. Corruption by politicians and officials is one of the biggest challenges facing the country.'¹²⁰ At one time, this organisation listed Uganda as the 11th most corrupt country in the world. A recent scandal rocking the Global Fund aid¹²¹ for the fights against HIV/AIDS should suffice to bring the point home. It must also be noted that the ministry implicated in this scandal is headed by a minister who had once been impeached by parliament on charges of corruption, but has found his way back to the cabinet!

'Both Kutesa and Muhwezi were censured by the 6th Parliament for unethical behaviour: Kutesa for asset stripping of Uganda Airlines and influence peddling; and Muhwezi for influence peddling, specifically the Sudhir Ruparelia Uganda Revenue Authority-Customs House scandal, and abuse of office.'¹²²

The Uganda Catholic Bishops decry corruption and express their frustration thus:

'Ugandans are beginning to become impatient with the Government's apparent incapacity to deal with, fight and eventually eliminate corruption. It is believed that millions of shillings of public funds end up in the pockets of individuals, and this creates frustration and erosion of confidence in public authorities. Legislation which exists to ensure proper accountability and

¹¹⁹ Rogers Nsubuga, op. cit., p. 20

¹²⁰ See Country Reports of Transparency International, also available as PDF-file under the address: TI Uganda: www.transparencyuganda.org (08.02.2006). See also A. Ruzinda, P. Langseth and A. Gakwandi (eds.), *Fighting Corruption in Uganda: The Process of Building a National Integrity System*, Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1998; Sarah Nakibuuka, 'Government moots new tools to fight corruption: Will they have sharper teeth than the old laws?' in: *Policy Review Newsletter: A Publication of the Uganda Debt Network*, Vol. 6, Issue 1, Jan. 2006, pp. 1,2,4; Innocent Nkwasiibwe, 'Can Western Monitors Learn from Kamuli?' and 'Sunday Monitor article decries corruption in districts' in: *Uganda Debt Network*, January 2004 Update, pp 4&3 respectively. All are available as PDF-files under the address of the Uganda Debt Network: <http://www.udn.or.ug> (08.03.2006).

¹²¹ See Global Fund Press Release on 24 August 2005 'Global Fund suspends Grants to Uganda: Action Taken to Ensure that Programs fully benefit the People of Uganda' under the website address: http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/media_center/press/pr_050824.asp (23.03.2006). The issue is now before the court in Uganda as this page is being written.

¹²² Odoobo C. Bichachi, 'Cabinet was created in the image of "no change"' in: *The Monitor*, July 19, 2001.

transparency in the use and administration of public funds, must be enforced; where it is lacking, new laws should be enacted to stamp out the evil practice of corruption.¹²³

What can be the expected as the outcome of life in such a society? No sense of the common good. In fact it is sad to see in the Uganda of today that those who claim most to be patriotic are the very most corrupt ones. Our ministers and politicians, our army, the police force¹²⁴ and the judiciary, just to mention a few. 'The position deemed most corrupt by the general public [at the local level] is that of district chairman which wields so much power that it has virtually usurped local boards, commissions and civil servants, including tender boards and public accounts committees, in deciding resource allocations.'¹²⁵

There is therefore a complete breakdown of social services. Roads, hospitals and schools are left in a sorry state. Hospitals, schools, etc are all the same. Ugandans tend to prefer to work with NGOs and private organisations and institutions instead of working with the government institutions, especially if they are not from the side of the boss. We should not wonder then that the private sector is a more successful provider of services to Uganda than the government institutions. Ironically of course, the owners and/or share-holders of these private enterprises are the government officials and politicians themselves.

We shall have to restrict ourselves now only to considering some phenomena of this distressed society. First is the *lack of confidence that Ugandans have in themselves*. The treatment that Ugandans especially render the expatriates is not just hospitality. Kevin O'Connor, an English freelance journalist who has lived in Uganda since 1996, succinctly brings this point home. After describing the unjust privileges the so-called Aid-workers enjoy when working in poor countries in the name of security allowances etc, he concludes thus:

¹²³ Uganda Episcopal Conference, *A Concern for Peace, Unity and Harmony in Uganda: Easter Message of the Catholic Bishops of Uganda*, (Kisubi: Marimum Press, 2004), pp. 14-15, quoting from their previous letter, *Political Maturity: Consolidating Peace and National Unity*, (Kisubi: Marimum Press, 1995), p. 11.

¹²⁴ Cf. Peter Nyanzi, 'Police most corrupt – report' in: *The Monitor*, Kampala: May 6, 2005 reporting on the National Service Delivery Survey (NSDS) released by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) on May 5, 2005.

¹²⁵ Transparency International (Uganda) 2006.

'And what really annoys me is the undeserved respect that Ugandans give to these young whites. Ugandans can behave as if the sun shines out of a *mzungu*'s arse and that their farts are equally sweet. I suspect that this is an emotional hang-up from historical and current inequalities between the First World and Third World. It is part of a self-confidence process, required by many Ugandans, to recognise that *bazungu* defecate, urinate and fornicate like anybody else, and respect for them has to be earned, not automatically given.'¹²⁶

Then there is the *increase in the number of mentally disturbed people*. When the pressure to live like others, to 'the modern life' is so demanding but the desired is unreachable, one cannot overcome the inevitability of a break-down. Mahmood Mamdani describes best the expectations of Ugandans who have acquired University education: 'They were already thinking of a nice bungalow and a loan for a motorcar. Their feet were already marching to the rhythm of 1, 2, 3, 4: one spouse, two children, three rooms in a bungalow, and four wheels for a motorcar.'¹²⁷ But when these wishes are not fulfilled, the depressions and disappointments thereafter are easy to imagine. This is not to excuse unemployment. In fact it is fully right to agree with Jean-Marc Ela when he remarks:

'The future of the young is as bleak as that of the intellectuals. Both will be jobless. Today access to secondary or higher education – if one has the privilege of sufficient family resources or a scholarship – is no longer a guarantee against the insecurity of tomorrow. In a job market where testing for employment is becoming a veritable lottery, the diplomas that constitute the *raison d'être* of the teaching system are worthless currency. One is struck by the paradox of a society in which the young are the beneficiaries of a huge outlay of state resources, and then find themselves relegated to the ranks of the urban unemployed while the country as a whole is without personnel trained in development.'¹²⁸

But coming back to mental illness itself: it is of course not only a result of a shattered dream. '[B]reakdown in mental health, physical health, social relationships and family life' are all symptoms of a morbid society, 'symptoms of alienation'¹²⁹. In Uganda, 'about 1.4 million Ugandans have severe mental health illnesses, a report

¹²⁶ Kevin O'Connor, 'How *Bazungu* Eradicate their Poverty in Uganda', in: *The Monitor*, Kampala: 8 Dec. 2002. *Bazungu* is the plural of *mzungu* which means 'a white person' and expatriate.

¹²⁷ Mahmood Mamdani, *And Fire Does Not Always Beget Ash: Critical Reflections on the NRM*, (Kampala: Monitor Publications Ltd, 1995), p. 4.

¹²⁸ Jean-Marc Ela, *African Cry*, Robert R. Barr (trans. *Le cri de l'homme africain*), (Maryknoll, N. Y. : Orbis Books, 1986), p. 81 ; cf. Lambert Rusoke, 'Time to walk the streets in search of employment' in : *Leadership* No. 441, August 2005, pp. 18-19; Bro. Francis Blouin, 'Educate Job Makers not Job Seekers' in: *Leadership* No. 446, February 2006, pp. 28-30.

¹²⁹ Albert Nolan, op. cit., p. 81.

has said'¹³⁰. This report, a result of a study carried out only in five relatively well-off districts, Kampala, Masaka, Hoima, Sembabule and Masindi districts and released by the Basic needs UK in Uganda (BUU), shows clearly the direction in which Uganda is heading.

'Dr Margaret Mungerera, a senior psychiatrist at Butabika Hospital, said the number of people with mental disorders in the country could be higher. . . "Basing on what we see, the country might even be having a bigger number of psychiatric victims. Take the example of poverty gibbering among the people, the northern conflict and the changed lifestyle; all these can cause mental disorders.'"¹³¹

The international medical organisation, *Médecins sans Frontières*, MSF, has carried out another study in Pader district and these are their findings:

- 'Almost all participants in the group discussions were exposed to severe traumatic events since 2002, most commonly abduction and killing of family members by the Lord's Resistance Army, personal experiences of violence, such as severe beatings and torture, and forced to witness or participate in killings, usually of family members (an LRA tactic which instils fear and discourages escape).
- 'Another important (although not unexpected) finding is that serious gender-based violence is prevalent in Pader Town Council.
- '5% of total group discussion respondents reported having a family member die due to domestic violence.
- 'Male and female participants reported that most traditional rituals and family structures have been eroded by the displacement, including 'fireside' education of the children, traditional song and dance, fertility/birth ceremonies, and use of the *abila* (family/clan shrine). With few viable opportunities for livelihood, men's historical role as "provider" has been drastically undermined, and perhaps due to feelings of demoralization and frustration, drinking alcohol is now a common coping mechanism and a frequent response to depression among males.'¹³²

¹³⁰ Al-Mahdi Ssenkibirwa, '1.5 million Ugandans mentally sick – report' in: *The Monitor*, 06.05.05; cf. Carolyn Nakazibwe, 'A naked mental picture; the sick roaming streets' in: *The Monitor*, April 3, 2003.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Médecins sans Frontières-Holland, Pader: A Community In Crisis: A Preliminary Analysis of MSF-Holland's Baseline Mental Health Assessment In Pader, Uganda, October 2004 – also on the website: https://obj/_scripts/.msf_download_pdf.php?id=2018&filename=uganda-mental-health2004.pdf– (23.05.2006); cf. MSF Press Release, 08.11.2004: 'Immense suffering in northern Uganda - urgent action needed'; http://www.msf.org/msfinternational/invoke.cfm?component=pressrelease&objectid=-CD3DA72E-43DE-4DF5-A2BFDA6C49D620F1&method=full_html (23.05.2006).

The ARLPI in one of their letters to Jan Egeland, The UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Emergency Relief Coordinator and Head of OCHA, had this to say:

'This conflict has made the people of Acholi, who used to be self-reliant, live in misery and dependence. Their cultural values are quickly breaking down and people live in a permanent state of trauma, which has made many people resort to suicide.'¹³³

Fr. Carlos Rodriguez, a Comboni Missionary working in Northern Uganda for now more than ten years, confirmed this with another article entitled 'Too many suicides in IDP camps' and goes on to explain what he experienced.

'For a long time I have been hearing that there is an average of three suicides a week in Pabbo, Acholi's largest IDP camp, which hosts more than 60,000 people. My first reaction was to think that perhaps the figure was an exaggeration, until recently, when I spent three days in Anaka IDP camp (40,000 people) and medical personnel there assured me that the suicide rate is two people per week. The problem remains extremely serious, especially when you think that many of the people taking their own lives are young folks.'¹³⁴

In another report he writes about another situation of the Ugandan society of today, with its apex in Northern Uganda: rape and sodomy.

'Earlier on rebels invaded the village and raped their wives. But one of the men puts it like this: "There is no woman in our place who hasn't been raped either by rebels or by the UPDF soldiers. Even women soldiers have forced us (the men) to have sex with them at gunpoint. If we don't die because of being shot we shall all die of disease" (referring to Aids).'¹³⁵

I cannot analyse all the signs of illness in Ugandan society of today, but I shall list some to conclude this section: There is *high rate of violence*, especially domestic violence and mob-violence, usually wrongly called 'mob justice'. Can a mob ever be just?¹³⁶ The bishops of Uganda once lamented: 'The public may stone or beat to

¹³³ ARLPI, Letter to the UN Undersecretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Emergency Relief Coordinator and Head of OCHA. Attention: Mr. Jan Egeland, Gulu: 9th November, 2003.

¹³⁴ Carlos Soto Rodríguez, Opinion: 'Too many death in IDP camps' in: *The Weekly Observer*, Kampala: 4-11 November, 2004.

¹³⁵ Ibid, 'Silent death in Kitgum' in: *The Monitor*, Kampala: 6th April, 2006; cf. Amnesty International 1991 Report, *Uganda: Human Rights Violations by the National Resistance Army (NRA)*, AI, 1991.

¹³⁶ Cf. the dossier, 'Why Violence?' in: *New People*, No. 19, Nairobi: July-August 1992, pp. 13-20, where part of the dossier, sub-headed 'Mob "Justice"?' reads: Close to the taxi park at Nakivubo in Kampala, a young man comes running from the direction of Owino Market. Behind him puffed an older man, calling out to stop the thief. It is a cry that always gets a response, and the young man was brought to a sudden halt. The second came up and demonstrated his ownership of good the other was carrying. In the centre of the huge crowd that can gather so quickly in such a place, the young man was in considerable danger! His loot was taken and returned to its owner. Then came the judgement: 'Remove your clothes, or be severely beaten!' Slowly the thief took off his clothes,

death a thief even if he has stolen only a chicken. The killing of people which we are still experiencing has gradually deprived us of a proper sense of the value of human life¹³⁷. This state of affairs is not limited only to the *wanainchi*, the simple, illiterate mass of population, but it is the joy and 'right' (a 'might-is-right' philosophy) of those in authority. The autobiography of the President, already quoted in this work, could be described as a chronology and enumeration of fratricide. It sounds as if he is proud of how much as well as how many he has killed. On page 165 alone, for example, there are 66 reported dead. After mentioning the murder of a certain commander Obot of the UNLA, the President continues: 'At around the same time, our forces in the west attacked Rubona Prison, where UNLA forces had been stationed. This was another great victory for our side in the course of which the enemy lost 66 soldiers. At Kembogo they had lost 49 and these two defeats sparked off a mutiny in Obote's army'¹³⁸. Some horrible statements unworthy of a leader, a father of a nation, are attributed to him. For example, he is reported to have said in 1987:

'The rebels attacked us [NRA soldiers] at a place called Corner Kilak 20 miles South of Kitgum [Town]. They came in while singing and shouting; our people [NRA] massacred those chaps. They approached our troops frontally. This gave us a very good chance because they exposed themselves; so on Sunday [January 24, 1987] we surrounded them and massacred them. We massacred them very badly.'¹³⁹

There is a high level of *misuse of alcohol*. One of the most booming businesses in Uganda is either the production or sale of alcohol, beginning from processed beers such as 'Bell Lager', 'Nile Special', 'Chairman' down to the local toxic brews such as 'Kasese-Kasese', 'Lira-Lira' or 'Ofondo'. By mentioning one problem, one stumbles on to another. They are all interconnected. Alcohol misuse has a great impact on the number of *road accidents*, almost on a daily basis and sometimes with horrible casualties, for example that of July 2002 in Western Uganda, where almost

until he was naked. 'Now run! Otherwise you will be beaten just the same!' He ran, followed by the jeers of the crowd, looking for somewhere to hide his shame. Very rough justice? Yes but the thief got away alive and uninjured. Not many years ago, a thief in Nakivubo would have been lynched: beaten senseless, coved in old pieces of paper and rags, and burned. (p. 19)

¹³⁷ Uganda Catholic Bishops, *Re-Shaping our Nation*, (Kisubi: Marianum Press, June 1980), p.8; cf. V. E. Okot Oburo, p. 50.

¹³⁸ Y. K. Museveni, op. cit., p. 65.

¹³⁹ As reported in: *Standard*, Nairobi: January 21, 1987.

all the occupants of the bus were killed!¹⁴⁰ Sitting behind a steering wheel is a sign of status in a third world country, but perhaps still worst in Uganda.¹⁴¹ And for young men, the faster one drives, the 'cooler' he is to the peers, young ladies and on-lookers, even when it means great disregard for the traffic safety. School drivers who drive at breakneck speed are cheered by their student-passengers. There is a common song sung almost in all, but more in boys' schools in Uganda when students are on an outing. It goes something like: '*Deriver yongeza muliro; Oh yongeza muliro!*' meaning 'Please driver, give in more fire/gas; accelerate!' And the drivers, usually already under the influence of alcohol, respond accordingly, like the fictitious Juma Saidi, the lorry-driver of the Oxford English Course, Book 2. The results are the many counts of road accidents involving secondary schools. The author remembers witnessing another kind of accident in 2000 at Nakawa market. A man was knocked down by one of the speeding mini-buses and all others, without stopping, followed suit until the victim was completely pressed flat on to the road. The mini-buses, the *kamunyi*, have to rush for their business and get more customers and thus earn more money, even if it means driving over a dead person! The by-standers instead of either calling the police or doing something to help simply remarked, 'See, how fatty/oily his intestines are!' When the police at last appeared, 30 minutes later, the victim was destroyed beyond recognition. So our society is characterized with high level indifference. The victims of traffic accidents are not only indifferently treated, but also in some places badly looted, or even killed by the by-standers so that they can be looted. The phenomenon of passers-by or by-standers, as we all know, is one of the indicators sociologists use to determine the social coherence of a given society. A society where people are indifferent to one another, when for example, someone in great need collapses on the street, etc, is a sick one that needs moral healing. 'The deformed conscience of many people [in Uganda] has made them insensitive.'¹⁴²

¹⁴⁰ See 'Ugandan bus crash kills 70', in: *BBC News*, published on Friday, 19 July, 2002, 13:33 GMT 14:33 UK <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2139010.stm> (28.03.2006); cf. 'Uganda fuel tanker hits minibus' published on 15.02.2004 at 16:15:33 GMT <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa-/3490299.stm> (28.03.2006); 'Uganda bus crash carnage', published on 22/09/2003 15:07:25 GMT <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/3129384.stm> (28.03.2006); Lauben Matsiko, Caleb Bahikaho and Raymond Baguma, '30 killed in Kabale bus' in: *The New Vision*, Wednesday, 8th June, 2005, <http://newvision.co.ug/D/8/12/438589/Kabale%20bus%20crash> (05.05.2006).

¹⁴¹ Cf. Kevin O'Connor, Parking, 'Vehicle Misuse – A Case of Economics, Sociology and Sex' in: *The Monitor*, August 30, 2003.

Human life is quite cheap in Uganda. And in Northern Uganda, the best description of life there is, perhaps, this photo published by the government owned daily, *The New Vision* of 9th February, 2006 about fire hazard in Padibe IDP camp.¹⁴³



ASSET: A man saves his burning blanket while others look on as fire gutted several grass-thatched houses in Padibe IDP camp on Tuesday

The journalists who reported this story write among other things these statements:

'Shocked inhabitants looked on helplessly as the flames billowed and destroyed the little on which they depended after fleeing their homes for fear of LRA rebels. Daring ones tried to rescue their property but it was too late and dangerous. They looked on as the towering Ali inspected the ruins left by the fire that broke out at about 10:00 am. Some 3,271 huts were razed to ash.'¹⁴⁴

The social situation in Northern Uganda is catastrophic! The people are dying, the culture is dying and everything is dying!¹⁴⁵ Human beings are herded together in IDP camps, euphorically called 'protected villages', when in reality they are comparable to the 'concentration camps' used by the Nazi Germany during the second world war; or like those used by the colonial Germany in Namibia in the nineteenth century to exterminate the Herero.¹⁴⁶ As we have already seen elsewhere, what is unfolding

¹⁴² Paolino M. Twesigye (1990), op. cit., p. 54; cf. Dr. Ian Clarke, *The Man With the Key Has Gone: The humour and pain of life in Uganda in the aftermath of war in the midst of AIDS*, (Chichester, West Sussex: New Wine Press, 1993), for example pp.146-55; 171-81.

¹⁴³ E. Kakande & H. Mukasa, 'Man saves blanket from camp fire' in: *The New Vision*, Kampala: 09.02.2006

¹⁴⁴ Ibid.

¹⁴⁵ Cf. Carlos Rodriguez, 'Burying culture in Acholi', Opinion in: *The Weekly Observer*, 27th April 2006, <http://www.ugandaobserver.com/new/oped/oped200505043.php> (09.05.2006).

¹⁴⁶ For elaborate exposition of this horrendous mistreatment of the Herero using concentration camps see the book by Jeremy Silvester and Jan-Bart Gewald, *Words Cannot Be Found: German Colonial Rule in Namibia – An Annotated Reprint of the 1918 Blue Book*, (Leiden, Boston: Brill, 2003). The précis of the book on the back cover reads: The 1918 'Blue Book' Report on the Natives of South-West Africa and Their Treatment by Germany, is based on the voluntary statements taken under oath of no less than 50 African witnesses. This testimony was combined with numerous German colonial documents to produce not only a stinging indictment of German colonial policy in German South-West Africa, but also a number of detailed eyewitness accounts of the first genocide of the twentieth century. However, within ten years of being printed, orders were issued for the destruction

in Northern Uganda can only be called genocide. The treaty that established the International Criminal Court (ICC) (in article 2) defines genocide as ‘any of the following acts committed with intent to destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group, as such:’ (a) Killing members of the group; (b) Causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group; (c) Deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculated to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part; (d) Imposing measures intended to prevent births within the group; (e) Forcibly transferring children of the group to another group.¹⁴⁷ In the case of Northern Uganda, these are the facts that are at hand as this page is written:

- ‘For a society which has been so renowned for its deep-rooted and rich culture, value system and family structure, all three have been destroyed under the weight of the conditions systematically imposed in the camps. This loss is colossal; it signals the death of a society and a civilization.’
- ‘In the face of relentless cultural and personal humiliations and abuse, suicide, serious depression and alcoholism have become rampant. About 1,000 children die every week due to the insecurity in northern Uganda. The high mortality rates indicate a humanitarian crisis in the country; the worst category an emergency can ever reach. It is a humanitarian crisis.’¹⁴⁸
- ‘Rape and generalized sexual exploitation, especially by soldiers, have become “entirely normal.” In Uganda, HIV/AIDS has become a deliberate weapon of mass destruction. Soldiers who have tested HIV-positive are then especially deployed to the north, with the mission to commit maximum havoc on the local girls and women. Thus from almost zero base, the rates of HIV infection among these rural communities have galloped to dramatic levels. This, even as official propaganda touts Uganda’s example the model for the fight against HIV/Aids! “The average HIV/Aids prevalence in IDP camps is at 35 percent, six times higher than the national

of all copies of the Blue Book within the British Empire. The editors of this volume have investigated how the Blue Book came into being, provided background information to the events and people described, and sought to discover the original German documents upon which so much of the Blue Book material is based. The documentation of *African* testimonies makes this book particularly useful to all those interested in African and colonial history, human rights and the history of genocide.

¹⁴⁷ From the website of Prevent Genocide International, <http://www.preventgenocide.org> (26.10.2005)

¹⁴⁸ Carol Natukunda, ‘1,000 kids die every week’ in: *The New Vision*, Kampala: January 9, 2006 reporting Fortunate Sewankambo, The acting director of World Vision Uganda, who said, “When I first saw these findings, I thought it was a lie. But let us face it.”

figure.”¹⁴⁹ “Three hundred children out of the 700 who were recently tested for HIV/AIDS in Gulu were found positive.”¹⁵⁰

- ‘The population has been deprived of all means of livelihood; they have been denied access to their lands, while the entire mass of their livestock was forcibly confiscated and simply exported from the north.’
- ‘Over the years, thousands of children have been abducted by the LRA.’
- ‘Some 40, 000 children, the so called “night commuters,” trek many hours each evening to reach the towns of Gulu and Kitgum (and walk back the same distances in the morning) to avoid abduction by the LRA.’
- ‘The population has been rendered totally vulnerable; they are trapped between the gruesome violence of the LRA and the genocide atrocities, humiliations are being systematically committed by the government.’¹⁵¹

These facts and many more others are based on research done in Northern Uganda by Government of Uganda such as *Suffering in Silence* (January 2005); *Health and Mortality Survey Among Displaced Persons in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader Districts, Northern Uganda* (July 2005), NGOs – both local and international. The report, *Health and mortality survey among internally displaced persons in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts, northern Uganda*, for example was a combined study carried out by the Uganda Ministry of Health in collaboration with WHO, WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA and IRC. In the executive summary of this report, these were some of the main demographic and mortality findings:

- ‘Both CMR [= crude mortality rate] and U5MR [= mortality rate for children under 5 years of age] were well above respective emergency thresholds (1 per 10 000 per day and 2 per 10 000 per day) in all four surveyed populations, and were four times higher than non-crisis levels in Kitgum and Pader Districts (Table 1).
- There was no obvious monthly trend in CMR.
- Malaria/fever and AIDS were the top self-reported death causes (Table 1); among children under 5, top causes were malaria/fever and *two lango*, a local illness concept encompassing oral thrush, malnutrition and diarrhoea.

¹⁴⁹ Timothy Oboth, ‘HIV prevalence among IDPs stands at 35%’ in: *The Monitor*, Kampala: July 1, 2005 reporting Mr Warren Nyamugosira, The Executive Director of a local civil organisation, NGO-Forum.

¹⁵⁰ Odwong W’Ayoo, ‘300 children test HIV-positive in Gulu’ in: *The New Vision*, Kampala: September 27, 2005 reporting Dr. Geoffery Openy-thoo, the medical officer at Gulu regional referral hospital.

¹⁵¹ Cf. Olara Otuno, op. cit.; cf. Fact Sheet: ‘Slow Genocide in Northern Uganda: What is going on in Northern Uganda?’ on the website of the USA-based NGO, Friends for Peace in Africa, www.friendsforpeacein africa.org (07.12.2005).

- Less than half of all deaths (Table 1), and 54.2% among children under 5, occurred in a health facility.
- A total excess mortality of 25,694 (of which 10,054 children under 5) can be projected for the entire Acholi region between January and July 2005, namely almost 1,000 excess deaths per week (Table 1).
- Violence was the third most frequent cause of death (9.4%), occurring mostly outside of camps (68.8%) and health facilities (93.5%). Persons killed were mostly adult males (70.1%), but 16.9% were children under 15. We estimate that 3,971 persons were killed in the study population between January and July 2005 (Table 1).
- Age/sex population pyramids in Gulu District, Kitgum District and Pader District display an apparent deficit in males 20 to 30 years old.
- All reported abductions were among persons below 35 years and 46.4% were among children below 15 years; 71.4% occurred outside of camps. We estimate that, between January and July 2005, 1168 persons have been abducted and haven't yet returned to their households (Table 1).¹⁵²

Street children and child soldiers are all realities of Ugandan society that glaringly contradict any triumphalism that anyone may want to tout about Uganda. Added to these are the numerous numbers of abandoned children, children thrown away in pit latrines, in dustbins or left on the door steps of Churches, of hospitals and other public places that the media bring to our awareness from time to time.

In exposing and analysing these social issues, I do not intend to 'stop at the stage of documenting social problems but [wish also to] move to the higher responsibility of proffering prescriptions'¹⁵³. These prescriptions have been laboriously proffered and are still done so by the Church and her partners in human affairs, as we shall see in the next chapters.

2.2 The political situation

The political situation of Uganda is significantly marked by the new brand of 'democracy' called no party movement or a one party-cum-military dictatorship. After taking over the government, the NRM/A galvanized its position by banning all political activities of parties and allowing only the movement to have a say in political affairs.

¹⁵² The Republic of Uganda – Ministry of Health, *Health and mortality survey among internally displaced persons in Gulu, Kitgum and Pader districts, northern Uganda*, July 2005, PDF-file, pp. ii, iv.

¹⁵³ Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah*, (Oxford, Melbourne et al.: Heinemann Educational Books, 1988), p. 161.

The old political parties were labelled sectarian and tribalistic and anti-unity¹⁵⁴. Those who wanted to be politically active or participate in the administration of the state or in the local administration first had to belong to the movement. The end result of such a restriction on the freedom of association was a creation of a one-party state with much concentration of power on the person of the President. The cabinet, the judiciary and the legislature became more or less mere puppets. The administration of the country was concentrated into the hands of a just a few individuals, namely the President and his immediate supporters that one could speak of an oligarchy.¹⁵⁵

A political situation of such a nature cannot be free of abuse. Corruption and nepotism are rampant in the politics as shown above. There is wanton embezzlement of public funds and much militarization of the population, something Fr. Lawrence Kanyike described as militarism seen in the movement of our President.¹⁵⁶

A society whose life is exposed to the trials described above cannot be expected to be any better politically organized. Besides, Uganda is the only country in East Africa which, as we have seen in the historical part, has had military coups and, consequently, so many Presidents, many of whom have a bloody and violent military background. These are Apollo Milton Obote, Idi Amin Dada and others as the table below shows.

List of Ugandan Presidents from Independence to date

Name	Took office	Left office	Title
Sir Edward Mutesa	9 th Oct. 1962	2 nd March 1966	President (through monarchical constitution of 1962)
Dr. A. Milton Obote	15 th April 1966	25 th Jan. 1979	President (through bloody

¹⁵⁴ Cf. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, *Sowing the Mustard Seed: The Struggle for Peace and Democracy in Uganda*, pp. 41-5.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. F. Ochieng-Odhiambo, *Handbook on some Social-Political Philosophers – Guide to Philosophy Series 3*, (Nairobi: Consolata Institute of Philosophy Press, rev. ed. 1998), p. 14.

¹⁵⁶ Lawrence Kanyike, 'Church and State have same *lubimbi*', in: *The Monitor*, Kampala: June 15, 2003. Cf. Article published in the *SouthScan* of December 8, 2005, London, and posted on the Al-Africa website entitled 'Concerns Grow About Terrorist Fall-Out from DRC Gold Trade' <http://allafrica.com/stories/200512080542.html> (11.12.2005) where a statement reads: Museveni has expanded his presidential guard to 12,000 [troop] and his motorcade has reached 50 vehicles including armoured personnel carriers and cannon fitted armoured vehicles. According to local reports he recently spent \$4m to secure his home.

			semi-coup)
Field Marshal Idi Amin Dada	25 th Jan. 1971	13 th April 1979	President (through bloody and violent coup)
Prof. Yusufu Lule	13 th April 1979	20 th June 1979	President (appointed)
Godfrey Binaise, QC	20 th June 1979	11 th May 1980	President (appointed)
Paul Mwanga	12 th May 1980	22 nd May 1980	Chairman of Military Commission
Presidential Commission	15 th May 1980	15 th Dec. 1980	Presidential Commission
Dr. A.Milton Obote	17 th Dec. 1980	27 th July 1985	President (elected)
Brig. Bazilio Olara Okello	27 th July 1985	29 th July 1985	Chairman of the Military Council (through coup)
Gen. Tito Okello Lutwa	29 th July 1985	26 th Jan. 1986	Chairman of the Military Council (through same coup)
Lt. Gen. Yoweri Kaguta Museveni	29 th Jan. 1986	- - - -	President (through bloody guerrilla warfare + elections)

Without mincing any words, we could concur with the late President, Dr. A. M. Obote, when he called Uganda a police state.¹⁵⁷ This, of course, is a part of his making as we have seen in the previous section on the history of violence in Uganda. The best illustration of all this were the run-up to and the Presidential and Parliamentary Elections of February this year, 2006. As this page is written, the main opposition leader and the first runner-up of the elections has rejected the results officially announced by the Electoral Commission, declaring the incumbent, President Museveni, winner with over 59% of the total vote. He has consequently filed a case with the

¹⁵⁷ See A. Milton Obote, *Notes On Concealment Of Genocide In Uganda*, Lusaka - Zambia: April 1990, published on the UPC website: <http://www.upcparty.net/obote/genocide.htm> (13.03.06)

Constitutional Court challenging the results on many grounds. It is likely to be a repetition of the 2001 saga that ended with the Opposition leader escaping to exile in South Africa, claiming threats to his life. His claims might not be unfounded, for last year soon after his return and declaration of contesting the presidency; he was immediately arrested and charged with terrorism, illegal possession of arms and a controversial alleged rape that was claimed to have taken place way back in 1997. The whole saga need not to be described here, it should suffice to mention the drama that ensued around the court process. The high court was, in the words of the Chief Justice, 'desecrated', when armed men dressed in black T-Shirts stormed the courtroom, where the process was going on.¹⁵⁸

After this incident and that before, there were riots from the protestors and supporters of the jailed opposition leader. The photos taken of the Police and/or Military police letting loose on the crowds should be enough to tell us what form of democracy is in place in Uganda.

After protest from all over the country and elsewhere about the interference in the court by the military, a new device was immediately put in place. Dressed in police uniform, the army returned to the court again. To illustrate this point, we quote again a publication from the only independent newspaper in Uganda, *The Monitor* of 25 November, 2005, entitled 'Black mambas now in Police Force uniforms'.

¹⁵⁸ See Hillary Nsambu, 'Black Mamba Besiege High Court' in *Leadership* No. 448, April 2006, pp. 24-26 and many other reports before such as Solomon Muyita, Simon Kasyate, Hussein Bogere & Lydia Mukisa, 'Armed men disrupt Besigye court case' in *The Monitor*, November 17, 2005 and 'Armed men disrupt Ugandan court' in *BBC News*, Last Updated: Wednesday, 16 November 2005, 17:06 GMT, <http://newsvote.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/4443314.stm> (16.11.2005).



SAME MEN DIFFERENT UNIFORMS: Members of the army's Black Mamba Urban Hit Squad that besieged the High Court on November 16 turned up in new police uniform yesterday. In the pictures above and below, two of the commandos are shown in their Black T-Shirts and army fatigues last week and in police uniform yesterday. Daily Monitor journalists positively identified the Mambas in police uniform. Principal Judge James Ogoola described last week's siege by the armed commandos as a "naked rape of the Temple of Justice". Chief Justice Benjamin Odoki also condemned the act. Photos by Monitor Team



A letter that was written by the Principal Private Secretary of the President weeks before the elections has been leaked to the public. It was written on the 8th February, 2006 and addressed to Lt. Gen Aronda Nyakerima, Chief of Defence Forces with the reference 'Reminder'. Among other things, the letter has the following to say:

'There is no assurance that we shall sail through with ease. In the most unlikely event that the Electoral Commission shall keep us away: We are not ready to specifically let Besigye and his group of betrayers rule over us; The Military should be put on alert in areas of Northern and

Eastern Uganda to start off chaos and continuously discipline those areas that shall have overwhelmingly voted for FDC.¹⁵⁹

These past elections (any other elections in Uganda) and the current politics of Uganda could be compared with the fictional ones described in the novels of Chinua Achebe *A Man of the People* and *Anthills of the Savannah*. In the former Achebe uses his typical style to describe the characters that make up the novels and their roles. At centre stage are Odili Samalu, a school teacher, who, having first settled at Mr. Nanga's residence ended breaking up with him and becoming his rival in both politics and love affairs. The other figure is Chief the Honourable M. A. Nanga, M.P. himself, a minister in the current government and seeking a re-election unopposed to exhibit his popularity to the electorate as well as to the cabinet. After heated election campaigns, intrigues and counter-intrigues, Odili ends up being delivered unconscious in hospital and consequently missing the nomination as the challenger of Mr. Nanga, who de facto goes back smart and unopposed in the house. He loses however his should-have-been second wife, Edna, to Odili. On the day of the elections Max, the leader of the opposition party to which Odili belongs and a real challenger of another Chief, Koko, is killed in front of the ballot box.

' . . . Max had been informed by . . . party intelligence that Chief Koko's resourceful wife was leading the Women's Wing of the P.O.P. in an operation that one might describe as breast-feeding the ballot, i.e. smuggling into the polling booths wads of ballot paper concealed in their brassieres. Max immediately investigated. But as soon as he alighted from his car, one of Chief Koko's jeeps swept up from behind, knocked him over and killed him on the spot. The police, most of whom turned out to be disguised party thugs, performed half-hearted motions to arrest the drives of the jeep but Chief S. I. Koko came forward and told them not to worry; he would handle the matter himself. Eunice [the girlfriend of Max] had been missed by a few inches when Max had been felled. She stood still like a stone figure . . . for some minutes more. Then she opened her handbag as if to take out a handkerchief, took out a pistol instead and fired two bullets into Chief Koko's chest. Only then did she fall down on Max's body and begin to weep like a woman; and then the policemen seized her and dragged her away. A very strange girl, people said. The fighting which broke out that night between Max's bodyguard and Chief Koko's thugs in Abaga struck a match and lit the tinder of discontent in the land.'¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ A scanned copy of the letter has been downloaded from the website of Radio Rhino International Africa: www.radiorhino.org/Uganda%20State%20House (01.03.2006). Hussein R. Kashilingi has signed the letter for Principal Private Secretary to H. E. the President from State House, Kampala.

¹⁶⁰ Chinua Achebe, *A Man of the People*, (London, Ibadan, Nairobi: Heinemann Educational Books, repr. 1973), pp.160-1.

The novel ends with the description of how the army decided to stage a coup and take over the government from the hands of those corrupt politicians.

In the *Anthills of the Savannah* the situation is that of the aftermath of a military coup *d'état* and the new military leader wants to amend the constitution through a referendum so that he becomes the President for life. After losing in the referendum he becomes angry and suspicious of his close friends and former classmates, Chris (the Minister of Information) and Ikem Osodi (the editor of the *Gazette*) and ends up eliminating both and any other opposition politicians. After being relieved of his duty as editor of the *Gazette*, Mr. Osodi finds himself in a lecture at a university. The following day there is the treacherous headline in the newspaper he formerly edited accusing him of regicide: EX-EDITOR ADVOCATES REGICIDE.¹⁶¹ This is the beginning of the end of him. Before him international journalists had been deported and others invited to provide good coverage of the country and sell it to foreign countries.¹⁶² The whole story in the novel is summarized by Richard Dowden of *The Independent* thus: 'Anyone ruling or in danger of ruling an African state should read this book. So should the rest of us. It brings humanity to a world in which we feared it did not exist.' And from *The Irish Times*: 'Violence takes over a drama of love, friendship and hope under threat. This is present-day Africa revealed in a stunning narrative of lyricism and natural speech. . . .'¹⁶³

The Commonwealth Observer Group in their Departure Statement had this among other things to say about the Uganda Presidential and Parliamentary Elections February 2006:

'So far as the electoral process as a whole is concerned, it is clear that the environment in which the elections were held had several negative features which meant that the candidates were not competing on a level playing field:

¹⁶¹ Chinua Achebe (1988), op. cit., p. 162.

¹⁶² See the case of John Kent alias Mad Medici, MM, who was deported and his journalist friend, Dick (ibid., pp. 55ff) and Miss Luo Cranford of the American United Press who was there to do 'the right reportage' (ibid., pp. 74ff). Compare this with the real Ugandan situations: Pius Muteekani Katunzi, 'Govt pays UK experts Shs. 1.2bn in PR deal' in: *The Weekly Observer*, 19th May, 2005; Alex B. Atuhaire, 'Museveni's son-in-law bags 640m/=' in: *The Monitor*, December 1, 2005 where the son-in-law is given a contract to work with CNN to 'polish Uganda's name abroad'; cf. 'Uganda expels Canadian journalist' Story from *BBC News*: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/2/hi/africa/4793500.stm> published: 2006/03/10 15:34:26 GMT (18.03.06) where it is reported that a Canadian journalist was deported as a *persona non grata* 'because of his biased reporting on Uganda'; 'Closing Soroti radio is wrong' editorial article in: *The Monitor*, June 24, 2003; Hussein Bogere, 'Govt bans talk on Colonel's court case', in: *The Monitor*, November 24, 2005.

¹⁶³ Chinua Achebe, ibid., back cover.

- The failure to ensure a clear distinction between the ruling party and the State;
- The use of public resources to provide an advantage to one particular political party;
- The lack of balance in media coverage (especially on the part of the State-owned media);
- The harassment of the main opposition Presidential candidate;
- The creation of a climate of apprehension amongst the public and opposition party supporters, as a result of the use of the security forces; and
- The alleged use of financial and material inducements.¹⁶⁴

One should not wonder, however, that the present political discussions or events in Uganda are still connected to the person of President Museveni. It should not have been the case, for the Constitution of Uganda, promulgated just in 1995, had clearly stated the president under the current constitution would have only two terms of office.¹⁶⁵ This provision, as everyone knows, was changed in the most dramatic way in August 2005, when Parliament voted to lift presidential term limits to give the incumbent the green light to stand again – that time it was still said, ‘if he wanted’. Of course he wanted to and still wants to. It was the price paid for multi-party politics. Prior to the amendment of the constitution a certain phenomenon, called *kisanja*, came in. It is said that the legislators considered supportive of the government’s plot to amend the constitution were bribed, each receiving US\$ 3,000 ‘with the aim of mobilizing and explaining to the local population the government’s position in the White Paper that was to be debated’¹⁶⁶. The supporters of this position were then clad with dry bananas fibres, in one of the local languages called *kisanja*. As that took place, the author could not help comparing it with the Acholi saying ‘*lyec oturo yen latalle*’ meaning that a marauding elephant, by uprooting trees, is helping the hunters to gain easy access to firewood for roasting its carcass. It is digging its

¹⁶⁴ Departure Statement by H. E. Sir Ketumile Masire, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Observer Group, in: *Commonwealth Observer Group Uganda Presidential and Parliamentary Elections February 2006 - Departure Statement*, Kampala, March 3, 2006, published on the website of the Commonwealth: <http://www.thecommonwealth.org/Templates/Internal.asp?NodeID=149333> (17.03.2006)

¹⁶⁵ See the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, Article 105, Clause 2 which reads: A person shall not be elected under this Constitution to hold office as President for more than two terms as prescribed by this article.

¹⁶⁶ See Ronald Kalyango, ‘Rights body condemns Shs 5m “kisanja” cash’, in: *The New Vision*, Saturday, 11th December, 2004, <http://newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/405247/MPs%20facilitated> (05.05.2006); Joshua Kato, ‘Here Comes Mr. *Kisanja*’, Wednesday, 14th April, 2004, <http://newvision.co.ug/D/8/25/353518/kisanja> (05.05.2006); Samuel Odonga Otto, ‘I will blame MPs, not Museveni over *kisanja*’, Tuesday, 18th January, 2005, <http://newvision.co.ug/D/8/20/412625/Constitutional%20Review%20Commission> (05.05.2006) and many others.

own grave. Then those who might suffer the consequences of this violation of the constitution are none other than the very people who celebrated it.

Looking at this short story and the reality of the current social situation of Uganda, we could summarise it by saying that 'the thirst for power and the ignorance of the common good'¹⁶⁷ has conquered Uganda again, just as it did before. It is a military state, a one party dictatorship, with the President at the most central stage. It is a state where opposition is just tiger paper, or rendered completely useless and harmless. This is also what in principal the contributors of the small booklet, *No-Party Democracy in Uganda: Myths and Realities* conclude. 'They have argued that no-party democracy is simply one-party dictatorship by another name and also constitutes a ban of the right to organised opposition.'¹⁶⁸

One other fact that deserves mentioning in the politics of Uganda is its militarization. This is of course a historical reality and colonial legacy as we have seen in the outline of violence in Uganda, but it must be said here that it has reached its peak in the current government. The fact that the army is also represented in parliament¹⁶⁹ is a direct contradiction of its acclaimed role: national security without partisan politics. Uganda as a nation is armed to the teeth or to the 'milk teeth' as Missio-Austria puts it in their campaign against using children as soldiers.¹⁷⁰ In the above cited letter written to the military commander before the elections, we see clearly which role the army plays in determining the situation. In fact, the opposition politicians have always charged that the UPDF is a personal army of the President.¹⁷¹

2.3 Relationships with neighbouring countries

The second verse of the Ugandan National Anthem goes as follows:

Oh Uganda! The land of freedom

¹⁶⁷ Paolino M. Twesigye (1990), op. cit., p. 55.

¹⁶⁸ Justus Mugaju & J. Oloka Onyango, 'Introduction: Revisiting the Multiparty versus Movement System Debate' in: ibid. (eds.), *No-Party Democracy in Uganda: Myths and Realities*, (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2000), p.2.

¹⁶⁹ See the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda Article 78, Clause 1, Paragraph c.

¹⁷⁰ See Missio, *Werkmappe Weltkirche: Frieden lernen. Missio hilft Kindersoldaten*, Nr. 122, Wien: 2001; cf. Wayne Madsen, 'America's African Beachhead: Uganda' in *Genocide and Covert Operations in Africa 1993-1999*, Lewiston-Queenston-Lampeter: the Edwin Mellen Press, 1999, pp.37 - 47.

¹⁷¹ See for example A. M. Obote, *Notes on Concealment of Genocide in Uganda*, op. cit; cf. *Election manifesto of the FDC 2006*.

*Our love and labour we give,
And with neighbours all
At our country's call
In peace and friendship we'll live.*

The promise and claims contained in this beautiful song, however, are far from being achieved. Uganda has constantly been at war, right from the days of its establishment as a state. The wars are not only fought within the country, but also within the territories of the neighbouring countries. In 1978 Amin invaded Tanzania. In 1990 Uganda, together with rebels of Rwandan origin calling themselves, Rwanda Patriotic Front, RPF, invaded Rwanda and caused change of government and participated allegedly as well in the subsequent genocide.¹⁷² In 1996 Uganda, with a group of rebels under the command of Laurent Desidère Kabila, invaded the then Zaire, and caused the removal of Mbutu Sseseseko from power. Again in 1998, under the guise of chasing the ADF rebels who were operating in the western part of the country, Uganda 're-invaded' DR Congo and supported the rebel groups operating there to fight against the government of Kabila. Kabila himself was subsequently assassinated in what many people believe was a plot involving Uganda. While in Congo, Uganda attacked Rwandan troops and fought running wars that left not only soldiers from both sides dead, but much more the local population in the regions of Eastern DR. Congo. Because of this involvement, which was not only military, but also economic, due to the fact that the officers who operated there were also businessmen and women, the International Court of Justice in The Hague recently delivered the following verdict:

'The Court finds that Uganda violated the principles of non-use of force in international relations and of non-intervention; that it violated its obligations under international human rights law and international humanitarian law; and that it violated other obligations owed to the Democratic Republic of the Congo.'¹⁷³

¹⁷² Cf. Henry Gombya, 'Rwanda: Did RPF kill Habyarimana?' in: *New African*, No. 386, (London: IC Publications, June 2000), p. 11.

¹⁷³ ICJ, Press Release 2005/26, on 19 December 2005, 'Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda)'; cf. Antoine Lokongo, 'The suffering of Congo' in: *New African* No. 388, September 2000, pp. 20-23; cf. Francois Misser, 'Congo: Behind rebel lines', *ibid.*, p. 24; 'Democracy: Milton Obote vs. Tony Blair' in: *New African*, No. 407, May 2002, pp. 18-20; cf. Kelvin Kelley, 'Human Rights Watch Gives Kenya Mixed Review, Slams Uganda' in: *The East African*, Nairobi: Monday, January 24, 2005.

The Association of Major Superiors of Religious Institutes in Uganda, AMSRIU, responded to this verdict with a strongly worded condemnation of the perpetrators of this terrible crime which was committed against the neighbours, not in the name of the citizens but on behalf of the few individuals in the government and the army; stating clearly who actually was behind the whole plot. They write:

'Consequences of Ruling against Uganda by the International Court of Justice (ICJ): According to the verdict of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), the UPDF committed in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) horrendous inhumane acts of torture and killings, incited ethnic conflict, trained child soldiers and looted the Congo to the tune of 10 billion dollars. This debacle has ruined the reputation of our country and has brought enormous shame to the whole Nation! The Government is answerable for all this. It should ask forgiveness, not only to the people of Congo, but also to the Ugandan citizens. Also, the government should ensure that the payment in reparation to the Congo be made by the individuals who profited from this plunder.'¹⁷⁴

Needless to say here is the involvement of Ugandan soldiers in the Sudan, whether supporting the SPLA or, as now generally accepted, going in search of the LRA. Many believe that the Khartoum's support for the LRA was a tit for tat for the Kampala's support to the SPLA – a belief that no one contests these days.¹⁷⁵

In conclusion of this part a quotation from a statement by the leader of the London-based Campaign for Political and Human Rights in Uganda (CamPHRU) is more apt. From him it is reported: 'Speaking at the launch [of the campaign], Dr. H. Obonyo, a former Ugandan cabinet minister, said it was a shame that Uganda [under Museveni] had fought with all its neighbours except Tanzania. This, he said, had been done against a constitutional provision that "clearly stated that war was declared by parliament, but Museveni has been fighting in Congo for three years now without any parliamentary approval. . . ."'¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ "'Live by the truth and the truth will set you free (Jn 8/32)": Statement of the Association of the Major Superiors of Religious Institutes in Uganda (AMSRIU) concerning the present situation in our country', published by the Catholic Information Service for Africa (Nairobi) as DOCUMENT entitled 'Uganda: Catholic Religious Accuse Government of Dirty Tricks' on January 25, 2006 and later posted to website of AllAfrica.com: <http://allafrica.com/stories/printable/200601250629.html> (27.01.-2006).

¹⁷⁵ See for example John Muwendo, 'Uganda: Can government ever defeat the LRA?' in: *New African* No. 430, June 2004, pp. 38-39.

¹⁷⁶ Martin Kazini, 'Uganda: Trouble, trouble, trouble' in: *New African* No. 412, November 2002, p. 24.

2.4 Economic Situation

For a country at war within itself and with all its neighbours, where corruption is alarming and where the politics is that of dictatorship, to say the least, one could easily guess what kind of economy such a country could be running. And yet Uganda has always been branded a success story of the IMF/World Bank economic reform policies. Recently it has been relieved, with other 18 countries under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative, a 100% of 'all debt incurred by Uganda to the IMF before January 1, 2005 that remains outstanding. This amounts to approximately US\$126 million, or US\$109 million excluding remaining assistance under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.'¹⁷⁷ In 2000, Uganda qualified for enhanced Highly Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) debt relief worth \$1.3 billion and Paris Club debt relief worth \$145 million. These amounts combined with the original HIPC debt relief added up to about \$2 billion. Growth for 2001-02 was solid despite continued decline in the price of coffee, Uganda's principal export. Growth in 2003-05 reflected an upturn in Uganda's export markets.¹⁷⁸ The CIA fact book gives the GDP (purchasing power parity) at \$45.97 billion (2005 est.); GDP (official exchange rate) as \$8.489 billion (2005 est.); GDP - real growth rate at 9% (2005 est.); GDP - per capita as purchasing power parity - \$1,700 (2005 est.). The book gives in more facts: Population below the poverty line is 35% (2001 est.); Budget: *revenues*: \$1.845 billion and *expenditures*: \$1.904 billion, including unknown capital expenditures (2005 est.); Public debt: 62.8% of GDP (2005 est.). Unfortunately there is no figure available for unemployment. For the labour force this is divided into agriculture 82%, industry 5%, services 13% (1999 est.). This needs to be seen against the background of Uganda's total landmass of 236,040 km², only 199,710 km² is actually main land (*Festland*) whereas water covers an area of 36,330 km² and that of the 199,710 km² mainland, 25.88% is arable land; 10.65% is covered by permanent crops and up to 63.47% other things such as buildings, roads, sport places, etc (2001). To this list of the land use is to be added the irrigated land which was estimated to be about 90 km² in 1998. The industrial production growth rate was at 9% (2005 est.); external-debt was \$4.949 billion (2005

¹⁷⁷ 'IMF Extends 100% Debt Relief to Uganda Under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative' in: *Policy Review Newsletter: A Publication of the Uganda Debt Network*, Vol. 6, Issue 1, Jan. 2006, p. 8; cf. 'IMF Extends 100% Debt Relief for 19 Countries Under the Multilateral Debt Relief Initiative' in: *ibid*.

¹⁷⁸ Cf. Information on Uganda from *The World Fact Book of CIA* last updated on 10 January, 2006, on the website: <http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/ug.html> (20.03.2006).

est.) and the economic aid – recipient was \$959 million (2003).¹⁷⁹ About the communication in Uganda we get this information: Telephones - main lines in use: 61,000 (2003) implying one telephone for 447 persons; Telephones - mobile cellular: 776,200 (2003) implying for one mobile cellular set there are 35 users. The general assessment of the telephone system is therefore 'seriously inadequate; two cellular systems have been introduced, but a sharp increase in the number of main lines is essential.'¹⁸⁰ E-mail and Internet services are available, but like the telephone service are quite minimal; almost exclusively only for the upper echelon of society [Internet hosts: 2,692 (2004) and Internet users: 125,000 (2003)] meaning that only 0.45% of the population has access to internet.

The table below¹⁸¹ should help to make a short comparison between Uganda and its neighbours in the East African Community, i.e. Kenya and Tanzania.

Comparison of Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania in some aspects

Coun-try	Size	Population	Religions	A.L.E*	% of poor
Tanza-nia	945,000 km ²	35.3 m; 50 % below 14 years of age	45 % Christians; 40 % Moslems	52 years	51
Kenya	583,000 km ²	30.3 m; 43 % below 14 years of age	66 % Christians; 7 % Moslems	48 years	48
Uganda	236,000 km ²	23.4m; 51 % below 14 years of age	76 % Christians; 16 % Moslems	43 years	55

* A. L. E. = average life expectancy

What do these figures tell us then about the economic situation of Uganda and what do we know about the well being of Uganda's citizens? Parts of the answer to these questions are already given in the list above. Part of the answers we get from

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid.

¹⁸¹ Facts given during a presentation by Georg Sticker, *Horizont3000*, Regional Representative East Africa, of the Regional Bureau Kampala, in Innsbruck in Welthaus of the Diocese of Innsbruck in collaboration with the *Katholische Männerbewegung*, on 11th May, 2004. The author was himself present at this presentation.

the National Service Delivery Survey of 2004 carried out by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). According to the end report of this survey,

'The population is largely young with children below 15 years constituting about 48 percent while the population 60 years and above constitutes only 3 percent. This young population has an implication on the required education and health services. These findings are in line with the National Household Survey 2002/2003. Thirty one percent of the population aged 10 years and above were full time students while about one percent had not worked but looked for work in the 7 days that preceded the survey. Whereas about one quarter of the females were domestic workers, the corresponding figure for male was only about 6 percent. In addition, the survey indicated that 44 percent of the population aged 10 years and above was engaged in agriculture, fisheries and forestry related activities as their main occupation.'¹⁸²

And in addition to those 44% who are engaged in agriculture as their main occupation, 'Nearly two in every three households were involved in agricultural activities and mainly engaged in crop husbandry (99%). Up to 43% of the households were involved in both crop and animal husbandry.'¹⁸³ But what is then the standard of living of these people who are primarily subsistent/peasant farmers; how do they live and what is their positive development; can we say that Ugandans are then economically well-off? The answer is a clear 'No', because the same survey shows us, for example, that only 40% of households are at the moment in school, that is to say that not all children can go to school and of those in school,

'Eighty three percent of the children attending day primary schools travelled a distance of less than or equal to 3 km which is below the PEAP, [poverty eradication action plan], target of 5 km. A relatively higher percentage (87%) than the national average, however, was found for the northern region. The highest incidence of leaving school was in P6 (35%) followed by P5 (22%). The findings also indicated that a significant number (14%) did not complete primary one (P1). The reasons given for children leaving school were mainly socio-economic including high cost (39%), lack of interest (17%) and sickness/calamity in the family (12%). School environment related reasons like poor quality of school were mentioned by less than one percent of the households. Schools reported having a problem of inadequate facilities and the inadequacy was reported highest for teachers' houses. Only about 8 percent of the schools indicated having adequate teachers' houses. Households that indicated adequacy of classrooms were more (29%) but this is not encouraging either. In addition, about 25 percent of the schools that were covered still depended on unsafe sources of water for drinking. However, an

¹⁸² The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), *National Service Delivery Survey (NSDS)*, 2004, p. xv (Executive summary)

¹⁸³ *Ibid*, p. xvii.

inadequate building was identified as the most serious constraint affecting schools and this was reported by one in every three households.¹⁸⁴

Still from the report of this survey these facts should be noted:

'Most households accessed water within a distance of 0.5 km in both seasons (65% and 57% for wet and dry seasons respectively). Whereas households in the rural area spent 43 minutes during the dry season and 31 minutes during the wet season to fetch water, the set target is only 27 minutes. Urban Households also spend more time fetching water (22 minutes during dry season and 17 minutes during the wet season) than the target of 7 minutes. Nearly 50 percent of the households reported inadequate safe water sources as the major constraint limiting use of safe water.'¹⁸⁵

At this point it is necessary to mention, though fleetingly, those living in the IDP camps of Northern Uganda. They need on average 2 hours to get a 20-litre jerry-can of clean water. It is usually a tug of war. The author remembers his own experience in summer 2004 when he was at home on leave and lived in an IDP camp for 18,000 people with only three working boreholes. Most of the time these boreholes were broken down and the camp inhabitants had to resort to drinking very unsafe water; results of which are the many cases of worm infections and diarrhoeal diseases.

These findings of the NSDS 2004 can be complemented with those of the 2002 Housing and Population Census which gives these details about the standard of living of Ugandans. In the executive summary these facts were included:¹⁸⁶

- The Literacy rate was 68% (of the population aged 10 years and above)
- One in every 25 persons had a disability
- The mean household size was 4.7 persons
- 61% of the households had access to safe water
- 17% had no access to a toilet facility
- Only 8% of the households had access to electricity
- Almost all the households (97%) used firewood and charcoal for cooking

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p. xv.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p. xvi.

¹⁸⁶ See *2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census*, op. cit., p. vi (highlights of the findings)

- Only 17% of the dwelling units were constructed with permanent roof, wall and floor materials
- About half (49%) of the households used “word of mouth” as their main source of information
- About half (48%) of the households owned a radio
- Only one third of the households (33%) owned a bicycle
- The tentative Infant Mortality Rate was 83 per 1000 live births

Now looking at all the facts given and comparing also some aspects with that of its neighbouring countries, notwithstanding the positive steps undertaken by Uganda in the years after Idi Amin and A. M. Obote, is it justified to call Uganda a success story as the World Bank and the IMF do? Can we say that the FDC was not telling the truth when they charged in their 2006 elections manifesto: ‘The country is facing escalating poverty, insecurity and uncertainty. Corruption, sectarianism and patronage have become normal practices of government functionaries right from the top?’¹⁸⁷ Are Ugandans really better off economically than, say some twenty or thirty years ago? The answer depends on from which angle one looks at it. For a few individuals, it is certainly much better than during Amin’s reign of terror. The gap between the rich and the poor has however greatly deepened. The bishops affirm this when they lament that corruption ‘makes a very big contribution to the poverty and under-development that make our country lag behind. Wealth in the hands of a few is undermining the dignity of the people who are turned into beggars for the rest of their lives’¹⁸⁸. The President confirms this position, though indirectly. ‘Our emphasis is to develop the private sector, because we know that is the only sector which can develop our country sustainably, efficiently and cheaply.’¹⁸⁹ He goes further to admit the harrowing gap between the poor and the rich: ‘. . . the miserable US\$270 per capita income, which is the national average, only comes about when you aggregate the US\$8 per person per head of the rural farmers with the US\$200 million of an industrialist such as Madhavani. At the lower end of the economic scale, therefore, there are

¹⁸⁷ Dr. Kizza Besigye, ‘Message to Ugandans’ in: *FDC Election Manifesto 2006*.

¹⁸⁸ UEC (2004), op. cit., p. 13.

¹⁸⁹ Y. K. Museveni, op. cit., p. 212.

really poor people . . .¹⁹⁰ and that means Ugandans who on average live on less than US\$1 a day. Could we say that there are even some who live on less than that for a month? Yes, there have been and there are still people starving to death in Uganda in spite of the riches and surpluses that the land has.¹⁹¹

The claim, therefore, that Uganda has progressed economically is a sham. Yes there has been an economic boom, there has been an increase in GNP, but this has not improved the standard of living of ordinary Ugandans. It has been and it is only to the advantage of a few, mostly touted for political or other ulterior motives. It is to be noted here the trite fact that about 50% of the Ugandan annual budget is supported by donors.¹⁹²

'The World Bank has praised Uganda for its economic performance and the reforms under the structural adjustment programme [SAP] as a success story and has promoted its case for the new debt relief programme, the Highly Indebted Poor Countries Initiative [HIPC]. The Panel has however indications that this economic performance was driven in part, especially over the past three years, by the exploitation of the resources of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Notes exchanged between World Bank staff clearly show that the Bank was informed about a significant increase in gold and diamond exports from a country that produces very little of these minerals or exports quantities of gold that it could not produce (see § 97). Internal discussions of the World Bank staff also confirm this knowledge of the situation: in one of those internal exchanges, a staff member earned his colleague that the WB silence would blow up in the Bank's face. In the case of Uganda and its exploitation of the natural resources of the DRC, the WB never questioned the increasing exports of resources and in one instance a staff member even defended it. During the Panel's visit to Uganda, the representative of the Bank dismissed any involvement of Uganda in the exploitation of those resources. The Bank not only encouraged Uganda and Rwanda indirectly by defending their case, but equally gave

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p. 198.

¹⁹¹ Cf. William Bionx Akena, 'More Children Starving in IDP Camps', on the website of the *Uganda Conflict Network, Uganda-CAN*, September 28, 2005: <http://www.ugandacan.org/archive/1/2005-09/catid/6> (05.05.2006); Denise Lifton, 'Northern Uganda's Brutal War: Murder, Rape, Abductions and Mutilations in the Name of the Ten Commandments' in: *World Hunger* website: . <http://www.worldhunger.org/articles/africa/lifton.htm> (23.05.2006); David Kaiza, 'Northern Uganda - looking away from tragedy' in: *Reuters*, 21 Jun 2004 15:42:00 BST website: <http://reuterslink.wrenhill.com/international/features/111937096613.htm> (23.05.2006).

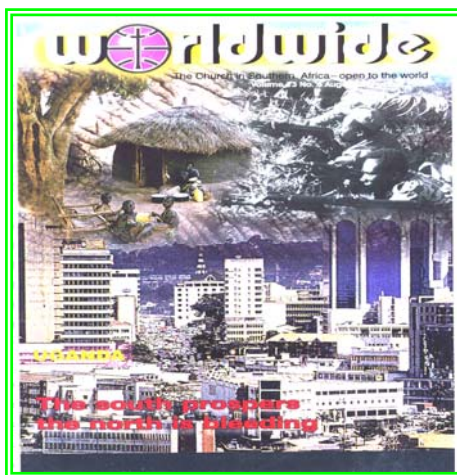
¹⁹² Cf. Sam Apedel, 'Donors reject Uganda budget, DP unites' in: *The Sunday Vision*, 16th May, 2004, <http://www.sundayvision.co.ug/detail.php?mainNewsCategoryId=7&newsCategoryId>, (16.05.2004); Andrew Mwenda, 'Poor donors! Grasp your role in Museveni's Uganda' in: *Sunday Monitor*, December 11-17, 2005; <http://www.monitor.co.ug/sunday/oped12112.php> (11.12.2005).

the impression of rewarding them by proposing these countries for the HIPC debt relief initiative.¹⁹³

The report goes then to mention individuals with their organisations or business enterprises who benefited or still benefit from the exploitations of the natural resources of the DR Congo. These include among others family members, relatives and close friends of the President, high ranking government and military officials and so on.¹⁹⁴ For financing the war,

'Uganda unlike Rwanda did not set up an extra budgetary system to finance its presence in the DRC. The regular defence budget is used and broadly the deficit is handled by the treasury. However, the Ugandan economy benefited from the conflict through the re-exportation economy. In turn, the treasury benefited and this allowed an increase in the defence budget. First, it has increased the incomes of key businessmen, traders and other dealers. In the coffee sector, gains have been substantial for the traders in Kampala and Bujumbura.'¹⁹⁵

That is why the AMSRIU can only be given credit for their boldness and sincerity when the members stated that 'the government should ensure that the payment in



reparation to the Congo be made by the individuals who profited from this plunder'.¹⁹⁶

While it becomes apparent that Uganda is not as glittering¹⁹⁷ as it is presented as far as its economy is concerned, reflected in the dire poverty that still torments the great percentage of its population, it is to be expected that for those internalised in the deplorable camps it is acutely worst. An anti-

¹⁹³ *Report of the Panel of Experts on the Illegal Exploitation of Natural Resources and Other Forms of Wealth of the Democratic Republic of the Congo*, UNO Security Council, S/2001/357, Distr.: General of 12 April, 2001, §§ 187-9. Compare this critical position with another position similar to that of the World Bank in Laure-Hélène Piron with Andy Norton, *Politics and the PRSP Approach: Uganda Case Study*, Working Paper 240, London: Overseas Development Institute, March 2004, ISBN 0 85003 720 4.

¹⁹⁴ Cf. *ibid.*, §§ 27-8, 87-89, 201-6.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, §§ 135, 137; cf. §§ 136, 138-142

¹⁹⁶ 'Live by the truth and the truth will set you free (Jn 8/32)': Statement of the Association of the Major Superiors of Religious Institutes in Uganda (AMSRIU) concerning the present situation in our country', *op. cit.*

¹⁹⁷ Cf. Peter Nyanzi, 'Uganda most failed state in EA' in: *The Monitor*, May 03, 2006, reporting on the recent publication of the US organisation Fund for Peace, 'Failed States Index 2006' released in May 2006, found on the website address: <http://www.fundforpeace.org/programs/fsi/fsindex2006.php> (03.05.2006).

cle in the *Worldwide* magazine of the Comboni Missionaries in South Africa with its colourful presentation and captions puts it best: 'Uganda: The south prospers the north is bleeding' as we can see it on the photo presented here. In the article the description goes then further to elaborate:

'There is a general belief that Uganda is now a model country on the continent as far as economic recovery is concerned. While this may be true in the south of Uganda, it is not so in the northern part of the country, where there is a hidden and forgotten war that has been going on for seventeen years . . .'¹⁹⁸

A report by the Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda, CSOPNU, entitled, *The Net Economic Cost of the Conflict in the Acholiland Sub-Region of Uganda*, gives a more detailed economic cost of the war in this region. Above all, it must be stressed that the first and most expensive cost of this conflict is human life. The 2002 population and Housing Census as we have seen already, gives us the number of Acholi to be 1,145,357 or 4.8% of the Ugandan population. The Catholic National Directory of 2003, however, gives the number of the Acholi to be only 742,000.¹⁹⁹ If these figures are correct, that means between 2002 and 2003, i.e. a year alone, 403,357 people of the Acholi sub-region died. We could surmise that more actually have died, for the finding of the 2002 Population and Housing Census shows that 'the Northern region had the highest observed population growth rate of 4.5% per annum'.²⁰⁰ Could this be a confirmation of the sad fact that more or less 1,500 people die every week in the IDP camps, or the other accusation of the opposition parties before the election that the population figure was deliberately overblown to create 'ghost voters'?²⁰¹

Returning to the report of the CSOPNU another chilling reality tells us in the first place '[t]here was considerable reticence at least initially even from authorities and some NGOs and international agencies on providing financial figures on the cost of their programmes. . . confirming once again that the truth . . . is the first casualty of

¹⁹⁸ Carlos Rodríguez/Staff writer, 'Uganda: While the South prospers, the North is bleeding' in: *Worldwide: The Church in Southern Africa – open to the world*, Vol. 13, No. 6, (Pretoria: Comboni Missionaries, August/September 2003), pp. 15-22, here quote from p. 15.

¹⁹⁹ *Uganda Catholic Directory 2003*, (Kampala: Uganda Catholic Secretariat, 3rd ed., 2003), p. 74.

²⁰⁰ 2002 Uganda Population and Housing Census, op. cit., p. 26.

²⁰¹ Cf. Vukoni Lupa Lasaga, 'Stop these foreigners from campaigning for candidates', in: *The Monitor*, January 24, 2006; cf. 'Kenyans Attend Museveni Campaign Rally in Busia', in: *All Africa News*, January 24, 2006; <http://allafrica.com/stories/200601231382.html> (24.05.2006).

war'²⁰². This only confirms the position that we have already expressed elsewhere that even the benevolent NGOs, generous and committed as they may be, could run the risk of enjoying the war in terms of their salaries, allowances and status that is accrued to all these, so that the idea of ending the root causes of the humanitarian crisis which they seek to address may not be their first commitment, let alone the possibility of the likelihood of condoning the war.²⁰³ Here are the main findings of the research:

'Over the past 16 years, this war has cost over 1.33 billion dollars, which on average represents over 3% of annual GDP. When the model is more fully developed, it is believed that total cost will be found to be closer to 4% of GDP. Over the years military expenses have accounted for 28% of the cost of the conflict. Losses related to agriculture and livestock which are the mainstays of the region almost equal the proportion of costs related to military expenditure. Tourism has suffered significantly as gun-shy tourists choose other destinations instead of Uganda; almost 15% of the costs are attributable to lost income from tourism. The war is one of Uganda's major public health problems, with over 10% of the cost attributable to taking care of health problems related to the war. Additional losses can be measured in lost output from a population whose health has been a major casualty of war. The cost of lives lost is incalculable but for the purpose of the model has been estimated at over 2.5% of total costs based on the value of lifetime production lost. The war knows no geographic bounds and is now spilling over into other regions; however, even while confined to Acholiland, the conflict has had an impact on neighbouring districts (also over 2.5% of the total in aggregating all these districts) and has a noticeable effect on their contribution to national GDP. Given the strong positive relationship between primary education and farm income, disruption of education by the war has a cost (0.5% of the total) and will affect rural development for years to come. People have fled with the clothes on their back and have lost all their worldly possessions, sometime more than once; these costs have been estimated at 1% of the total. No one in his right mind will make major investments in a war zone; private investments lost or not made have been conservatively estimated at 0.5% of total costs. Government at all levels has lost revenues as a result of the conflict and together with donors has been unable to make the kinds of public investment needed for development of the region (estimated at over 1% of the total). Some of the investments they have made will be frozen in IDP camp and will become

²⁰² Dr. Jeff Dorsey and Mr. Steven Opeitum, *The Net Economic Cost of the Conflict in the Acholiland Sub-Region of Uganda*, (Kampala: Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda, CSOPNU, September, 2002), p. 2.

²⁰³ Cf. Robert Ochola-Lukwiya, „Internationale ‚Hilfe‘ könnte zum Opium der Acholis werden“ in: *Missionskalender 2006 – St Georgenberg-Fiecht*, 2006, 49-51; cf. Richard Rottenburg, *Weit hergeholte Fakten. Eine Parabel der Entwicklungshilfe, Qualitative Soziologie Band 2*, Stuttgart: Lucius&Lucius, 2002; cf. Kevin O'Connor, see footnote no. 126; cf. Herwig Büchele, *Eine Welt oder keine. Sozialethische Grundfragen angesichts einer ausbleibenden Weltordnungspolitik*, Innsbruck-Wien, Tyrolia Verlag; Mainz, Matthias-Grünwald-Verlag, 1996; Heiner Geißler, *Was würde Jesus heute sagen? Die politische Botschaft des Evangeliums*, (Berlin: Rowohlt, 2003).

redundant as the camps empty out and the population returns to its homes at the end of the conflict. Environmental degradation as a result of overexploitation of the environment by a rural population concentrated in overcrowded camps equivalent to small cities also has a cost. The loss of some of the region's most skilled people to migration to other districts or overseas also is a cost to the region and to Uganda. Over the years the cost comes to an average of about US\$100 million per year. The war is costing Uganda over 3% of its GDP. It reduces Uganda's ability to deal with the myriad problems it faces and to take advantage of the many opportunities available to the country and to its people.²⁰⁴

The corollary question that follows the revelation of such a reality on the ground and also accompanying recommendation are the very question and recommendation that everybody with interest in Northern Uganda and Uganda as a whole asks, viz:

'Can Uganda afford to lose close to \$100 million every single year – i.e. almost the equivalent value of the entire budget of the World Bank's new Northern Uganda Social Action Fund? Unless the country can afford to throw away \$100 million a year and to watch its youth die in combat or of boredom in the camps, then it must do whatever is necessary to resolve the conflict peacefully.'²⁰⁵

Can the country afford such a loss; does it make the country richer in another way when such a loss recurs? Does it matter to the country when such a loss in terms of economy and human life happens? This is for the author the central and most important question to ask or that has ever been asked.

Another contentious economic issue in Uganda is that of land. Everybody in Uganda knows how emotionally loaded this issue is. In fact many Ugandans suspect the present government to be have a hidden agenda about their land. There is real fear of land-grabbing in Central as well as in Northern Uganda. This point can be illustrated with a few examples: Acholiland in Northern Uganda; Bugandaland in Central Uganda. One writer whose views need to be taken with some caution has this to say:

'Patriotic Senior Officers of NRA opposed to Lt. Gen. Museveni have exposed another serious land sale to foreign countries. The President of Uganda has sold a large part of Uganda land to Col. Gadaffi of Libya. . . . The Senior NRA Majors have warned Museveni about settling for-

²⁰⁴ Dr. Jeff Dorsey and Mr. Steven Opeitum, op. cit., pp. 2-3 (main findings and conclusions).

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p. 3; cf. Wendy Glauser, 'Youth in northern camps are most vulnerable, says report' in: *The Monitor*, October 25, 2005; cf. Peter Nyanzi, 'Northern disaster worse than Tsunami, says report' in: *The Monitor*, June 1, 2005; cf. George Gedda, 'Uganda deaths top 12,000; children pay highest price' in: *The Associated Press*, Friday, February 04, 2005 - Page updated at 12:00 A.M.

eigners by a force of army on land owned by indigenous in Uganda. This land is in the Buganda region, within Ankole; the full details of the contract are below.²⁰⁶

The article goes then to list in detail large chunks of land allegedly sold off to Gadaffi. These were in Luwero, Masindi, Gulu and Kamuli districts of the time. Others were in Mukono, Apac, Masindi and Kitgum districts. Other places allegedly sold to Gulf States were in Mpigi, Masaka, Rakai, Mubende and Hoima. Others were in Mubende, Hoima, Kabarole, Nebbi and Iganga districts. Tororo, Lira, Soroti, Arua, Moyo and Kitgum (again) districts have also parts of them sold off to the Gulf States.²⁰⁷

The ARLPI had already dealt with the land issue in Acholi in their document, *Let My People Go*, published in 2001. Among many things mentioned in this document, land takes a central place.

‘... people resented very much the fact that soon after the forced removals of people from the countryside, Maj. Gen. Salim Saleh started some kind of commercial farming business in Kilak county, engaging people in this enterprise under conditions tantamount to exploitation, since people were given money to engage into farming but had to repay double the amount after the harvest. According to former MP of Cwa constituency Okello Okello ‘people were so desperate that many engaged in this kind of business.’ During our consultations with people in the camps many expressed the fear that the policy of putting the population of Acholi into camps was a well-calculated move to grab their land. A project proposal two years ago by the Divinity Union Ltd, owned by Maj. Gen. Salim Saleh, highlighted some large chunks of land in Acholi to be used for large-scale commercial farming. Whether founded or unfounded, the people’s fear of having their land grabbed is real. It cannot be underestimated as an important factor that deepens the already existing rift between the people of Acholi and the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government.’²⁰⁸

The fear of land grabbing has been mounting with time and with the unfolding of events in Acholiland or in the politics of Uganda which point towards the affirmation of this fear. Unconfirmed reports keep on pouring in to suggest that commercial farming at a clandestine level is being carried out by some security personnel. Gen. (now elevated to that post) Salim Saleh came again with some idea known as the Security

²⁰⁶ ‘Uganda Land Sold Entirely: Uganda Land Sold to Gadaffi of Libya’ in: *Focus on Uganda*, Vol. 1, No. 4, London: June/July, 1992, p. 12; cf. Judy Adoko and Simon Levine, *Land Matters in Displacement: The Importance of Land Rights in Acholiland and What Threatens Them*, Kampala/Gulu: Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda, December 2004.

²⁰⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 12-13.

²⁰⁸ ARLPI & JPC, *Let My People Go: The forgotten plight of the people in the displaced camps in Acholi*, An assessment carried out by the Acholi Religious Leaders’ Peace Initiative and the Justice & Peace Commission of Gulu Archdiocese, (Gulu: July 2001), p. 8. Foot note 5 is an interview with John Okello Okello on 13th July, 2001.

and Production Programme in 2002 to propose ways to eradicate poverty in Acholiland as well to maximally utilise the land. This plan was utterly rejected in Acholiland, for people saw in it the prolongation of the clandestine movement to grab land.²⁰⁹

Gen. Salim Saleh got a mandate once again in 2003 to be in charge of the Security and Economic Rehabilitation of Northern Uganda, Luwero Triangle and other war ravaged regions. This appointment and other developments have raised great concerns and protests and real worries for the people of Acholi as can be demonstrated by a few examples below. An Acholi Professor now living and teaching at a University in the USA once wrote to Prof. Ronald R. Atkinson, who with an organisation '... had been awarded a 5-year contract to do aerial photography for the whole of Acholi in order to establish land ownership.'²¹⁰ The Professor queried where else in Uganda such a project was also being carried out. The answer was apparently nowhere, which goes to confirm a conviction that he shares with many Acholi:

'It is a grave miscalculation to think that our clan leaders do not know the communal boundaries of our land. I believe that even in your previous research, you established that in Acholi, *Rwot Kweri* was the local authority on the land in the community. This does not require aerial photography. Although NUPI [Northern Uganda Peace Initiative] is to provide the scope of the project, I think this is an ill-conceived Government scheme. It does not speak well at a time of confidence building that is dearly needed for the ongoing peace effort.'²¹¹

²⁰⁹ Cf. Lt. Gen. Salim Saleh, 'Saleh's magic to end Kony' in: *The Monitor*, June 29, 2003; cf. 'Foundation for Humanity: A Case Statement', 1997; and 'Security and Production Programme (SPP): Concept', May 2003; cf. Dr Okee-Obong, 'The Security and Production Programme for Acholi Region: A Critical Review', Thursday, December 29, 2005, on the website of *Stop The Genocide In Northern Uganda (StGiNU)*, <http://stginu.blogspot.com/2005/12/security-and-production-programme-for.html> (08.05.2006).

²¹⁰ Ben O. Latigo, PhD., Dean and Professor, University of the District of Columbia, School of Engineering and Applied Sciences, Office of the Dean, Building 42 Suite 212, 4200 Connecticut Ave., NW Washington, DC 20008, in a private letter to Prof. Ronald Raymond Atkinson, Department of History, University of South Carolina, Columbia, SC 29208, dated November 2005. The author wrote an e-mail to Prof. Latigo on Friday, March 24, 2006 4:57 AM to enquire more about this letter and Prof. Latigo answered on Fri, 24 Mar 2006 09:38:13 -0500 with an e-mail that was copied to Prof. Atkinson and NUPI ["Ronald Atkinson" <Atkinson@gwm.sc.edu>, "Stig Marker Hansen" shansen@nupi.or.ug] to confirm his position. Neither Atkinson nor NUPI wrote the author either to object or confirm, except that NUPI sent the author their website address [<http://www.nupi.or.ug>] in an e-mail dated Sat, 25 Mar 2006 11:17:15 +0300. Atkinson is known in, and knows, Acholiland very well. He has written a lot on the Acholi, latest known to the author is *The Roots of Ethnicity: The Origins of the Acholi of Uganda*, originally published by the University of Pennsylvania Press, published in Uganda, Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd, 1994.

²¹¹ Ibid. *Rwot Kweri* was the village chief responsible for administration of justice and organisation of communal work. His function was usurped by the Local Council I (LC I, succession of RC I)

Earlier on in the letter Prof. Ben Latigo, as one of those who seek a peaceful ending of the conflict in Acholiland and ensure its safety, gives the background information of the developments that were unfolding in Uganda as far as land issue is concerned:

'In September last year, I was among a group of six that met President Museveni in Seattle and presented a petition on the issues [of IDPs and land in Acholiland]. Among the issues we raised was that of Acholiland. Acholiland has never been expropriated. Not even by the Arabs and British during pre-colonial times. At the meeting, President Museveni conceded that there was no Government scheme to expropriate Acholiland. However, he did not live up to our request to make a public pronouncement on this issue. Last week Parliament shot down the proposed Constitutional Amendment that would allow Government to acquire land for commercial use without proper justification. I was in a meeting in Washington DC yesterday and the land issue in Acholi came up once again from accounts made by representatives of organizations that have just returned from Acholi. Most troubling to me was a phone discussion I had earlier in the day with NUPI in Gulu.'²¹²

To conclude this section another example of serious concerns and misgivings about government's position and attitude towards land of the Acholi is given below. The writer of the article, 'The Rehabilitation of Acholiland' responds to a newspaper report of a purported proposal for a post-war development in Acholiland and points immediately to serious misgivings and false information contained therein. First of all, the appointment of a dubious and 'poorly educated Acholi elder, Ananiya Akera'²¹³ as the one responsible for such an immense project makes everyone ask why he and not any other younger and more educated person. Secondly, the persons behind the project and the language used to describe the Acholi who are to be 'rehabilitated' already show negative signs. Salim Saleh features again in this article. The Minister of Water, Lands & Environment, Gen. Kahinda Otafire, was given time to elaborate on the project and 'grabs this chance to disparage the Acholi people along the lines dear to the NRM stalwarts.'²¹⁴ Quoting a Catholic local Councillor who was among the early councillors who first resisted the British colonial attempt to grab Acholis' land, Onyango Odongo asserts that it will never as it did not happen, that land is removed away from the people under whatever pretext:

²¹² Ibid; cf. Felix Osike, 'Third Term Bill goes to House' in: *The New Vision*, Kampala: Wednesday, 16th February, 2005.

²¹³ Onyango Odongo, 'The Rehabilitation of Acholiland' in: *The Leadership*, No. 445, January 2006, p. 20. Ananiya Akera 'had just turned 90' according to *The Monitor's* report ('Great potential for Acholiland', October 26, 2005, by Ono P'Lajur) the author was referring to. Who on earth at the age of 90 is still in active service?

²¹⁴ Onyango Odongo (f. n. 96).

'It is evident that the Creator intended the land for the use of the creatures he has put on it. Consequently, no creature ought to be cut off from the possession of some part or other of the earth. All Acholis should own land and in such quantities as to furnish them with the necessities of life. This is not because there is any mystic virtue in the soil. The simple fact is that a man who has a small holding has a bargaining weapon in the battle for existence. He is not the impotent victim of the labour market. He can afford to refuse the unjust wage and will never starve his family.'²¹⁵

He goes on to conclude that 'the people of Acholi are not as backward as [Salim Saleh] claims, and they will be best to plan rehabilitation of the ravaged Acholiland. General Saleh who has just completed his secondary education, with poor grades, should do his experimental work elsewhere.'²¹⁶ It must be added here that this position and the fears as well as concerns are not only raised by the Acholi. An example of non-Acholi to talk boldly on this issue is the Missionary of Africa (White Father) priest, Wolfgang Schonecke.²¹⁷

Somewhere else in Uganda, there is a lot of fear and concerns that the government has a sinister plan to grab the land from its rightful owner. Representative here is the study carried out by Elliot D. Green entitled *Ethnicity and the Politics of Land Tenure Reform in Central Uganda* in which he has sought to prove with the example of the Baganda that land is tightly bound with ethnicity. This, he asserts, is because also any government's land reform is not free of ethnicity.²¹⁸ In the case of Buganda, he showed how biased the NRM government is towards the Banyankole, members of the ethnic group of the President, in trying to allot them land in Buganda:

'The NRM bias towards Western Uganda had been a long-standing problem ever since Museveni took power in 1986 with an army overly populated with Banyankole and their ethnic

²¹⁵ Ibid., pp 22-23.

²¹⁶ Ibid., p. 24.

²¹⁷ See his many articles on this and related issues of Uganda, for example: „Uganda verliert immer an Glanz“ in: *Herder Korrespondenz* vom November 2004, 361-366. Here one of his statements: 'There is increasing evidence that the same people who have enriched themselves from plundering the natural resources of the DRC are looking for ways of taking away the fertile land of Northern Uganda and making the over 1.6 million IDP people as cheap labour force for large commercial farms. It would be a terrible disgrace if the hard earned tax-payers' money of the Germans would be used to grab land!' (p. 364, personal translation) or „Musevenis Lack ist ab“ in: *Die Tagespost* vom Mo., 20. Februar 2006, etc. Compare this report with that of Uganda Conflict Action Network, 'Land Insecurity in Northern Uganda: An analysis of and resource for contentious land issues in northern Uganda', <http://www.ugandacan.org/LandInsecurity.pdf> (08.05.2006).

²¹⁸ Cf. Elliot D. Green, *Ethnicity and the Politics of Land Tenure Reform in Central Uganda*, Working Paper Series No. 05-58, Development Studies Institute – London School of Economics and Political Science, April 2005, p. 4 (PDF-file found under the website address: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/collections/DESTIN/pdf/WP58.pdf> [28.03.2006])

brethren, the Banyarwanda. While Museveni did make some effort to include a variety of Ugandans in his government, he appointed his brother, Salim Saleh, as army commander in 1986, only to have him followed by another Munyankole, Mugisha Muntu, in 1989. Museveni did attempt to combat this perceived bias in his choice of Jeje Odongo, a native of Eastern Uganda, as Commander in 1998; however Odongo's successor in 2001 was none other than the President's nephew, James Kazini, who was then succeeded by yet another Muhima, General Aronda Nyakairima. These appointments plus the continued presence in the upper army echelon of the Bahima Generals David Tinyefuza and Elly Tumwine along with Museveni's son, Major Muhoozi Kainerugaba, led the International Crisis Group (2004, 13) to note that "Banyankole/Bahima domination of the top ranks undermines any attempt to project the army as a national institution with a national outlook. The absence of national outlook in turn reduces the army to an arm of the NRM ideology that serves the relatively narrow political interests of its founder and a few kinsmen." Similarly Museveni's 2003 cabinet reshuffle came under criticism for resulting in 'one of the most unrepresentative [cabinets] (sic) since the Movement came to power 18 years ago' with 11 of the 19 senior ministers coming from western Uganda and only one from eastern Uganda. . . Western Ugandans have also been seen as benefiting economically from Museveni's rule more recently. Between 1999 and 2000, for instance, the poverty rate in urban western Uganda dropped from 25.2% to 5.6% overtaking the urban poverty rate in Buganda (which dropped from 11.9% to 7.0% over the same period of time). . . More specifically, the President's brother were accused of benefiting from the privatization of parastatals in the 1990s, especially the President's brother Salim Saleh and Museveni's wife's brother-in-law, Sam Kutesa, who were both heavily implicated in the scandals surrounding the divestitures of various companies. . . As a result of this perceived state bias towards western Ugandans, many Baganda remain wary of the central government's attempts at land tenure reform, often couching their worries in coded language. . . MPs from Buganda have even expressed similar concerns: Wasswa Lule (Lubaga North, Kampala) noted that, "if we allow government to acquire land for investors, only investors from Mbarara [the largest city in Ankole] will get it. . ."²¹⁹

Green continues that 'one town councillor in Kiboga town said that the problem with the present land laws in Uganda is that "Rwandans can buy it," while another argued that Banyarwanda were taking away land from Baganda because they could afford to pay more for it.'²²⁰ Because of concern and fears that the Baganda ex-

²¹⁹ Ibid., pp. 16-18. in these pages he makes some notes: foot note 20: Banyarwanda, including the current President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, comprised some 20-30% of the army in the 1980s; foot note 21: Muntu held the post [of Army Commander] until 1995 [the longest]; foot note 23: While there has been concern in recent years about actual foreigners leasing land – see for example the controversy over a German company mistreating local farmers on its land in the Bukaleba Forest Reserve in 2002 – foreign land ownership been long prohibited in Uganda.

²²⁰ Ibid., p. 19, foot note 29: Interview [of the author] with Martin Kibuye, Kiboga, 15th Nov. 2001; interview with Eugene Musoke, Kiboga, 16th Nov. 2001.

pressed, the government responded with advertisements in its owned daily, *The New Vision*, claiming that the Baganda for the first time in 31 years had then the rights on their lands, but 'the advertisements noticeably did not mention *Kabaka, Kattikiro* or *Mengo*, nor did it attempt to dissuade readers that the Banyarwanda and Banyankole were attempting to take away land from the Baganda.'²²¹ So it comes down to one conclusion that the people are not against development as such, but because of perceived and real dangers they see surrounding its discussion, implementations and possible working out by a government that is visibly favouring its own clique at the expense of the others, that they resist any attempts to deprive them of their only means of livelihood. We have seen from the information given above that, if the land should in any unfair way be removed from the people, then that means their very existence and livelihood is at risk. It means this huge mass of the Ugandan population (68% depend on subsistence farming for a livelihood²²²) will become squatters in their own country; they will become *shamba* workers as is the case of some few nowadays. It will mean slavery! Green stresses further that, 'the reluctance of government to acknowledge these . . . ethnic factors in the [aborted] Land Act [of 1998] has had serious political consequences. . . '²²³ Indeed unless 'Museveni and the NRM make a more conscious effort to reduce the overpopulation of Banyankole and Bahima in top military and political posts while also focussing more on reducing regional disparities'²²⁴, all government attempts in land tenure reform will be seen with suspicion and vehemently objected by all the under privileged of this regime who are threatened by loss of their only means of survival in what is disguised as government's development plan or land reform. This is not to ignore the economic fact that unless people have a title deed to their land, they cannot borrow money from bank to develop business. Every bank needs credit-worthiness based on title deeds before it can give out loans.

2.5 Religious situation

Uganda, as we have seen in the early chapters of this work, is considered a highly Christian or religious country. The Christianity of Uganda is an example of the

²²¹ Ibid, pp. 19-20.

²²² 2002 *Uganda Population and Housing Census*, op. cit., p. 23.

²²³ Ibid., p. 19

²²⁴ Ibid., p. 22

global shift of Christianity noted by Philip Jenkins in his prognostic book, *The Next Christendom: The Coming of Global Christianity*.²²⁵ The national anthem we have quoted above begins in the first verse with the call 'Oh Uganda may God uphold thee!' The motto of the land is 'For God and My Country'. Uganda has no state religion, but it is a predominantly Christian country. One reader of the *Leadership* magazine summarised best how 'Christian' Uganda has progressed and now is:

'In 1910, the first African women to become Religious Sisters made their professions. They were 'The daughters of Mary' *Bannabikira* Sisters in Bwanda Masaka Diocese. In 1913, the first Africans to become priests South of Sahara desert were ordained. They were Frs. Bazilio Lumu and Victor Mukasa Womeraka of Masaka Diocese. In 1939, the first African Bishop South of Sahara desert was consecrated. He was Bishop Joseph Kiwanuka. In 1964, the 22 Uganda Martyrs, the largest number of African Saints was canonised in Rome by Pope Paul VI amidst the vast majority of the Cardinals, Patriarchs, Archbishops and Bishops of the Church gathered in Rome for the 2nd Vatican Council. In 1969, Uganda became the first African country ever to be visited by a Pope, when Pope Paul VI made a pilgrimage to the land of the Martyrs. On the occasion he made an unforgettable prophetic statement "You Africans can and must become missionaries to yourselves." In 1993, Pope John Paul visited Uganda. She was again privileged to be the only African country where a reigning Pope has stayed for the longest period (Feb. 5th - 10th). In August 1998, the first ever African Pope Nuncio was consecrated in Rubaga Cathedral, Kampala, a Ugandan, His Grace Archbishop Augustine Kasujja.²²⁶

The list is endless. We could add the facts already mentioned above that over 80% of the population states Christianity as their confession. For the Catholic Church it is more than half of those now with 30 bishops, 19 dioceses (4 archdioceses and 15 suffrage dioceses). The number of priests, religious women and men and missionaries is unknown, but they are many.

'Uganda thus enters the 21st Century with a renewed vigour and dynamism. She has an amazing growth of Vocations to Priesthood, Religious life, vocations born in movements like the faithful Charismatic volunteers trained and selflessly living in fellowship communities engaged actively in worship and evangelisation. Many of her sons and daughters are spread over the globe as Missionaries. She is a real hope for the triumph of the Kingdom of God over the satanic powers of darkness in the 21st century. Uganda, you are the glory of Africa. Your kinsmen the Uganda Martyrs are gloriously shining out for you as models to follow. Take cour-

²²⁵ Oxford, New York et al.: Oxford University Press, 2003.

²²⁶ 'Thank God for Uganda' (author unknown) published as a prize letter in issue No.: 383 October 1999, p. 3.

age they are interceding for you at God's throne of Mercy. Uganda Praise and thank God always!²²⁷

We could still add to that also the facts that a number of Ugandan priests and religious men and women are part of the present government. The list of Presidential Advisors, for example, contains a number of Catholic priests. The controversial Electoral Commission is deputised by a Ugandan catholic nun. The Uganda Human Rights Commission has a Catholic priest as one of its Commissioners.

As Jenkins remarks, '[w]e can only speculate what this future synthesis might look like. But underlying all these speculations is one solid reality. However partisan the interpretations of the new Christianity, however paternalistic, there can be no doubt that the emerging Christian world will be anchored in the Southern continents.'²²⁸ Nevertheless, he ridicules the missionary success based simply on numbers, thus:

'It is one thing to talk about missionary successes and numbers, but quite another to determine the nature of the religious changes involved. The act of joining a church or a sect is not necessarily the same as the internal process of conversion. While we can more or less measure the numbers declaring themselves Christian, the inner dynamics of religious change do not lend themselves to counting of any kind.'²²⁹

Then there are those types of Christians, especially in the case of Uganda: convinced Christians, half-baked Christians, 'our good' Christians, mediocre Christians, indifferent Christians and the academic Christians.²³⁰

The convinced Christians are those distinguished by deep knowledge of the fundamentals of the Catholic doctrine. They strive to integrate matured faith with Christian witness. They understand Christianity as a way of life which has to be lived without a compromise. The half-baked group on the other hand embraces those believers with minimum knowledge of their Christian doctrine. Yet they are also rigid they cannot open up to try and learn something more. Any new initiative is seen with suspicion. What they know is the truth and only that. There is also the category

²²⁷ Ibid.

²²⁸ Philip Jenkins, op. cit.; p. 14.

²²⁹ Ibid., p. 39.

²³⁰ The summary is based on Paolino M. Twesigye (1991), pp. 180-4. He in turn bases his summary on Charles Ssemuju, *The Categories of Catholics in Uganda*, Kisubi: Marianum Press, 1988 and John Mary Waliggo, *The Catholic Church in Uganda and the Signs of the Times*, Mbale: Maryland Press, 1987. In the following paragraphs I rely on this summary.

commonly known as 'our good Christians'. Although difficult to specify, it comprises normally those who do not disturb; seen as pious, obedient and uncritical Christians. Their understanding of Christian life is what was once characterised as the role of lay Christians, viz: to pray, to obey and to pay. From this group one may not expect any initiative in difficult times or any certainty for any positive support. Those belonging to this group could practice their devotions, like praying the rosaries for the Catholics, everyday; sometimes even interceding that their mission of stealing or looting may succeed without being caught. What is convenient is what is right for them. It is out of this group, which is rather large, that a good number of Christians belong who will even loot their Parishes when there is any chance.

The category of mediocre Christians also exists. These are lazy fellows or people who are best with different problems. If a pastor who is doing home visitation meets them and gives them a word of encouragement, their typical answer is 'Father we are doing what we can!' They may come to Sunday mass at times but for many of them the last time they received the sacraments was at their wedding. In spite of their problems they also try to see that their children attend catechumenate and they also pay their Church tithe. There is also the group of indifferent Christians. These are Christians by name. If there is still something in them, it is only to be noticed at Easter and Christmas – this means only attending mass at the most. This category is only good for statistics. The point of concern is that this group is growing by mass-baptism of unduly but enthusiastically prepared candidates. The number of children from broken families or unmarried parents finding themselves in this group is also increasing. The last group is that of the academic Christians. Those are mainly intellectual 'giants' of secular sciences whose knowledge about their faith has remained on the level of the catechumenate. Nevertheless some may be convinced that what they know about their faith is enough and they keep on practising their religion without difficulties. Some on the other hand cannot cope with this discrepancy in their lives. They fail to reconcile their secular scientific knowledge with the catechumenate doctrine of faith resulting in a state of dormancy. Where they fail to find factual proof for matters of faith they simply give up.

In the wider context and over confessional frontiers Søren Kierkegaard brings another criticism of nominal Christianity.

'There are lots of things which one can be 'at the same time,' and it is true particularly of all insignificant things that one can be a number of them 'at the same time'. One can be both this

and that and at the same time a dilettante violinist, member of a lodge . . . etc. The significant thing has precisely this characteristic, that just in proportion as it is significant it is less possible for a man [sic] to be that *and* at the same time something else'.²³¹

Based on this remark, Michael L. Budde goes on to describe the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, a country that was considered the most Catholic in Africa at that time, as a classical example of failure of Christianity when state, ethnicity, or any other categories are considered more important than being Christian thereby relegating being a Christian to a second place or even the last important thing.

'The failures are so huge, the contradiction with the gospel so enormous, that they don't even register as subjects of concern in the churches. When forced to confront our hypocrisy and our obedience to other sources of meaning, we wring our hands, lament the sinfulness of the human condition and pray for a human solidarity that would terrify us if it ever came to pass. And the institutions of death grind on in our world, with good Christians serving them efficiently, responsibly and in ways indistinguishable from those who reject the premise that Jesus of Nazareth incarnated God's way for his people on earth.'²³²

The results of this contradiction between calling oneself Christian but living in another way that diametrically contradicts Christian principles are numerous in connection with the world order and throughout history.

'The twentieth century provides too many examples of Christian failure to consider any other conclusion. World wars, wars of national liberation and colonial conquest, unspeakable genocides – all of these and more testify to the irrelevance of Christianity as a category having any purchase on human loyalties or obligations. When states say "kill", Christians kill. When ethnic leaders say "die", Christians die. When the market says "some must starve", Christians let some – too many – starve. Those whose Christian convictions and sensibilities move them to deny human sacrifice to the human-made gods of nationalism, those who refuse to bless systems of economic exploitation – these stand out as irritating, awkward exceptions whose witness exposes the timidity of the mainstream, a mainstream that elevates to a superhuman status those Christian exemplars it cannot hide or obscure.'²³³

²³¹ Søren Kierkegaard, *Attack upon Christendom* quoted by Michael L. Budde, 'Pledging Allegiance: Reflections on Discipleship and the Church after Rwanda' in Michael L. Budde and Robert W. Brimlow (eds.), *The Church as Counterculture*, (Albany: State University Press of New York, 2000), p. 213.

²³² Michael L. Budde, p. 214.

²³³ Ibid., pp. 214-5. Compare this position with what Albert Nolan describes as 'Catastrophe' in the first chapters of his book *Jesus Before Christianity*, Maryknoll, New York: Orbis Books, rev. ed., 1992, pp. 3-23 or with a fiction written by Joseph F. Girzone, *Joshua: A Parable for Today*, N.Y.: Collier Books/Macmillan Publishing Company, 1983, 1987.

It is no wonder then that the Ugandan religiosity, and for our case Christianity or Catholicism, of today is marked with a lot contradictions and dichotomy. The Christian is divided between his Christian or Church's ideals and his traditional and/or daily realities. The result of which is the emergence of lip-service or the Sunday Christians whose Christian-being ends at the doorstep of the Church. It is no wonder too that there is mushrooming of sects and independent Churches posing serious challenges and rivalries to the traditional Churches. Fr. Wolfgang Schonecke once remarked on this reality that in a situation where the Church authority is not democratic the other mass of Christians, 'as their religious needs are still there, will look for another church where they are respected and can bring in their talents. Many of our young walk out and join sects where they find a music culture and a leadership style more in harmony with their aspirations.'²³⁴ It is still no wonder then that Uganda, a very Christian country, experienced in 2000 one of the world's most horrible cult infernos. A cult called Movement for the Restoration of the Ten Commandments, founded and led by Joseph Kibwetere and other close collaborators such as ex-priest Dominic Kataribabo, Celedonia Mwerinde and Ursula Komuhangi amongst others, set a world record when on the 17th March 2000 more than 300 people were burnt alive in a Church building, allegedly due to the fact that the end of the world that had been prophesied did not come. From the sites of this sect were to be discovered more than a thousand decomposing corpses of believers who were said to have been killed earlier.²³⁵

There are other disturbing realities about the Christianity of Uganda. It is already a known, as pointed out at the beginning that the Christianity of Uganda had a bad foundation. It is a Church still with much colonial legacy of 'divide and rule'. It is so divided that in a positive sense it is difficult to give an identity of the Church of Uganda. In the negative sense, yes! Orthodoxy is more important than orthopraxis. This Church, in the words of present Nuncio to Uganda, once addressed to the Comboni Missionaries in Kampala, 'is complacent'²³⁶, and rather bent on living its regional

²³⁴ Wolfgang Schonecke, 'Church Leadership in a Democratic Culture' in: *AMECEA Documentation Service ADS 2/1997*, Nairobi, February 1, 1997, p. 4 (Physical Exodus)

²³⁵ Cf. *Talk of the Town of The New Vision* of Wednesday, March 22, 2000, pp. 19-22 where many searching questions were asked about Joseph Kibwetere, his cult and the fact that they had gone all that long without being recognised from the ubiquitous security intelligence of Ugandan armed forces (CMI, ESO, ISO, CID, etc!)

²³⁶ See Robert Ochola-Lukwiya, 'I have heard the Cry of My People, Part 2!?' unpublished manuscript, Innsbruck, April 2003.

or tribal limitation rather than risking the national integration. In Northern part of the country it is still an Italian dominated Church; in the southern an English and/or Belgian and French dominated Church and in western it is an Americanised Church leading to a typically Butooro, Buganda, Bunyoro, Busoga or Lango, Acholi Church, etc without much striving for *ecclesia semper reformanda*, that the Church should search for and work towards reforms and universality without doing any danger to its particularity.

In public life, the faith and the faith community is one that is seen as unbending and inauthentic. There are loud cries of ambiguity of Christians as well as their leaders in public life. In Uganda, the Christians make the majority of the population, but what is their influence on the population apart from offering the donor sponsored social services such as hospitals, schools, etc? But the 'Church in Africa [and in Uganda for our case] needs to identify itself with the poor and suffering masses in more ways than in mere *charity (handouts)*'.²³⁷ That is, it must take upon itself seriously public and social matters and the Christians should lead the others not by word of mouth but by their deeds. Action speaks louder than words. 'The Church and its leaders can no longer use external pressure to assure conformity. The only pressure is moral authority.'²³⁸

Even if there are no more open religious wars fought in Uganda, it is to be noted that the Christians are much divided among themselves. 'Uganda has long lived a history of a divided Christianity, a division which from time to time provoked some bloody violence . . . In order to realise a new order in the Ugandan history, ecumenism is fundamentally inevitable.'²³⁹ The state, as already seen before, has always favoured the Anglican Church. The Catholic Church has drawn, first of all, away from politics into the background, labelling politics a dirty game. Of late, it has become a trick of winning votes and sympathies by appointing a few Catholics to the

²³⁷ Clement Majawa, 'The Church's Role in Defining Genuine Democracy in Africa' in Emmanuel Katongole (ed.), *African Theology Today*, African Theology Today series, Vol. 1, (Scranton: The University of Scranton Press, 2002), p. 113.

²³⁸ Wolfgang Schonecke (1997), op. cit., p.2.

²³⁹ Paolino Mondo Twesigye (1991), op. cit., p. 102.

government posts even if without any executive power. The relation of the Christians with the Moslems for example is not without friction either.²⁴⁰

Tribalism or nepotism based on tribes that was seen in the social analysis is unfortunately also in the religious life. Worst still is the fact that this is not only a problem of the lay people, but also of religious men and women and clerics.²⁴¹ Other vices that are worth mentioning here are the idol worshipping and the human sacrifices that are closely related with this practice.²⁴² These are coupled with problems that are linked with globalisation such as abortion, paedophilia, prostitution, pornography and homosexuality, which certainly were not practised in many African cultures.²⁴³

Another reality which could fleetingly be mentioned here is the devil worship with the intent of getting rich quickly. It is alleged that even high ranking politicians and 'staunch' Christians do visit places where they offer sacrifice and seek fortune as well as have their destiny predicted by fortune tellers.²⁴⁴ Connected with this is the witch-hunting that still haunts many Ugandan communities. People are either outcast or sometimes killed by mobs because they are suspected of being witches or having 'evil eyes'.²⁴⁵

²⁴⁰ See, for example, 'The teaching of Religion in Primary Schools' in *Leadership* No.412, January 2003, pp. 10-14; cf. Erhard Brunn, „Eine der fruchbarsten Formen des Christseins" in: *eins* 1-2, 2006, p. 51, where he reports about the activities of Fr. Roger La Bonte, M. Afr., who is involved in Christian-Muslim dialogue in Uganda.

²⁴¹ Cf. Don Bosco Ochieng Onyalla, 'Tribalism in Religious Communities in Africa' in: *AFER*, Vol. 47, No. 3, September 2005, pp. 160-183; cf. in the same issue of *AFER* Ferdinand Nwaigo, 'Tribalism versus Evangelisation in Sub-Saharan Africa', pp. 131-159; John B. Kariuki Wakarega, 'Evangelisation and Cultural Pluralism: A Call for Dialogue', pp. 219-238.

²⁴² Cf. Emmanuel Afayo, 'Child Sacrifice in Mukono' in *Leadership* No. 414, March 2003, pp. 22-23; Sr. Grace Candiru, 'Witchcraft' in *Leadership* No. 415, April 2003, pp. 9-13; Emmanuel Afayo, 'Anti-Witchcraft Campaign in Lugazi Diocese' in *Leadership* No. 446, February 2006, pp. 18-20 just to mention a few examples.

²⁴³ Cf. John S. Mbiti, *African religions and philosophy*, (London, Ibadan, Nairobi, Gaborone: Heinemann, repr. 1988), pp. 146-8; cf. Edward Kanyike, *The Principle of Participation in African Cosmology and Anthropology* Dissertatio ad Doctoratum in Facultatem Philosophiae apud Pontificiam Universitatem S. Thomae in Urbe, Romae 2003, (Balaka: Montfort Media, 2004), pp. 139-42.

²⁴⁴ Cf. Richard M. Kavuma, 'Museveni wins the wrong war' in: *The Monitor*, April 15, 2004, <http://www.monitor.co.ug/specialincludes/agenda/rd04151.php> (24.05.2006).

²⁴⁵ A relative in the lineage of the author was killed by a mob in 2003 on this allegation, just as an example; cf. John S. Mbiti, op. cit., 204-15; cf. Okot p'Bitek, *Religion of the Central Luo*, (Kampala: Uganda Literature Bureau, 1980), chapter 7, pp. 121-44; cf. Okot p'Bitek, *Lawinos Lied, Ocols Lied. Ein Streitgesang*, übersetzt von Raimund Pousset (original: *Wer pa Lawino/Wer pa Ocol*; engl.: *Song of Lawino/Song of Ocol*), Wuppertal: Peter Hammer Verlag, 1998, 134 etc.

To end this short reflection it seems appropriate to quote one writer who said, 'The opposite of saints are not the sinners, but the hypocrites.'²⁴⁶ This fact can be said of any person or people calling themselves Christian. The number does not give the ultimate reality. It is the fruit from which one can differentiate a good tree from one that is not all that very good (cf. Mt 7: 16f). The same can be said of the religiosity, Christianity or Catholicism of Ugandans. First, the cases of corruption that we have long dwelt on are being committed by people who call themselves Christian. Those who are running our country do not call themselves pagans. Our President confesses himself to Christianity so does our Vice-President, who recently though, decided to visit a traditional shrine, which caused an uproar among Catholic communities of Uganda.²⁴⁷ For the Catholic Church in Uganda, the institutional Church is certainly expanding and growing, but the Christian life and Christian values are still to be desired. In the words of the Catholic Bishops the call is to all the Christians of Uganda 'to let their light shine!'²⁴⁸

2.6 Conclusion

To conclude, we note sadly, the fact that violence is still part and parcel of Uganda's modern society. We find instances and situations of violence in the social life, in the politics, in the relationships with our neighbouring countries and also in our religious life – a complete disregard of the African philosophy of life, the *ubuntu*²⁴⁹ that should unite us all irrespective of our difference. There is much still to be done in all these areas to defeat the culture of violence that has taken the upper hand. We must tackle violence head-on in order to build a society based on peace, respect for human life, dignity and rights, such as the rights to be different and belong to another party, tribe or religion without being looked at or labelled a bandit, terrorist, or backward or primitive. Whereas the rest of Uganda is relatively peaceful and progressing,

²⁴⁶ Glenn Close, *Das Gegenteil der Heiligen sind nicht die Sünder, sondern die Scheinheiligen*, on the Missionskalender of Comboni-Missionare, DSP, 4. April 2004.

²⁴⁷ Cf. Jean-Marie Nsambu, 'Wherever I go, I pray as a Catholic – Bukenya' in: *Leadership* No. 435, February 2005, pp. 26-28; cf. John Kalema, 'Bukenya's visit to the shrine' – letter- in same issue of *Leadership*, pp. 2 and 4.

²⁴⁸ Cf. Uganda Bishops' Conference, *Let Your Light Shine*, (Kisubi: Marianum Press, 18th October, 1992) quoting Mt 5:16.

²⁴⁹ For the explanation see F. Ochieng' - Odhiambo, *African Philosophy: An Introduction*, Guide to Philosophy Series 5, (Nairobi: Consolata Institute of Philosophy Press, repr. 2nd ed., 2002), pp.43ff; Edward Kanyike, op. cit., pp. 80-5; Albert Nolan (1988), op. cit., pp. 80, 159, 188.

the situation in Acholiland could be summarised in the words of Latin America liberation theologians as that of 'a crucified people'²⁵⁰ whose life is overburdened by suffering, humiliation, homelessness, unemployment or inhuman working conditions and suffering severe punishments meted by the state. We say with Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. that the Christians of Uganda need to 'embrace the part of black religious tradition that refused to separate Christian gospel from the struggle for justice in society' or else accuse them of 'turning Christianity into *Churchianity*, thereby distorting the essential message of the gospel which is equality and brotherhood' and lament with him that 'The great loving heart of God has been embalmed and laid coolly away in the tombs we call Churches. Christ of the manger, of the carpenter's bench and of the borrowed tomb has once again been crucified in stained glass windows.'²⁵¹

²⁵⁰ See, for example Ellacuría Ignacio, *El pueblo crucificado. Ensayo de soteriología histórica* in RLT 18 (1989), pp. 305-333, where the term actually originated. For our case see Albert Nolan (1988), op. cit., pp. 49-67 'A Crucified People'.

²⁵¹ James H. Cone, Black Theology as Public Theology in America' in Leroy S. Rouner (ed.), *Civil Theology and Political Theology*, (Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame Press, 1986), p. 192.

3 Judging in light of the Gospel (GS 4)

In the light of what was seen in the chapters above, we cannot avoid asking ourselves why there is such a high scale of suffering in the world and insecurity in Uganda. If we compare Uganda with its East African neighbours, Kenya and Tanzania, we find that these two countries have not had the same waves of insecurity, violence and sufferings as Uganda has. Why is this so; what is special about Uganda? What do the other countries have that Uganda does not have and what have Ugandans done wrong that they have to suffer this much?

Different people will seek to give different answers to these questions. The politicians may say that the situation has been and it is so because Ugandans have not voted for the right candidates to take over the political offices. The social scientists may offer other answers as we have seen in the previous chapters: the question of ethnicity, the question of colonialism, etc. But these alone will not explain the reasons for the sufferings and insecurity in Uganda, for as just mentioned, neighbouring countries, especially Tanzania, have all been colonised. These countries have also, more or less, the same ethnic diversity as Uganda. They have also had their 'dictators'. They face the same challenges that Ugandans have to grapple with in the day-to-day running of their families and societies.

Therefore, we have to seek our solution to this pressing question elsewhere; namely in theological answers. We do so with our faith and conviction that God created the world and everything in it good. But because of the sins of our first parents, the sins of humanity, there came death and suffering in the world. All that we see and live as suffering are a manifestation of sins and sinfulness of mankind (cf. Rom 5:12 reflecting on Gen 3), which is not to be understood as God's punishment for man's sinfulness. Instead, it could be considered self-inflicted suffering, or suffering inflicted on others, either because of ignorance, sadism or laziness.

The South African liberation theologian, Albert Nolan, succinctly summarises this state of affairs as follows:

'Sin is an offence against God precisely because it is an offence against people. 'Whatever you do to even the least of these people, you do to me' (Mt 25:40, 45). There is no such thing as a sin that does not do any harm to anyone. At the very least, sin harms the sinner (now and in the future); at the most it harms millions of other people (now and in the future). . . . Sin is about suffering, about making people suffer, allowing them to suffer or ignoring their suffer-

ings. In the last analysis sin is not a transgression of law but a transgression of love. . . . Sin becomes visible in suffering. The seriousness or gravity of a sin must be measured in terms of the amount of pain and suffering it causes. . . .²⁵²

And if this is the situation, what do we Christians believe? What do I a believer have to do to reduce suffering in a situation like that of present-day Northern Uganda? The answers come from the different teachings of the Bible and of the Tradition of the Church to which we turn now.

3.1 *The teaching of the Bible*

The Bible as we have seen above teaches us all that we need to know and do in life. It is the book of life, about life and for life. It is the revelation of God to his people, beginning with the patriarchs through the prophets and reaching the climax in the Son of God, who himself, is the revelation of God to mankind. In him God has made himself visible and touchable. *All scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, for refutation, for correction and for training in righteousness, so that one who belongs to God may be competent, equipped for every good work.* (African Bible 2 Tim. 3: 16f)

3.1.1 The Old Testament

In the Old Testament, as we have seen in the introduction of this chapter, we have the revelation that God created everything and everybody good and for life, but the sinfulness of mankind made this become impossible to life. Man became violent from the onset and ended up killing his own brother (cf. Gen 4f) and this state of affairs brought untold suffering in the world, culminating in total chaos figuratively illustrated in the story of the flood (Gen 5ff).

Even if God made a promise never to let the world be flung into chaos as it was at the time of Noah (Gen 9: 9, 10, 11ff), humanity continued to go against God's will to their own destruction.

In the book of Exodus we read the story of God's chosen people enslaved in a foreign land, Egypt, and harshly subjected to slavery and misery. Not forgetting his promise made to Abraham and his descendants, God sent the Israelites a liberator just at the moment when everything seemed to be getting worst for the Israelites.

²⁵² Nolan Abert (1988), op. cit., p.38

Pharaoh had not only subjected them to harsh slavery, but also started eliminating them: *Then Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, gave this order to the Hebrew midwives, Shiphrah and Puah: When you help the Hebrew women give birth, kill all the boys as soon as they are born. Allow only the baby girls to live* (New Living Translation, NLT Ex 1:15-16). Moses, himself a survivor of this infanticide as well as genocide, was then called to go and liberate the endangered kinsmen: *Yahweh then said, 'I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying for help on account of their taskmasters [oppressors]. Yes, I am well aware of their sufferings. And I have come down to rescue them from the clutches of the Egyptians and bring them up out of that country, to a country rich and broad, to a country flowing with milk and honey . . .* (NLT Ex 3:7-8b)

The prophets of the Old Testament still give us more examples of God's concern for humanity and his intervention in human history. After delivery out of Egypt and returning to their own land, the chosen people, once enslaved and oppressed, turned out to be oppressors themselves. They became oppressors not only of the foreigners whom they subdued and were now living among themselves, but also of their own weak ones: the poor, the widows and the orphans. And the leaders, especially the royal house and the temple cult became places and instances of oppression! This inner injustice had repercussions not only in foreign relations, but also and much more in internal affairs.

Regarding peace especially, Fr. Bernhard Häring gives us a better description when he remarks that peace, *Shalom*, was a promise, a gift and a commission.²⁵³ For the notion of peace, *shalom*, itself, a derivative of the verb *shalem* means to complete, to bring to harmony and fulfilment. Where peace prevails, 'the whole as well as all the components attain the maximum and optimal'²⁵⁴.

When the chosen people have not striven for peace or their leaders not fulfilled their God-given responsibilities of leadership and ensuring peace, freedom and

²⁵³ Bernhard Häring, *Umrüsten zum Frieden. Was Christen heute tun müssen*, (Freiburg-Basel-Wien, Herder Verlag, 1983), p.15. The title of the first part of this small book is: *Frieden: Verheißung, Geschenk und Aufgabe* meaning peace is a promise, a gift and a commission/task to be fulfilled. See this also in his 3-band book, *Frei in Christus. Moraltheologie für die Praxis des christlichen Lebens* Bd. 3, (Freiburg-Basel-Wien, Herder Verlag, 1981), pp. 428-36.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, p. 16 foot note 4 quoting from J. Macquarie, *The Concept of Peace*, (New York, 1973), p. 15.

fraternity or mishandled the *anawim*, the poor ones, then God has harshly and strongly spoken. We can only cite some examples to drive our point home.

The prophet Isaiah, for example, known as the prophet of hope and justice, begins his book with a rejection of false piety as condemnation of the practice of social injustice and murder and oppression: *When you stretch out your hands I turn my eyes away. You may multiply your prayers, I shall not be listening. Your hands are covered in blood, wash, make yourselves clean. Take your wrong-doing out of my sight. Cease doing evil. Learn to do good, search for justice, discipline the violent, be just to the orphan, plead for the widow.* (New Jerusalem Bible, NJB Isa 1: 15-17) The theme of justice runs through the whole book. In chapter 58 he rejects utterly false fasting without justice:

Is that the sort of fast that pleases me, a day when a person inflicts pain on himself? Hanging your head like a reed, spreading out sackcloth and ashes? Is that what you call fasting, a day acceptable to Yahweh? Is not this the sort of fast that pleases me: to break unjust fetters, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break all yokes? Is it not sharing your food with the hungry, and sheltering the homeless poor; if you see someone lacking clothes, to clothe him, and not to turn away from your own kin? (NJB Verses 5-7)

Isaiah goes further to define what true peace, true *shalom*, is: *Fair judgement will fix its home in the desert, and uprightness live in this orchard, and the product of uprightness will be peace, the effect of uprightness being quiet and security for ever.* (32: 16-17) True peace, therefore, ‘doesn’t mean stationing soldiers in the village. True peace means the freedom of people to live together and respect each other. True peace is in our hearts and not based on the gun, it is based on the sense of humanity’ as the politician Daniel Omara Atubo²⁵⁵ rightly said.

It was not only Isaiah who was concerned with the issue of peace, social justice and harmony in society. The prophet Jeremiah, for example had to pay with his own freedom and comfort for having rebuked the political status quo of his time and saw and said the truth of the looming dangers on the state. (cf. Jer 37:15-16; 38:1-6).

The prophet Micah is another social prophet who was so concerned with social life. On the question of what one should do in order to please God, he answers thus: ‘*You have already been told what is right and what Yahweh wants of you. Only*

²⁵⁵ In Godfrey E. N. Nsubuga (ed.), *Wells of Wisdom: Proverbs, Sayings, Poems, Maxims, Slogans, Anecdotes* (Kampala, Uganda: MK Publishers, 2002), p. 184.

this, to do what is right, to love loyalty and to walk humbly with your God.' (NJB Mic 6:8)

The prophet Amos, who in the African Bible is described as 'God's Demand of Social Justice' stresses this point to the highest level.

When he visited Israel he saw that there was economic prosperity and military might, but he could see beneath the surface. He knew that the true health of a society could not be measured merely in terms of economic prosperity, but must be assessed from the morality of the nation. The gloom portrayed in Amos lies not in the proclamation of judgement, but rather in the social evils that invited such judgement. Justice is essential for the proper functioning of society and is required by God.²⁵⁶

In chapter 8 he describes at best the situation seen in the previous analysis:

Listen to this, you who rob the poor and trample the needy! You can't wait for the Sabbath day to be over and the religious festivals to end so you can get back to cheating the helpless. You measure out your grain in false measures and weigh it out on dishonest scales. And you mix the wheat you sell with chaff swept from the floor! Then you enslave poor people for a debt of one piece of silver or a pair of sandals.' (NLT 8:4-6)

'The issues addressed by Amos vividly show themselves in many African countries: corruption, injustice, embezzlement, oppression of the poor and flight of capital.'²⁵⁷ So we see that peace for the prophets, in fact for the whole Old Testament, is not one of saying 'at least for *us* we can sleep in our houses and please don't ask us about *them*!'²⁵⁸

3.1.2 The Gospel and New Testament

For Christians the New Testament is an intrinsic part and completion of the Old Testament. We cannot read any part separating one from the other. And like in the OT, we find in the NT divine directives for plans of action for peaceful co-existence in a troubled society like that of Uganda. In reading the Gospels and the entire NT we need the correct and prudent exegesis without running the risk of either over spiritualising everything or of using the Bible in a fundamentalist manner, taking

²⁵⁶ The African Bible, 'Message of Amos', (Nairobi: Pauline's Publications Africa, 1991), p.1547.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 'Relevance of Amos in Africa', p. 1548.

²⁵⁸ See foot note no. 6. Cf. with what Dr. Kigongo called '*kasita twebaka ku tulo* (at least we can sleep at night)' in his article, 'The Emotions vs. Intellectual Level of Public Debate' published together under the theme *Reconciliation in Uganda* http://www.federo.com/Pages/National_Reconciliation/.html retrieved on 06.06.2003.

everything literally to mean 'anything anyone wants it to mean'²⁵⁹. On the contrary, the Gospel must and is for us an existential message of 'good news for the poor and oppressed without any bias against the rich and/or un-oppressed.'²⁶⁰

The gospel is the news about our time and our country that God is revealing to us today through the signs of our times, but this subjective experience and revelation is formed, guaranteed and normatively shaped by the message of Jesus to his contemporaries and by all that is revealed about God in the Bible. Objective revelation and Biblical norms are not the letter or *content* of the good news for us today but the spirit or *shape* that the gospel will have to take for us or for anyone else.²⁶¹

We need then to contextualise and Africanise as well as 'Ugandise' the Gospel when we read it with reference to the situation of over one million people languishing in the IDP (read concentration) camps in Northern and Eastern Uganda.

In that respect the message of the Gospels and the NT which is a continuation of the OT is simple and straight to the point. Jesus reveals in John 3:16 that God has loved the world that he sent his only son to save it. And this only son presents us his manifesto thus: *I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full.* (NJB Joh 10:10b) What does it mean then 'life in full' for the mothers and fathers of Northern Uganda who cannot even afford to feed or defend their children or, for the children of Northern Uganda who cannot sleep in their huts, but must run miles on miles each day to go and seek relative safety of the open places of the towns? What does it mean 'life in full' for the youth of Northern Uganda who cannot even to go to school to learn and develop their God-given skills?

The *modus operandi* of this Son is love. *I give you a new commandment: love one another; you must love one another just as I have loved you.* (NJB Joh 13:34; cf. 15:12) And 'No one can have greater love than to lay down his life for his friends.' (NJB Joh 15:13) This love for friends, neighbours must also include the 'enemies' (cf. Mt 5:44), for 'the command of love transcends all national, racial and religious barriers. The central message of the famous story [of the Good Samaritan, Lk 10:25-37] is the duty to help whoever is in need.'²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Albert Nolan (1988), op. cit., p.7

²⁶⁰ For an elaborate explanation on this topic see ibid, chapter 1 (What is the Gospel?) pp. 7-30.

²⁶¹ Ibid., p.25.

²⁶² Heiner Geißler, op. cit., p.32. (personal translation)

The product of this total love of oneself and of one's neighbour is peace. It is the peace of Jesus unlike the peace that the world can give (cf. Joh 14:27), for he himself is our peace (cf. Eph 2:14). He is the true *Eirené*, which is the Greek version of the Hebrew *Shalom*.²⁶³

Jesus proclaimed in the Beatitudes, part of his manifesto: *Blessed are the peacemakers: they shall be recognised as children of God* (NJB Mt 5:9) thereby transforming the work and struggle for peace into an essential element of being his followers. St. Paul brought this command home when he exhorted his followers in Ephesus to go about living their faith wearing shoes on their feet *the eagerness to spread the gospel of peace*. (NJB Eph 6:15) and the product of peace in turn is justice: *The peace sown by peacemakers brings a harvest of justice*. (NJB Jam 3:18). Peace, justice, faith, love, hope, etc are the message of the NT. When these elements are there, there is harmonious social living; there is freedom from all kinds of oppression; there is non-violence. Where peace, justice and love are centre stage, people will not be locked up in desperate situation like that of Northern Uganda where the only life programme is the struggle to survive!

We cannot exhaust the biblical teaching on peace, justice and social life. We can summarise it into that of total love for oneself and one's neighbours, including enemies. That means being just to each other, avoiding violence, avoiding revenge and doing all that is within our means to ensure that peace, social justice and harmony reign in our society. *Never try to get revenge: leave that, my dear friends, to the Retribution. As scripture says: Vengeance is mine - I will pay them back, the Lord promises. And more: If your enemy is hungry, give him something to eat; if thirsty, something to drink. By this, you will be heaping red-hot coals on his head. Do not be mastered by evil, but master evil with good* (NJB Rom 12:19-21) is the pressing exhortation for our time in a situation like that of Northern Uganda where vengeance, lawlessness, murder and suffering of all sorts have taken upper hand.

The Church has total authority and responsibility of 'living and teaching the gospel of peace'. It is to this that we now turn our focus.

²⁶³ Cf. V. E. Okot Oburo, op. cit., pp. 128-9; cf. Xavier Léon-Dufour, „Friede“ in: *Wörterbuch zur biblischen Botschaft*, ebd. (Hg.), (Freiburg-Basel-Wien: Herder Verlag KG, ² 1967), 192-6.

3.2 *The teaching of the Church*

The Church understands herself as a community of believers, of the followers of Jesus Christ. In fact the Catholic Church goes further in considering that 'The Church of Jesus Christ subsists²⁶⁴ in' her whereas the other Churches are ecclesial communities. And so she is the true safeguard and guarantor of the true teaching of Jesus Christ and the one, holy, apostolic and universal faith in this Jesus Christ. She sees her social teaching itself as a valid instrument of evangelisation.

'As such, it proclaims God and his mystery of salvation in Christ to every human being, and for that very reason reveals man to himself. In this light, and only in this light, does it concern itself with everything else: the human rights of individual, and in particular of the 'working class', the family and education, the duties of the State, the ordering of national and international society, economic life, culture, war and peace and respect for life from the moment of conception until death.' (CA 54)

She proclaims further that, 'Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us [bishops] as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.'²⁶⁵ The document continues to say, 'The Church has the right, indeed the duty, to proclaim justice on the social, national and international level, and to denounce instances of injustice, when the fundamental rights of people and their salvation demand it.' (JM 36) In fact, the Church has always understood that it is her inherent right and duty to witness to the commissioning of Jesus Christ when after his resurrection he told his apostles:

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go, therefore, make disciples of all nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all the commands I gave you. And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time. (NJB Mt 28:18-20)

²⁶⁴ Vatican II., *Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, Lumen Gentium*, Solemnly Promulgated by Pope Paul VI. on November 21, 1964, No. 8. Hereafter LG; cf. *Dominus Iesus* footnote 56: 'The interpretation of those who would derive from the formula *subsistit in* the thesis that the one Church of Christ could subsist also in non-Catholic Churches and ecclesial communities is therefore contrary to the authentic meaning of *Lumen gentium*. "The Council instead chose the word *subsistit* precisely to clarify that there exists only one "subsistence" of the true Church, while outside her visible structure there only exist *elementa Ecclesiae*, which — being elements of that same Church — tend and lead toward the Catholic Church" (Congregation For the Doctrine of the Faith, *Notification on the Book "Church: Charism and Power" by Father Leonardo Boff*: AAS 77 [1985], 756-762).'

²⁶⁵ The 1971 World Synod of Catholic Bishops, *Justitia in Mundo, Justice in the World*, no. 6. Hereafter JM.

Or of another paschal scene and commissioning as reported by the writer of the fourth gospel:

In the evening of that same day, the first day of the week, the doors were closed in the room where the disciples were, for fear of the Jews. Jesus came and stood among them. He said to them, 'Peace be with you!' and, after saying this, he showed them his hands and his side. The disciples were filled with joy at seeing the Lord, and he said to them again, 'Peace be with you! As the Father sent me, so am I sending you.' After saying this he breathed on them and said: Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven; if you retain anyone's sins, they are retained.' (NJB Joh 20:19-22)

3.2.1 The Universal Church and the Magisterium

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World, *Gaudium et Spes* opens with the most promising statement of our time: 'The joys and the hopes, the grief and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the grief and anxieties of the followers of Christ.'²⁶⁶ This document, which is actually the 'social charter' of the Second Vatican Council, calls on the Christians and the Church to the task 'of scrutinizing the signs of the times and of interpreting them in the light of the Gospel.' (GS 4) After critically scrutinizing, analysing and weighing on the scale of reality, so to say, the situation of the modern world, the document then goes to individual concerns of the Church. These are the dignity of the family and marriage, the importance of culture, the economy, the political society and, last but not least, the fostering of peace and the promotion of a community of nations (Ch. V; nos. 77-90).

The document defines peace thus: 'Peace is not merely the absence of war; nor can it be reduced solely to the maintenance of a balance of power between enemies; nor is it brought about by dictatorship. Instead, it is rightly and appropriately called an enterprise of justice.' (GS 78) It continues then to recommend what Christians and humanity as a whole should do in situation of conflicts: 'all Christians are urgently summoned to do in love what the truth requires, and to join with all true peacemakers in pleading for peace and bringing it about . . . and renounce the use of violence in the vindication of their rights'.(GS 78)

²⁶⁶ Vatican II., *Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: Gaudium et Spes*, promulgated by Pope Paul VI. on 7th December, 1965, no. 1.

Christians should desist from being war-mongers and participants in arms trafficking: 'men should be convinced that the arms race in which an already considerable number of countries are engaged is not a safe way to preserve a steady peace.' (GS 81) Instead of taking the laws into their hand, Christians and humanity should work towards building up an international community which should be responsible for solving the problems of war, i.e. to uproot social injustice from society, the main cause of war. (cf. GS 83)

In order to achieve all its recommendations and teachings, the Council gave a great responsibility to the spiritual leaders of the Church:

Bishops, to whom is assigned the task of ruling the Church of God, should, together with their priests, so preach the news of Christ that all the earthly activities of the faithful will be bathed in the light of the Gospel. All pastors should remember too that by their daily conduct and concern they are revealing the face of the Church to the world, and men will judge the power and truth of the Christian message thereby. By their lives and speech, in union with Religious and their faithful, may they demonstrate that even now the Church by her presence alone and by all the gifts which she contains, is an unspent fountain of those virtues which the modern world needs the most. (GS 43)

This is, of course, without relieving the faithful of their own respective duties. The faithful on their part are exhorted as follows:

The council exhorts Christians, as citizens of both cities, to perform their duties faithfully in the spirit of the Gospel. It is a mistake to think that, because we have here no lasting city, but seek the city which is to come, we are entitled to evade our earthly responsibilities; this is to forget that because of our faith we are all the more bound to fulfil these responsibilities according to each one's vocation. . . [Any] split between the faith which many profess and their daily lives deserves to be counted among the more serious errors of our age. Long since, the Prophets of the Old Testament fought vehemently against this scandal (Cf. Is. 58: 1-12) and even more so did Jesus Christ Himself in the New Testament threaten it with grave punishments (Cf. Matt. 23:3-23; Mark 7: 10-13.). (GS 43)

Many Popes, before and after the Council, have taught in light of this recommendation. Notable among them is Pope Leo XIII. with his social encyclical *Rerum novarum* on the 'Condition of the Workers'. This encyclical has been considered by later popes to be the foundational social justice teaching document of the modern era. Issued in 1891, it was a response to the changed conditions brought on by the Industrial Revolution.

For our purpose, with respect to the situation of Northern Uganda, the encyclical of Pope John XXIII., *Pacem in Terris*, is perhaps the most apt. The encyclical reflects on the rights of individuals and draws together two major strands of human rights thought, the Enlightenment ideals (of which the U.S. Constitution and Bill of Rights are examples) and the older Catholic tradition of natural law rights. Below I skim through it to highlight those points that are of immediate importance to our reflection.

First of all, it is the first encyclical that is addressed not only to the Catholic faithful, but to all Christians and Men and Women of good will. It asks for co-operation with people of various world views (*Weltanschauungen*): 'In putting these principles [outlined in this document] into practice it frequently happens that Catholics in many ways cooperate either with Christians separated from this Apostolic See or with men of no Christian faith whatever, but who are endowed with reason and adorned with a natural uprightness of conduct.'²⁶⁷ Then it goes on first to expound the right order between individuals, between individual and state, between states and states, between individual state and human community and the pastoral role of the Church in all these complexities of relationships which should result in peace, freedom, democracy and good international co-operation among states.

On the human person the document stresses:

Beginning our discussion of the rights of man, we see that every person has the right to life, to bodily integrity, and to the means which are suitable for the proper development of life; these are primarily food, clothing, shelter, rest, medical care, and finally the necessary social services. Therefore a human being also has the right to security in cases of sickness, inability to work, widowhood, old age, unemployment, or in any other case in which one is deprived of the means of subsistence through no fault of one's own. (PT 11)

It then continues to explain how the issue of safeguarding human rights and dignity is incumbent on all as a paramount responsibility.

Any human society, if it is to be well-ordered and productive, must lay down as a foundation this principle, namely, that every human being is a person; that is, human nature is endowed with intelligence and free will. Indeed, precisely because one is a person one has rights and obligations flowing directly and simultaneously from one's very nature. And as these rights and obligations are universal and inviolable, so they cannot in any way be surrendered. (PT 8-10)

²⁶⁷ Pope John XXIII., encyclical letter *Pacem in Terris: On Establishing Universal Peace in Truth, Justice, Charity and Liberty*, promulgated on 11th April, 1963, no. 157. Hereafter abbreviated PT.

The state in particular must fulfil its role in ensuring this:

It is clearly laid down that the paramount task assigned to government officials is that of recognizing, respecting, reconciling, protecting and promoting the rights and duties of citizens. (PT 77) This means that, if any government does not acknowledge the rights of the human person or violates them, it not only fails in its duty, but its orders completely lack juridical force. (PT 61)

Where this is not realised or respected, be it intra or inter state, then it comes to the sorrowful state described aptly by St. Augustine: 'What are kingdoms without justice but large bands of robbers.' (PT 92) ²⁶⁸

We conclude the reflection on this important encyclical by citing its position on women, since we have seen that in the situation of Northern Uganda of today the first and most vulnerable besides children are the women. The pope, aware of the spirit of his time, wrote accordingly: 'Since women are becoming ever more conscious of their human dignity, they will not tolerate being treated as mere material instruments, but demand rights befitting a human person both in domestic and in public life.' (PT 41)

Pope Paul VI. with his many social encyclicals and institution of the World Day of Peace in 1968, to be celebrated each year on the New Year Day to underline the importance of peace in the understanding of the Church, is one of the great teachers for peace. 'The World Days of Peace are particularly intense moments of prayer for peace and for the commitment to build a world of peace. Pope Paul VI instituted these Days to dedicate to "thoughts and resolutions of Peace a special observance on the first day of the civil year."' ²⁶⁹

This Compendium is the most recent publication of the Church's social teaching and says among other things, that 'the Church's social doctrine is an integral part of her evangelising ministry.' ²⁷⁰

Nothing that concerns the community of men and women – situation and problems regarding justice, freedom, development, relations between people, peace – is foreign to evangelization, and evangelisation would be incomplete if it did not take into account the mutual demands made by the Gospel and by the concrete, personal and social life of man. Profound links exist

²⁶⁸ Quoting St. Augustine, *De civitate Dei*, Book IV, ch. 4.

²⁶⁹ Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, (Vatican: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2004), p. 292, no. 520, foot note 1103 quoting Paul VI, Message for the 1968 World Day of Peace: AAS 59 (1967), 1100. For specific teachings of the Church on every social issue it is recommended that one takes a look at this very important document

²⁷⁰ Ibid., p. 36, no. 66.

between evangelization and human promotion: 'These include links of an anthropological order, because the man who is to be evangelized is not an abstract being but is a subject to social and economic questions. They also include links in the theological order, since one cannot dissociate the plan of creation from the plan of Redemption. The latter plan touches the very concrete situation of injustice to be combated and of justice to be restored. They include links of the eminently evangelical order, which is that of charity: how in fact can one proclaim the new commandment without promoting in justice and peace the true, authentic advancement of man?'²⁷¹

This Compendium, from which most of the information for the latter part of this section is derived, is dedicated to Pope John Paul II whom the authors have called 'Master of Social Doctrines and Evangelical Witness to Justice and Peace'.²⁷² Fr. Vincent E. Okot Oburo had already done the same with his doctoral thesis of 1987 when he wrote in the dedication of his work 'to His Holiness John Paul II, Apostle of Peace who, by forgiving his attempted assassin Ali Agca, continues to teach our violence-threatened world the art and culture of reconciliation and peace in the Cross of Christ, Redeemer, Prince of peace and Reconciler of mankind to the Father'.²⁷³

It is not the intention of this thesis to even give a sketch of the social life, teaching and involvement of the late Pope John Paul II. His many writings, speeches and travels speak for themselves. Here, after sketching his so called 'social encyclicals', I would like to dwell only on one of his many writings, one that is specifically concerned with Africa as a way of concretising and Africanising his social teaching to the situation of Africa. It is to the apostolic post-synodal exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa: On the Church in Africa and its Evangelising Mission towards the Year 2000*, promulgated in 1995. But we now turn first to his social encyclicals.

Laborem Exercens (14th September, 1981):

This is the encyclical in which the Pope explains the dignity and role of human work in modern society. His ideas, when taken seriously, can enhance democracy, liberty and development in the society. He urges the Church to teach the importance of work ethics to people so that they can be dedicated to work:

²⁷¹ Ibid, pp. 36-37, quoting in this number foot note 85: Pope Paul, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 29; foot note 86: *ibid.*, 31

²⁷² See dedication of the Compendium.

²⁷³ V. E. Okot Oburo, *op. cit.*, v.

Through work a person must earn his bread and contribute to the continual advance of science and technology in the society. It is on the eve of new development in technological, economic and political conditions which will influence the world of work and production and bring true development to democratic governments. Every work should be done for the glorification of God and perfection of creation.²⁷⁴

In a situation like Northern Uganda where people are not only herded together in concentration camps, but also have no access to their land and therefore no access to work,²⁷⁵ there could be no better exhortation than this.

Sollicitudo Rei Socialis (30th December, 1987):

This ethical and theological encyclical analyses the economic, political, social and cultural dimensions of world development. The Church is hereby called upon to address itself seriously to lack of effective international solidarity, to political rivalry between East and West at the time and to uncontrolled production and sale of deadly arms. The encyclical also emphasises that genuine development in a democratic government must be integral (taking into account human beings in the totality of their bodily and spiritual existence). True liberty, justice and development need to be based on human dignity which stems from the fact that a human being is created in God's image and likeness (cf. Gen 1: 26f) and is to exercise dominion over creation (cf. Gen 1:28). This mandate to responsible stewardship and developing the earth is, therefore, everyone's response to Divine Vocation.²⁷⁶ Governments have a duty to realise democratic principles which will enable people to respond to their Divine Vocation. This means that each government must reform unjust structures in its political institutions and replace corrupt and dictatorial forms of government with democratic and participatory ones. (cf. SRS no. 30)

Centesimus Annus (1st May, 1991):

The encyclical looks into such issues as principles of genuine democracy, human work in politics, new capitalism and free market economy (*laissez-faire*). It reiterates the Church's traditional teaching on the natural right to private property. This is an extension of human freedom, necessary for the autonomy and development of the

²⁷⁴ Pope John Paul II, *Laborem Exercens*, (Rome: 14th September, 1981), no. 1.

²⁷⁵ Cf. ²⁷⁵ Dr. Jeff Dorsey and Mr. Steven Opeitum, op. cit., pp. 2-3.

²⁷⁶ Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, (Rome: 30th December, 1987), no. 30; hereafter SRS.

person²⁷⁷ in view of the following questions: With the failure of communism, should capitalism be regarded as the victorious social system? Should capitalism become the goal for developing countries which are making efforts to rebuild their economies and societies? (CA no. 42) Regarding the political system of new capitalism or the free market economy, the encyclical offers the following advice:

There is the risk of an idolatry of the market in the system of new capitalism. The idolatry of free market economy ignores the existence of good which by their nature are not and cannot be mere commodities. Many human needs are unable to be satisfied by recourse to market mechanisms. The government, therefore, must provide for the defence and preservation of common goods such as the natural and human environment. (CA no. 40)

The encyclical also highlights the Church's vision of the 'dignity of the person revealed in all its fullness in the mystery of the Incarnate Word.' (CA no. 7) The tone of the encyclical clearly favours authentic democracy as the political system suitable for fostering human dignity. This is an indication that the Church promotes the democratic system because the latter encourages subsidiarity and solidarity, which are basic principles of the Catholic Social Doctrine. It is in democracy that the structures of participation and shared responsibility, which are essential for subsidiarity, can be nurtured. True democracy will also foster solidarity within organisations, societies and between countries as well as international organisations. (cf. CA no. 46)

Since there are some socio-economic and political problems which need a faith approach that can only be provided by the Church, governments need to collaborate with the Church on some crucial national issues. The Church is the medium through which God's message of salvation to humanity is interpreted. It, therefore, contributes to the enrichment of human dignity, the anthropomorphic values of liberty, justice, peace and integral development. (CA no. 47) To achieve this, it needs the democratic system, since the latter ensures the participation of citizens in making political choices and guarantees that the people elected to public offices are accountable to the public and can be replaced through peaceful means when their terms expire. Authentic democracy has to be nurtured through the advancement of orthodox education and formation in true socio-economic, political and theological ideals. (cf. CA no. 47)

²⁷⁷ Cf. Pope John Paul II, *Centesimus Annus*, (Rome: 1st May, 1991), no. 30; hereafter CA.

The encyclical challenges the State to streamline all economic activities in line with democratic, institutional, juridical and political principles. It should guarantee and protect all forms of freedoms, human rights and individual and national property, stable currency and efficient public services. But, in case of tension, conflict, and misunderstanding in the government (between political parties or organisations), the Church has the responsibility to bring the conflicting parties together and act as a democratic intermediary. (cf. CA no. 48)²⁷⁸

Ecclesia in Africa (14th September, 1995):

This document, as it says at its beginning, was an event of grace for Africa. 'The Special Assembly for Africa of the Synod of Bishops was an historic moment of grace: the Lord visited his people in Africa.'²⁷⁹ After first giving an historical background to the evangelisation of Africa and the current situation of the Church and society in Africa, the document then goes on to mention and recommend the tasks of the Church in Africa vis-à-vis the aforementioned situations. From the understanding that the Church in Africa is the 'Family of God' (EA 63, etc), it is also expected that the people of Africa may maintain this characteristic of familiarity still particular to Africa in going about with her evangelizing mission. The Pope then goes further to elaborate on how this could be done. In view of the fact that the most serious problem of the Church in Africa is social and political, serious attention should be given in training the bearers of the evangelisation (bishops, priests, deacons, lay people – catechists, religious men and women) and giving special attention to the issue of peace and justice. The Church must then become the voice of the voiceless. 'The Church . . . must continue to exercise her prophetic role and be the voice of the voiceless so that everywhere the human dignity of every individual will be acknowledged, and that people will always be at the centre of all government programmes.' (EA 70) The Church must also inculturate the faith (EA 78) in order to be able to build a reconciled society.

²⁷⁸ These analyses are based on the summary provided by Clement Majawa, 'The Church's Role in Defining Genuine Democracy in Africa' in Emmanuel Katongole (ed.), *African Theology Today*, African Theology Today series, Vol. 1, (Scranton: The University of Scranton Press, 2002), pp. 110-113; for a further summary of the Church's social teaching see Tarcisio Agostoni, *Every Citizen's Handbook: Building a Peaceful Society*, Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa, 1997.

²⁷⁹ Pope John Paul II, Post-synodal Apostolic Exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa: On the Church in Africa and its Evangelising Mission towards the Year 2000*, given at Yaoundé in Cameroon, on 14 September, 1995, no. 6; hereafter EA.

'Despite the modern civilization of the 'global village', in Africa as elsewhere in the world the spirit of dialogue, peace and reconciliation is far from dwelling in the hearts of everyone. Wars, conflicts and racist and xenophobic attitudes still play too large a role in the world of human relations. The Church in Africa is aware that it has to become for all, through the witness borne by its own sons and daughters, a place of true reconciliation. Forgiven and mutually reconciled, these sons and daughters will thus be able to bring to the world the forgiveness and reconciliation which Christ our Peace (cf. Eph 2:14) offers to humanity through his Church. Otherwise the world will look more and more like a battlefield, where only selfish interests count and the law of force prevails, the law which fatally distances humanity from the hoped-for civilization of love.' (EA 79)

The document made a strong appeal to all not to let war take a central stage in Africa anymore. In the section entitled "'Beat your swords into ploughshares" (Is 2:4): no more wars!' the Christians are urgently called upon to continue the role of the church as a mediator of peace in situations of conflicts: 'The Church in Africa — especially through some of its leaders — has been in the front line of the search for negotiated solutions to the armed conflicts in many parts of the Continent. This mission of pacification must continue, encouraged by the Lord's promise in the Beatitudes: "Blessed are the peacemakers, they shall be called sons of God" (Mt 5:9).' (EA 118) All this is indispensable, if the Church is to fulfil her God-given mission of building the Kingdom on this planet.

In conclusion to the teaching of the universal Church, it is worth mentioning here the recommendation that all that Christians do for the good of the society and humanity has to be done in a spirit of ecumenical and interreligious cooperation:

In these days when cooperation in social matters is so widespread, all men without exception are called to work together, with much greater reason all those who believe in God, but most of all, all Christians in that they bear the name of Christ. Cooperation among Christians vividly expresses the relationship which in fact already unites them. . . This cooperation. . . should be developed more and more, particularly in regions where a social and technical evolution is taking place be it in a just evaluation of the dignity of the human person, the establishment of the blessings of peace, the application of Gospel principles to social life, the advancement of the arts and sciences in a truly Christian spirit, or also in the use of various remedies to relieve the afflictions of our times such as famine and natural disasters, illiteracy and poverty, housing shortage and the unequal distribution of wealth.²⁸⁰

²⁸⁰ Vatican II Council, *Decree on Ecumenism: Unitatis Redintegratio*, no. 12; cf. John Paul II, encyclical letter *Ut unum sint: On Commitment to Ecumenism*, Vatican, 25.05.1995, nos. 40, 43, 74-6; cf. *Ecclesia in Africa*, nos. 65-67.

3.2.2 The Church in Africa: SECAM and AMECEA

The Symposium of the Episcopal Conferences of Africa and Madagascar, SECAM, formed in 1969 in Kampala, Uganda,²⁸¹ came up with the same teaching on peace and justice in line with the post-synodal exhortation, *Ecclesia in Africa*. In their plenary session of 2000 the bishops issued a pastoral letter entitled, '*Christ Our Peace*' (Eph. 2: 14): *The Church-as-Family of God, Place and Sacrament of Pardon, Reconciliation and Peace in Africa*, where the concern was to confirm or contextualise the Synod of Bishops that took place six years before and which had described the Church in Africa as 'Family of God' just as we have seen in the foregoing section. This pastoral letter, which the SECAM members said should be 'seen as a discussion paper for an agreed pastoral strategy for every level of the Church in Africa,'²⁸² 'begins its reflection with an analysis of the conflictual state of the world and Africa in the 20th century, disclosing in particular the structural causes of conflicts and wars (ch. I). Then it discusses the efforts of humanity to find lasting peace in the world (ch. I, II). Then follows a theological discussion on the qualities of that peace that Christ alone offers mankind (ch. II). The Assembly then develops the demands of this peace, starting with the Church, community of the reconciled (ch. III). In conclusion, the Plenary Assembly outlines the ways and means through which the Church can become even more the place and sacrament of reconciliation, of peace and of forgiveness for Africa.' (SECAM 2000, 7) Without having to repeat what has already been mentioned by the other 'teachers' of the Church, we see here those issues peculiar to this SECAM session that are of paramount importance and urgency for Africa.

The first of these is what the plenary session considered as the real obstacle to peace. These are the poor quality of relation with God. 'The most serious obstacle to peace is the lack of the proper relationship between God and man. The quality of the relationships between ourselves is both a direct consequence and a sign of our relationship with God.' (SECAM 2000, 65) When this relationship is thwarted, we see the kind of situation as is in the Uganda of today. Another serious obstacle to peace is failure to recognise human dignity. 'In the world generally but in Africa particularly,

²⁸¹ See *Ecclesia in Africa*, no. 3.

²⁸² SECAM 12th Plenary Session, '*Christ Our Peace*' (Eph. 2: 14): *The Church-as-Family of God, Place and Sacrament of Pardon, Reconciliation and Peace in Africa*, Rome: October 1-8, 2000, no. 8; hereafter SECAM 2000.

the failure to recognise the equal dignity and rights of persons, groups and sexes gives rise to frustration, conflict and injustice which over time degenerate into bloody disruptions within families and groups.’ (no. 66) Belonging to a minority group, to the opposition party or to another ethnic group is always enough reason to be at a disadvantage in the African society of today.

Another obstacle mentioned is deception: ‘. . . A third obstacle to peace and reconciliation is hypocrisy or deception on the part of individuals or groups. Among some peoples, tribes and clans, social life and human relations are often marred by unspoken understandings or inferences. These can often give rise to misunderstandings leading to conflicts and rejections and tragic social breakdown.’ (no. 67) Added to that is what the session called ‘false *irenicism*’ i.e. the false thinking that by loving somebody one will also accept all the thinking and points of view of the other. No! Love does not mean that. It means accepting and respecting the other in spite of differences of opinions and positions. ‘We must accept that disagreement and opposition are sometimes an integrating part of a process of dialogue, discernment and reconciliation.’ (no. 69)

Another problem is the silence of complicity. Because of the false notion of group identity and false understanding of love and solidarity, people, even Christians and their leaders, have sometimes kept silent in the face of grave violation of human rights. They think by speaking they would be betraying their own group. For some others, better a criminal, a dictator from my own ethnic group than an honest or democratic politician from another group. ‘A silence of complicity which protects wrongdoers is undoubtedly another obstacle on the road to peace and reconciliation. Of course, we cannot inform on others but when men and women have committed crimes out of the ordinary, conscience demands as a duty of truth, courage and honour that we disavow and accuse them.’ (no. 71) ‘Everywhere there is a real danger of providing wrongful protection in evil. The human conscience must break this silence of complicity which protects evildoers and sacrifices the innocent. The strength and the greatness of a society lie in its capacity to defend the weakest, the most vulnerable, the marginalised, and to protect its minorities.’ (no. 72) Closely linked with this is the reality of false tolerance. (no. 73)

On another dimension, another obstacle to peace, reconciliation and peaceful co-existence in Africa and elsewhere today is the state’s failure to live up to its man-

date of providing conditions that are in line with the general wellbeing of its citizens. This comes about especially because of excessive state power, usually concentrated on one person or on a small group of people (no. 75) giving rise to selective attention to issues of development, infrastructures, education or even human rights respect. 'Some people are more equal than others', as George Orwell wrote sometime back in his satire, *Animal Farm*, simply because they happen to come from the side of those managing state power. (no. 76)

In view of this glaring state of affairs the Church in Africa and her Christians are urged to steadily work for peace, which is working for justice and reconciliation in love.

'The parable of the unforgiving debtor (Mt 18: 23-35) shows how Jesus condemned the inconsistency of one who begged for cancellation of a huge debt for himself, but refused to cancel a much smaller debt for a colleague. Jesus lets us understand how contradictory the hope of divine forgiveness is for one who won't forgive his brothers and sisters. The parable reveals how we must learn from God himself how to forgive and be reconciled with one another. In human relations, offences are frequent, friction never ending. It is hard to avoid being hurt and wounded. We must react with a basic attitude of forgiveness, like our merciful father who has forgiven us in Christ.' (no. 78)

The AMECEA (Association of Member of Episcopal Conferences of Eastern Africa) have not said anything less than or different from what their counterparts on the whole continent have said. In any case AMECEA is part and parcel of SECAM. In one of their plenary sessions they made some of these appeals.

'To you, our pastoral collaborators: We appeal to you to live in these times of distress in solidarity with our people. To be near them, ready to listen to their problems and give a word of encouragement and hope, is a challenge to us all. Especially, we must mobilize our Christian communities for development and lead them through the example of our own hard work and dedication. Let us avoid giving scandal to our people by an extravagant style of life. Let us be accountable and transparent to those we serve and those who support us.'²⁸³

In the same message they made this appeal to the governments in the AMECEA region, i.e. Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Malawi, Somalia, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, as follows:

'We appeal to all of you who are in positions of decision-making to be true leaders of your people. Whether you received your mandate through elections or otherwise, you carry that

²⁸³ Message of the AMECEA Bishops from the 12th Plenary Assembly in Mangochi, Malawi, 19th August, 1995, no. 15. Hereafter AMECEA 1995.

mandate in order to serve the community. This position and power is not your property. You must neither use it for your personal enrichment nor to favour your family or clan. A good leader works for the common good. A good leader looks upon economics as a tool to care for all the people. We make this special appeal to you: do not make money or power the aim of your leadership. Money must remain a tool to build up the common good. Some of the recent economic plans, like the Structural Adjustment Programme, were not people-centred programmes and therefore did not help the poor. (AMECEA 1995, no. 16)

In the message of their 14th Plenary session, held from the 14th to 28th July, 2002 they had this to say:

'We strongly assert that war is the greatest threat to the realisation of the Gospel values of justice and peace, respect for human dignity and human rights, and the integrity of creation (environment). It is because of wars that we have so many millions of Refugees and internally displaced persons in the African continent. In the same vein we condemn terrorism and fundamentalism, in all their forms, which disturb a peaceful social order and bring about social conflict. For this reason we urge all leaders in the Region to always resolve conflicts through peaceful means. We commit ourselves and the entire Catholic Church in the Region to be in the forefront in the peacemaking process.'²⁸⁴

The message continues with some promises of good intentions and self-commitment to work for peace on the side of the bishops:

'Inspired by our vision of being 'a Holy Spirit-filled family of God, committed to holistic Evangelisation and Integral Development', we pledge to continue speaking out against war and conflict and to do whatever is necessary to bring about lasting peace and harmony based on social justice. This is a necessary condition if we have to build the family of God in the AMECEA Region, where no child of God will continue to live under war and inhuman conditions. Each and every person is made in the image of God and is therefore sacred.' (cf. Genesis 1:26-27) (AMECEA 2002, no. 9)

Although not as the official voice of the AMECEA, the writers of *AFER* of December 2003 have focused on the conflict in Northern Uganda and made it a concern for the Church in AMECEA.²⁸⁵ In the concluding section of one of his contributions in this issue, Fr. Deusdedit R. K. Nkurunziza has this to say:

'... The Church in Uganda and in the AMECEA region in particular, has a key role to play in assuring the Acholi people that contrary to the belief of many, the international community is,

²⁸⁴ Message of the AMECEA Bishops from the 14th Plenary Assembly in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania: 'You Will Be My Witnesses' (Acts 1:8), 26th July 2002, no. 8. Hereafter AMECEA 2002

²⁸⁵ See the title of *African Ecclesial Review (AFER)*, Vol. 45 – No. 4, December 2003, 'War of Terror in Northern Uganda: Concern for the Church in AMECEA'.

indeed concerned with their problems and destiny. The Church in AMECEA region has to put pressure on parties involved not only to reduce the destructive potential of this war but also to reach a lasting and peaceful resolution of this War of Terror. . . . To this mission, the AMECEA countries cannot remain indifferent. They are challenged to be in solidarity with the Church and the people of Northern Uganda until a lasting solution is obtained for the good of the suffering lot due to the LRA's atrocities.²⁸⁶

We turn now to a brief overview of the teaching of the Ugandan Catholic Church.

3.2.3 The Uganda Catholic Bishops' Teachings on Peace

The first Catholic hierarchy was established in Uganda with the creation of the diocese of Masaka in 1953.²⁸⁷ Since then, Uganda has seen a steady growth in her Catholicism. Kampala became an archdiocese and its second Archbishop, Emmanuel Nsubuga, was made a cardinal as early as 1979. In 1999 three more ecclesiastical provinces of Gulu, Mbarara and Tororo were created. With the increase in the number of dioceses the Uganda Episcopal Conference was established. At the moment Uganda is blessed with 19 dioceses and 30 bishops. Three of these are expatriates. The rest are indigenous Ugandans. There is one co-adjutor bishop; there are three auxiliary bishops and seven bishops emeritus.

Since its creation, the Uganda Episcopal Conference has been dealing with the socio-political side and economy of the country. Their first letter on the eve of independence, *Shaping our National Destiny, 1962*, was a guide to the country before its political independence from the British colonisers on the path to be taken if Uganda was to become a nation state. The bishops sought therein to remind the politicians and citizens of what they considered God-given duties and responsibilities if Uganda should become the land of freedom and democracy politicians referred to prior to independence, lest those promises being made were only empty words. In the turn of events that followed, they were proved right, for the promised independence and its euphoria did not last long. The challenges of an independent country, so divergent in terms of its politics, became overwhelming for the new leaders. They

²⁸⁶ Deusdedit R. K. Nkurunziza, 'Insurgency in Northern Uganda: A Challenge to the Church in AMECEA', in: *African Ecclesial Review (AFER)*, Vol. 45 – No. 4, December 2003, p.327.

²⁸⁷ Cf. John Bauer, *2000 Years of Christianity in Africa: An African Church History*, (Nairobi: Pauline's Publications Africa, 2nd rev. edition, 1998), p.384; cf. John Baptist Odama, Frederick Drandua, Joseph Oyanga and Martin Luluga, *Peace and Love: Pastoral Letter of the Catholic Bishops of Gulu Archdiocese, Nebbi, Arua and Lira Dioceses (GANAL)*, Gulu: Easter Sunday, 23rd April 2000, pp. 7-8.

were faced with the challenge of living up to their promise of democracy and development which would not come true if the leaders ascended to power not because of the will to serve, but to fulfil personal ambitions.

It took a long time before another document would come from the bishops, especially because of the instability that followed the 1966 crisis and subsequent military coup of 1971.

Beginning again after the fall of Amin in 1979 with the letter, *Reshaping our Nation* through the difficult time of post-Amin with *I Have Heard the Cry of My People*, 1980; *Be Converted and Live*, 1981; *In God We Trust*, 1982; *Celebrating Our Ancestors*, 1984 and *With a New Heart and a New Spirit* in 1986, the message has always been the same.²⁸⁸

In all these pastoral letters, the teachings of the bishops could be summarised as Paolino M. Twesigye summarised them.²⁸⁹ They decried the collapse of moral standards, the lack of respect for human life as well as the thirst for power and the ignorance of the common good seen in the lives of Ugandans. Further more they lamented over detention without trial which took central political stage in the country. There were discrimination, tribalism, nepotism and division. Corruption has become a daily nuisance in all government offices. Violence by the armed forces, armed robbery and looting are the plagues afflicting Ugandans.

'We have to admit that since independence many of our dreams have not been fulfilled. Rather we have witnessed a growth of tribal strife, exploitation, corruption, robbery, violence and hatred which have led to the loss of moral conscience, a collapse of economy and a life of indescribable suffering for a large number of the population.'²⁹⁰

²⁸⁸ For an elaborate analysis of the teachings of the Ugandan Bishops in their pastoral letters listed above I recommend the three theses already mentioned here in this work: Fr. Vincent Emmanuel Okot Oburo (1987), Fr. Paulino Mondo Twesigye (1990) and (1991). For the masters' thesis and doctoral dissertation of Twesigye the letter, *Towards a New National Constitution*, 1989, is included to the list. For both authors the earlier letter of archbishop of Kampala Joseph Kiwanuka, *Church and State*, 1961, is of paramount importance. Another work which needs to be mentioned here is that from Fr. John Mary Waliggo, 'The Catholic Church & the Root-Cause of Political Instability in Uganda' in: Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael Twaddle (ed.), *Religion and Politics in East Africa: The Period since Independence*, (London: James Currey, Nairobi: E.A.E.P., Kampala: Fountain Publishers et al., 1995 etc), pp. 106-119.

²⁸⁹ Paolino Mondo Twesigye (1990), op. cit., pp. 53-68.

²⁹⁰ Uganda Catholic Bishops, *With a New Heart and a New Spirit*, (Kisubi: Marimum Press, 1986), p.12.

In another of their writing the bishops sharply decried again the situation at the time:

'Corruption and graft are practised at all levels. The Court of Laws may be functioning somehow, but their verdicts are held in contempt and are over-ruled arbitrarily by members of Government. Magistrates are being threatened and attacked. Detention without trial has been practised for so long in Uganda that to many it must now look like the normal thing. All the more reason for us to raise our voices and proclaim that it is and remains an evil. . . There are fears abroad of mysterious bands of armed individuals who are free to commit any act of cruelty they like. The prevalent lack of enforcement of the law has turned not a few citizens into lawless people who murder and maim out of greed and envy for revenge. The evils besetting us are so grave and so numerous that one might be tempted to despair of ever overcoming them. However we must not give into despair and we must go on trying to discuss with each other and together seek for solutions.'²⁹¹

In their second last pastoral letter published in 2004 entitled *A Concern for Peace, Unity and Harmony in Uganda*, the bishops continued to voice their concern. Quoting from the Pope's address to them during their 2003 *ad limina* visit, they said:

'Only last year, His Holiness Pope John Paul II counselled us when he said: "As Bishops you have a serious duty to address the issues of particular importance for the social, economic, political and cultural life of the country to make the Church even more effectively present in those areas. Working out the implications of the Gospel for Christian life in the world and applying it to new situations is crucial to your ecclesial leadership: this is the time for the Catholics – together with other Christians – to bring the freshness of the Gospel to the struggle of defending and promoting the fundamental values upon which a society truly worthy of humankind is built."²⁹²

As a response to this counsel, the bishops promised to take upon themselves the task and commitment to work for peace in their own dioceses and also at a national level. 'We need to build strong institutions for peace in the country and in every community, using fully both the good traditional means and the modern ones and particularly the Christian means of peace-making, forgiveness and reconciliation'.²⁹³

In the end, we could say that all the teaching of the Church, be it that of the universal or of the local Church, focuses on the same issue: for a good and peaceful

²⁹¹ *Message of the Catholic Bishops of Uganda to the Government and the People of Uganda*, (Kisubi: Marianum Press, 8th June, 1985), p. 2

²⁹² Uganda Catholic Bishops, *A Concern for Peace, Unity and Harmony in Uganda: Easter Message of the Catholic Bishops of Uganda*, (Kisubi: Marianum Press, 2004), p. 7 quoting the Pope's address of 27th September, 2003.

²⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.15.

social life, the state must fulfil her role of safeguarding the life and property of her citizens. When this is not the case, the Church, from her mission of teaching the will of God for the salvation of mankind, is bound to carry out her prophetic role of giving directives. She has to teach, but above all, lead by her examples. We can conclude this sketchy search for the Universal Church's teaching on peace, justice and social order in the words of the renowned Moral Theologian Bernhard Häring where he remarked:

Today it becomes clearer and clearer that the future of Christianity and its credibility will be decided from the fact whether or not the followers of Christ *live* and *proclaim* to the world the *gospel of peace*.²⁹⁴

3.3 The missing link – discrepancy between words and deeds

The Ugandan Catholics (bishops, priests and the laity) have taught and said a lot about peace, justice and reconciliation and the cessation of violence as we have seen above, or as Fr. Okot Oburu and Fr. Twesigye Mondo have eloquently shown in their doctoral theses quoted in this work. This spirit of good teaching has to be admired and encouraged. But experiences and even the scripture tell us that words when not translated into actions are mere hollow sound; . . . *faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.* (New International Version, NIV Jam 2:17) The history of Uganda as seen above teaches us, unfortunately, that Ugandans have not done what they say and teach, as far as violence is concerned. For example, back at the beginning of January 2000, when the Catholic charismatic members from all over the country gathered to 'celebrate the new millennium & century with Jesus' at the Martyrs' Shrine, Namugongo, Kampala, Uganda, the archbishop of Accra, Ghana, who was presiding over the concluding mass posed a serious question. After first posing positive questions whose answers were to show how much Catholicism and/or Christianity is present in Uganda, he then hit the nail on the head: 'But why then do you butcher one another so brutally?' Everybody was quiet and ashamed and felt so uneasy! It was such an uncomfortable question that nobody knew, or wanted to know the answer.²⁹⁵ Thus the magnitude of violence experienced and continued to be experienced in the country shows clearly the discrepancy between words and deeds.

²⁹⁴ Bernhard Häring, op. cit., p. 23.

²⁹⁵ The author, as a novice of the Comboni Missionaries, was personally present at this mass.

On the sides of the clergy who are ipso facto moral teachers and conscience guides of the faithful entrusted to their pastoral care, we find the same pattern, especially during the NRA bush war of 1980s. One account tells us of such a happening in Toro area:

'Several Toro priests performed extensive intelligence work for NRA when they began operations to liberate Toro, as well as recruiting fighters, collecting supplies and arranging for the repair of vehicles and weapons. . . . Since the NRM victory in January 1986, two priests have thrown themselves directly into politics by standing for the parliamentary seats in the 1989 parliamentary elections. . . .'²⁹⁶

There are a number of priests and religious men and women who hold very important positions in the present regime. Kassimir tells us further that of the two priests who directly contested for parliamentary seats, after winning, but being barred by the late Cardinal Nsubuga from taking their seats, one of them ' . . . complied and since then has been appointed vice-chairman of the important Non-Governmental Organizations Committee.'²⁹⁷

On the side of the bishops, elders of the nation and the moral therapists, like the prophets of the Old Testament – as Fr. Vincent Emmanuel Okot Oburu rightly called them²⁹⁸ -, we have discrepancies as well. One source, talking about the military *coup d'état* of 1985 that removed Obote from, and brought Okellos to power, brings to the light what many Ugandans hold as a known secret that it was through the intervention and planning of the Catholic Church of Gulu, through the intervention and advice of Cardinal Nsubuga of Kampala that Obote was removed from power by the two majors, Tito Lutwa Okello and Bazilio Olara Okello.²⁹⁹

²⁹⁶ Ronald Kassimir, 'Catholics and Political Identity in Toro' in: Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael Twaddle (ed.), *Religion and Politics in East Africa: The Period Since Independence*, (London: James Currey, Nairobi: E.A.E.P., Kampala: Fountain Publishers et al., 1995 etc), p.135.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Cf. Vincent Emmanuel Okot Oburu, op. cit., pp. xix, 21 etc.

²⁹⁹ Cf. Joseph Pinytek Ochieno, op. cit.; Cf. Charles Onyango-Obbo, 'Museveni's "Saleh Crutch" And "Ankole Standard"', in: *The Monitor*, March 01, 2000, retrieved from the internet site: <http://www.africanews.com/article371.html> , (04.11.2004); cf. Kelvin Nsangi, 'Church praised over Gay Fight', in: *The Monitor*, January 4, 2005, here from the internet site: http://www.mask.org.za/SECTIONS/AfricaPerCountry/ABC/uganda/uganda_76.htm, (04.04.2004 at 19:08 hrs); cf. Charles Onyango-Obbo, 'Praise the Movement and Pass the Spoons' in: *The East African*, February 08, 1999; <http://www.nationaudio.com/News/EastAfrican/020899/Opinion/Opinion5.html> (14.04.2004); cf. Edward Mulindwa, 'Kazibwe Quitting Was 'Arranged With Museveni'', in: *The East African*, Wed, 04 Jun 2003 09 here from the internet archive website: <http://www.mailarchive.com/uganda-net@kym.net/msg03977.html> (14.04. 2004 at 29:33 hrs).

This is not the only accusation against the Catholic establishment in Uganda in terms of violence in Uganda. We have already mentioned the generally held belief in Uganda that the late Cardinal Emmanuel Nsubuga, the then Archbishop of Kampala, was either indirectly or directly involved in supporting the NRA rebels of Museveni. In doing that he has not only betrayed himself as cardinal and bishop who should be a mediator between any warring parties, but also eroded the credibility of the whole of the Church. Could it be because of such incidences that the present government of Uganda holds the Catholic Church with suspicion, as we shall see when it comes to the issues of negotiating or mediating peace? Or was it the mistake of trusting in an individual as the liberator of the nation? The Evangelical Bishop Zephania Kameeta of Namibia, a renowned African liberation theologian and statesman, once warned of trusting in individuals or organisations as the basis of Christian witness.³⁰⁰ He emphasises that

‘the vertical and horizontal dimensions of liberation can and should never be separated from one another. The main danger which manifests itself in the ‘Theology of the Status quo’ lies in the eradication of the vertical dimension of the Gospels from the vertical dimension and in over emphasizing the former.’³⁰¹

Coming back to the discrepancy in the teaching and deeds of the Catholic establishment in Uganda we observe the long silence before the Uganda Episcopal Conference, for example, would come out with one voice to speak against the suffering of Northern Uganda and other parts of the country. The long silence, which some people have called the conspiracy of silence,³⁰² has been felt by many. Like Bishop Ochola from the Anglican Church, who feels betrayed and left alone by his brother

³⁰⁰ Cf. Jörg Baumgartner (Hg.), *Zephania Kameeta – Im Wind der Befreiung. Grenzgänger zwischen Kirche und Politik. Reden-Meditationen-Texte*, (Wuppertal, Peter Hammer Verlag, 2004), 37: „... es ist Verrat am Evangelium und Leugnung der Universalität, wenn die Kirche gewisse Personen und Organisationen auswählt und sie zur Grundlage und zum Ausgangspunkt ihres Zeugnisses macht.“

³⁰¹ Ibid., p. 36: „Die vertikale und die horizontale Dimension der Befreiung darf und kann nicht voneinander getrennt werden. Die Hauptgefahr, die sich vor allem in einer Theologie des Status quo zeigt, besteht in der Lösung der vertikalen Dimension des Evangeliums von der horizontalen und in einer Überbetonung der ersteren.“

³⁰² Cf. Anglican Bishop-emeritus Macleord Baker Ochola II. in many of his speeches and writings concerning the conflict in Northern Uganda. The latest example known to me at the time of writing this page is in his address on 3rd December, 2005 to the Diocesan Convention of the Diocese of South-west Florida, USA, entitled ‘Human Catastrophe and Emergency in Northern Uganda’ where he reiterated his call to break the conspiracy of silence about the conflict/genocide in Northern Uganda.

bishops of the Anglican Church of Uganda,³⁰³ the Archbishop of Gulu, John Baptist Odama, has in his homily on the Feast day of the Ugandan Martyrs on 3rd June, 2003 made the same remark to his Catholic brother bishops:

'In the North of Uganda, many believe that the Uganda Episcopal Conference must do more and initiate appropriate action in order to bring pressure to bear on government authorities to resolve the situation. Archbishop Odama requested the interest of the Episcopal conference in his homily, wrote Father Antonini.'³⁰⁴

Looking at the list of the bishops' letters and/or messages³⁰⁵, especially those after the year 1986, one might strongly suspect that a certain 'conspiracy of silence' has taken place, for even if the list is long, it does not mean that a very constructive message and deeds have always been delivered. One staunch lay Catholic remarked on one of the peace messages of Ugandan Bishops as follows:

The Catholic bishops' letter entitled 'As you celebrate the joy of Christmas and the New Year' . . . begins well . . . but leaves many problems unanswered. . . . [I]nstead the writer hurries to point out and explain the little signs of hope put in place by the government. This gives the impression that the writer was interested more in appeasing the government, in speaking the words it wanted to hear, while by-passing the pain of the people [in the IDP camps] they visited. . . . [I]t jumps soon to a number of issues and clamps them together in a few lines. . . . My suggestions: The bishops should propose the concrete ways of fostering peace in our country. Simply mentioning 'peace' is not enough. . . .³⁰⁶

This assertion of Okello is no far-fetched criticism of the Bishops. In fact if one would begin to suspect that he might be prone to attacking the Bishops because he is a layman or an Acholi from the war-ravaged Northern Uganda, then the writing of

³⁰³ Ibid: 'Let down by our own Church, the Anglican Church of Uganda' where he goes on to say, 'I speak with a heavy heart because I look back and see our consistent failure in prophetic witness as a church community and national Anglican Church of Uganda, . . . mostly . . . among us the leaders, the shepherds, that is, the House of Bishops. . . . If that is how, we, the shepherds relate: how about the flock?'

³⁰⁴ Comboni Press, 'From the Missions: Acholi Slavery and Hopelessness' in: *Comboni Mission Newsletter*, Vol.4, No.2, 2003, p.10.

³⁰⁵ The list shows these: Towards a New National Constitution, 26th March, 1989; The AIDS Epidemic, 8th September, 1989; Let your Light Shine, 18th October, 1992; Political Maturity: Constitution, Peace and National Unity in Uganda, 13th April, 1995; Be My Witnesses, August 1996; The Evil of Abortion, April 1998; True Peace Comes from Respect for Human Rights, January 1999; Test the Spirits, June 2000; A Concern for Peace, Unity and Harmony in Uganda, April 2004 and lastly: Towards a Democratic and Peaceful Uganda based on the Common Good: The Catholic Bishops' Pastoral Letter on the Transition from the Movement System of Governance to Multiparty Politics, 11th November, 2005.

³⁰⁶ Joseph B. Okello, 'The Bishops' Letter' – Prize Letter of the *Leadership* magazine No. 435, February 2005, p.3. The editor's comment on the letter reads: 'The writer of this appraisal is critical, but loyal. He welcomes serious criticism and rational correction. He loves the Church.'

Fr. John Mary Waliggo, a priest from Buganda where most of the Ugandan Catholic Bishops come from and a staunch supporter of the NRA/M, should leave us with no doubt: 'The Catholic bishops hailed the successful revolution of the NRM, which they described as "a most welcome breath of fresh air for us in Uganda and an example to the rest of the world"'.³⁰⁷ And quoting from the Bishop's Pastoral Letter of 29th June, 1986, *With a New Heart and a New Spirit*, he continues:

'In the NRM, the bishops had hopes that the root-cause of Uganda's instability could be effectively redressed: "We have also been favourably impressed by the attempt on the part of the Government to overcome tribal divisions and prejudices." They endorsed the swearing-in pledge of Museveni for fundamental change in Uganda: "A fundamental change is urgent and necessary in our country. Indeed, we have been calling for such a change for many years especially through our various Pastoral Letters. Indeed it is an essential part of the Church's mission to promote such a change for the good of our country."'³⁰⁸

It must be added that even the writings that we have looked at above have been very mild in their tone in comparison to those of the early 1980s. Moreover, beginning to write about the situation in Northern Uganda was no initiative from the side of the bishops, but a response to the invitation of the priests of the then diocese of Gulu to the Uganda Episcopal Conference as early as 1996. After thanking the bishop who was the chairman of the UEC at the time for his visit and giving a chronology of recent happenings which point to the fact that a genocide is unfolding in Acholiland, the priests went further to implore the Chairman 'to ask the Bishops' Conference from Uganda to do more about the conflict in Northern Uganda. We request the Bishops' Conference writes a pastoral letter about the dramatic situation of Northern Uganda before we are totally annihilated. We are also ready to provide the necessary material and information that might be needed for such a letter,' they

³⁰⁷ John Mary Waliggo, 'The Catholic Church & the Root-Cause of Political Instability in Uganda' in: Holger Bernt Hansen and Michael Twaddle (ed.), op. cit., p. 116. In the notes on the contributors of the book this is what is written about him: [Fr.] John Mary Waliggo wrote *A History of African Priests* (Nairobi: Mariatum Press, 1988), after which he became Secretary to the Uganda Constitutional Commission. [Now he is a Commissioner with the Ugandan Human Rights' Commission (UHRC)].

³⁰⁸ Ibid. pp. 116-117 foot note 33&34 quoting *With a New Heart and a New Spirit*, op. cit., pp. 9-10. This pastoral letter could be considered with no doubt the *carte blanche* of the Catholic bishops to Museveni and his NRA/M Government. Paolino Mondo Twesigye (1991) calls it the *Magna Charta*, p.282. It is not only the longest in size, but also in its contents where the Bishops seem to contend themselves that God had at last heard their prayers and provided the nation with a 'redeemer' making Uganda a quasi 'piece of heaven on earth'. It is unfortunate, however, that as this pastoral letter was being debated and drafted in praise of the allegedly achieved 'fundamental changes' some Ugandans had been dubbed *Anyanya* and lynched on the streets of Kampala, in full view of everybody, including the bishops; Cf. 'Chronology' in: Okello Lucima (ed.), op. cit.

wrote.³⁰⁹ In response, the bishops issued a *two-page* letter entitled 'The War in the Northern part of Uganda and the Search for Peace: Letter of the Catholic Bishops of Uganda to the President and the Government of Uganda, the Members of Parliament and Local Councils, the People in the war torn areas, all Ugandans of goodwill' dated 28th August, 1996.³¹⁰ This was the first official statement, exactly ten years after commencement of the conflicts in Northern Uganda.

The author recalls the rage of one of the Comboni Missionaries working in Uganda who was invited to the German Speaking Province (DSP) on the occasion of the canonisation of Bishop Daniel Comboni, founder of the Comboni Missionaries, in October 2003, to come and talk about the situation in Northern Uganda. This missionary narrated to the group of students at the scholasticate of Innsbruck how he was so disappointed and enraged by what he had been told by a Parish Priest in Germany about how a Ugandan bishop had recently described the situation of Uganda to a Parish community: peaceful, very progressive, all at ease and not mentioning even a word about Northern Uganda.

At the end of his dissertation Fr. Okot gives a number of proposals that should be embarked on to live a culture of peace and reconciliation in Uganda. On the recommendation to the priests whom he calls ministers and educators of peace he says 'priests must in the first place be at peace and united in order to be effective.'³¹¹ Or in the words of the Kairos Document of the Institute of Contextual Theology of South Africa, we could demand of our Church in Uganda and their leaders that:

And finally a prophetic word from the Church at this time must be above all a word of hope. Nothing could be more hopeless than the realisation that you are unable to defend yourself and your family, that there is no one else to defend you, that your attackers will never be apprehended and that justice will not be done. Some measure of hope could be restored if there were a prophetic church leadership that would risk everything to search for the truth, to publish the truth and to take every action possible to ensure that justice is done. . . The primary task of

³⁰⁹ Letter of the Priests of Gulu Diocese, Gulu Deanary, to the Chairman of the UEC, Bishop Paul Kalanda, dated 02.08.1996 as thanks for his visit to Northern Uganda, available also as „Brief der Priester der Diözese“ Gulu in: *Weltkirche*, München, Nr. 9/1996, 265-266.

³¹⁰ Available also as „Der Krieg im Norden Ugandas und die Suche nach Frieden. Brief der Bischofskonferenz“ in: *Weltkirche*, München, 9/1996, 263-265. See also the comments therein!

³¹¹ V. E. Okot Oburo, op. cit., p. 150.

the Church at this moment, then, is not [only] to call for peace but to call for justice [as well]. The culprit must be found and brought to justice.³¹²

The lack of this peaceful unity at the national level is what we shall now turn to in the form of another modest unity: The Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative, ARLPI, as a fulfilment of the call of/on the church to *teach* and *work* for peace, justice and reconciliation.

³¹² 'Violence, The New Kairos: Challenge to the Churches' a publication of Institute for Contextual Theology, September 1990, available on line as: <http://www.anc.org.za/ancdocs/history/transition/-kairos.html> (25.11.2005), op. cit.

4 Acting in Fulfilling the Mission of Peace – the example of the Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (ARLPI)

At this stage the picture before us is as follows: We are in a situation of a civil war or insurgency where more than a million people are displaced from their homesteads and are living in squalid condition in concentration camps. This situation in turn has led to a gross violation of human rights by the warring parties, the LRA and/or the UPDF (formerly the NRA). The situation is further that of massive displacement, of insecurity, fear and uncertainties. The people of Northern Uganda have fears that they will be annihilated, that their land will be taken from them, that their President and the government have a hidden agenda against them. The government of Uganda is seen as corrupt, violent, and dictatorial and is suspected of genocide and is employed in robbing its own people of their land. It is a government that has fought war with almost all its neighbours, plundering the natural resources of some of the neighbours, but not willing or able to protect its own citizens from violent attacks. The desperate people feel neglected by the whole international community, the UNO, EU, AU or USA. The situation is that of desperation marked by severe suffering and dire poverty; where children grow up without any hope for the future; where parents cannot provide food, shelter, education or security for their children. The situation is that of a slow, but painful genocide.

It is in that situation that we would like to look at the formation, composition, history, activities, difficulties, successes and prospects of the ARLPI as an example of acting in fulfilling the Church's mandate and mission for peace, justice and non-violence as a response to a situation of war, injustice and violence.

4.1 *The name ARLPI and its history*

Picture 2: Logo of the ARLPI



As the name reveals, the Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative is an inter-faith organisation of religious leaders of the Catholic Church, the Anglican Church of Uganda, the Catholic-Orthodox Church and the Muslims together with the traditional leaders of the Acholi ethnic group that was officially established in 1998. Their position is the peaceful ending of the war in Northern Uganda,

especially in Acholiland, through peaceful means, meaning through dialogues, negotiations and agreements as opposed to the government's hard-line position of military means: 'The ARLPI's intervention sought to break the institutional and leadership impasse over the conflict. Except for the abortive peace talks conducted by Betty Bigombe, the Museveni government had been committed to use force to end the rebellion.'³¹³ This was as a response to:

'the leadership vacuum . . . within the Acholi community that prevented a consistent voice that would articulate and aggregate the collective demands [of ending the war]. Although the government had made efforts to incorporate segments of the Acholi in the NRM structures, in light of the history of north-south mistrust, there was a perception that these leaders were compromised. Moreover, as the NRM gradually allowed the resumption of political activities, a deep gulf emerged between Acholi elected members of parliament (MPs) and government ministers and local state agencies. In the absence of clear leadership, the ARLPI seemed ready to fill the vacuum as a locus of community leadership and a bridge-builder between the Acholi and central government.'³¹⁴

The ARLPI emerged then as a neutral force, not interested in any political gains but in ending the dire suffering of the population.

Their activity began in 1997 with a prayer meeting that was organised by the Catholic and Anglican Church communities and the Muslims in Kitgum on the 15th August, 1997. 'Preliminary discussions to foster common approaches to peace began in Kitgum between June and August 1997 organised by Anglican and Catholic leaders. These efforts culminated in joint prayer for peace by Christians and Muslims on August 15 under a new organisation, the Joint Justice and Peace.'³¹⁵

The Joint Justice and Peace is an extension of the Peace and Justice-Committee Kitgum, started by the Comboni Missionary Fr. Carlos Rodriguez Soto, which began originally to collect information of human rights' abuses, murder, abductions and destruction of property. The Committee also gave a monthly chronology of

³¹³ Gilbert M. Khadiagala, 'The Role of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) in Peace Building in Northern Uganda', in: *Greater Horn of Africa Peace Building Project - Appendix from the Report: The Effectiveness of Civil Society Initiatives in Controlling Violent Conflicts and Building Peace A Study of Three Approaches in the Greater Horn of Africa*, USAID and Management Systems International MSI), Washington, DC, March 2001, p. 3 (PDF-file available under the address: http://pdf.dec.org/pdf_docs/Pnacy566.pdf [24.11.2005]). Since there is still no book written about the organisation, ARLPI, the author relies in the following pages heavily on this report, personal experiences and interviews with the members of the ARLPI.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ Ibid.; cf. ARLPI (2001), op. cit., p. 35.

events in Kitgum. It had sought the recognition of the institutional Church in Gulu, but had no response. Instead the members of the Kitgum Peace and Justice Committee had a very good working relationship with the then Anglican Bishop of Kitgum, Macleord Baker Ochola Amida II. It was thanks to their efforts that the Joint Justice and Peace prayer of the 15th August 1997 could be organised.

After this successful prayer meeting in which the organisation issued a message that proposed peaceful approaches to the war and condemned the government's policy of establishing protected camps, there arose a common need that that meeting should be extended and prayer meetings held more frequently. By January 1998, these initiatives spread to Gulu, resulting in a joint meeting of religious leaders from both districts. To provide organisational framework to the initiative, the religious leaders appointed Bishop Nelson Onono-Onweng of the Northern Diocese of the Anglican Church of Uganda as the coordinator who would liaise with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and other donors for funding of peace initiatives. 'The ARLPI formally constituted itself in February 1998 by appointing a five-member task force to oversee its functions.'³¹⁶ This included the above named Bishop Nelson Onono-Onweng as overall co-ordinator or Chairman. He was deputised by Shiek Musa Khalil. Others were the then Anglican Bishop of Kitgum Diocese, Macleord Baker Ochola II as Treasurer Monsignor Mathew Odong as Secretary and Fr. Carlos Rodríguez, the founder of the Kitgum Peace and Justice Committee. Conspicuous at this early stage of the ARLPI is the absence of the then Catholic Bishop of Gulu, Bishop Martin Luluga.

In their inaugural meeting the ARLPI gave these as their goal and objectives:

Goal/Mission: To actively engage the entire Acholi community to effectively participate in the process of healing, restoration, reconciliation, peace and development in Acholiland. ARLPI is committed to contribute to bring about a transformation of the current violent armed Conflict by promoting sustainable reconciliation and peace building activities.

Objectives:

- (a) To unite as believers in God Almighty in order to mobilise the people of Acholi for peace and development
- (b) To advocate for social justice and human rights

³¹⁶ Ibid., p. 4; cf. ARLPI (2001), op. cit., p. 35.

- (c) To train in conflict analysis, conflict transformation and undertake community peace-building
- (d) To foster the spirit of peaceful co-existence among different communities in Acholiland and with the neighbours
- (e) To work collaboratively with the local leaders, members of parliament, local and international NGOs and all community base stakeholders to promote the culture of dialogue as a basis for resolving and transforming conflicts within communities.
- (f) To undertake any other activities which may contribute to the creation and promotion of love, harmony, forgiveness, reconciliation, healing and peace.³¹⁷

This coming together, in order to begin looking for ways of ending the common problem that was and is still facing the whole population in this region, is consistent with the recommendation of Donal Dorr in his book, *Mission in today's world*, where he recommends: 'Where people of different religious faiths live in the same area, it should be normal to have a "dialogue of life" and a "dialogue of joint action".'³¹⁸ This 'dialogue of life' and 'dialogue of joint action' were defined by the Vatican in 1991 as follows: 'Dialogue of life, i.e. sharing of joys, sorrows and concerns; dialogue of joint action, i.e. collaboration in furthering human development and liberation.'³¹⁹ 'A decisive breakthrough for the ARLPI was a meeting with President Museveni on March 8, 1998, in which the leaders presented a memorandum, "A Call for Peace and an End to Bloodshed in Acholiland" that marked the formal inauguration of the intervention.'³²⁰

The ARLPI continued and continues adapting itself to the situation and learning from past experiences, modifying itself in various aspects to respond better to the tangible situation on the ground. Before the formal inauguration, members of the group were able to attend in 1997 the Kacoke Madit, KM, organised by the Acholi at home and in the Diaspora in London. They were able to attend the second Kacoke

³¹⁷ From their website: www.acholipeace.org (19.12.2005). This information is also available on the website of the Kacoke Madit, KM, www.km-net.org (20.01.2006); cf. Rt. Rev. Macleord Baker Ochola II, *Hope in the Storm: Experience of ARLPI in Conflict Resolution of the Northern Uganda armed Conflict*. A Paper presented at the Swedish Seminar on Northern Uganda, organised by the Mission Church of Uppsala, Uppsala, April 15, 2004 (present on the net as a PDF-file: <http://www.pacedifesa.org/documenti/paper.pdf> [02.03.2006]), p. 4.

³¹⁸ Donal Dorr, *Mission in today's world*, (Dublin: The Columbia Press, 2000), p. 20.

³¹⁹ Ibid.; quoting International Theological Commission, *Dialogue and Proclamation*, Vatican City, 1991, §42.

³²⁰ Gilbert M. Khadiagala, op. cit., p. 4.

Madit as an organised body in which they presented the outcome of their three-day consultative meeting, *Bedo Piny* organized in June 1998, in Gulu under the theme of 'Active Community Participation in Healing, Restoration, and Development.'³²¹ This document made a number of observations and recommendations: there was no military solution to the insurgency; efforts should be made to bring the LRA and the government to the negotiating table; an olive branch should be extended to Joseph Kony and his combatants; parliament should enact an Amnesty Law to pave the way for dialogue and reconciliation; efforts should be made to win the hearts and minds of people in the areas of insurgency; Uganda and Sudan should begin negotiations to resume diplomatic relations; religious leaders, Acholi MPs, NGOs and all other social forces should continue to exert pressure on the government and rebels to listen to the concerns of the people; and religious leaders should begin a massive programme of sensitisation to promote awareness of the benefits of peace. The consultative meeting also gave a mandate to the ARLPI to engage the United Nations system and other foreign donors in the quest for a comprehensive and lasting solution to the northern insurgency. This made the ARLPI become a formal and a recognised partner and collaborator with the KM which officially requested the ARLPI, as an impartial body, to spearhead the broad-based campaign of peace education and sensitisation under the framework of Community Peace-Building Programme.

It must be noted here that attempts to bring together the three major religions under the umbrella of the ARLPI are a departure from the legacy of religious polarisation and partisanship which had marked and still marks the religious and social life of Uganda and many African countries. Like the rest of the country, the north inherited a pattern of close institutional affiliation between religious groups and political parties, notably the association of the Catholics with the Democratic Party DP and the Anglicans with the Uganda People's Congress, UPC. Mamdani tells us that 'popular language of the 60s used to refer to the DP as *Dini ya Papa* (religion of the Pope) and to the UPC as "United Protestants of Canterbury"'.³²² This sectarianism was exacerbated by Idi Amin's efforts to promote Islam as the dominant religion throughout the 1970s, thereby causing Islam to be almost exclusively associated with Amin's tribe's supporters, the Nubians or people who in one way or another might have worked with

³²¹ For the content of this document see Okello Lucima (ed.), op. cit.

³²² Mahmood Mamdani (1994), op. cit., p. 14.

or benefited from his reign. By transcending the inherited institutional divisions, the ARLPI views its organisational framework as a major phase in anti-sectarianism, not just in the north, but the rest of country too. 'For the record, ARLPI is the first of its kind for the whole of Uganda, and if I am not mistaken, for the whole of Africa.'³²³

In the absence of clear leadership, the ARLPI seemed ready to fill the vacuum as a locus of community leadership and a bridge-builder between the Acholi and central government. In engaging the Museveni government, the ARLPI's point of departure was forgiveness and reconciliation, the centrepiece of the campaign for a peaceful approach to the conflict. 'Key actors in the ARLPI claim that a reluctant Museveni was forced to concede the message of reconciliation when they reminded him that even God forgives sinners.'³²⁴ They also credit Museveni for acknowledging the concerns of the ARLPI, marking a significant departure from the past practice of militarism. Presidential permission for the intervention was a critical first step in building confidence and acknowledgement of the centrality of alternative institutional avenues for engagement. More important, national recognition strengthened the ARLPI's position in the eyes of local government actors, in particular the Local Councils and military authorities, which were to become partners in the peace initiatives. Legitimised at both the national and local levels, the ARLPI through funding from the UNDP embarked on a series of activities to promote peace. 'The UNDP's Director in Uganda, Babatunde Thomas, was a major player in the formative stages of coordination of funding for the ARLPI. As part of the agreement with the UNDP, the ARLPI obtained annual funds for its activities disbursed over three-month periods.'³²⁵ These funds were targeted specifically for holding workshops, meetings and travel to establish contacts with the LRA and its allies. In June 1998, as already mentioned, the ARLPI organised a three-day consultative meeting, *Bedo Piny pi Kuc*, in Gulu under the theme of Active Community Participation in Healing, Restoration, and Development. This meeting brought together a broad-based spectrum of leaders from government, parliamentarians, military, and NGOs to focus on practical approaches to ending the war and reflect on future strategies to meet the challenges of poverty and under-

³²³ Bishop Nelson Onono-Onweng now Chairman of Finance and Administration of the ARLPI in a telephone interview with the author on Thursday, 30 March 2006.

³²⁴ Gilbert M. Khadiagala, op. cit., p. 4. This position of God of God's total forgiveness of any sinner is best presented by Archbishop-emeritus Desmond Tutu in his book, *God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time*, N. Y., London et al.: Doubleday, 2004.

³²⁵ Ibid.

development. Building on the momentum generated by the meeting with the president, the meeting sought to commit the government and Acholi leadership to a sustained peace initiative that would depart from the previous erratic efforts. This meeting was innovative because it constituted a soul-searching reflection on the diagnosis and prescriptions of the civil conflict. The ARLPI structured the discussions around four central themes: the causes of the insurgency; the causes of its persistence; impact on Acholiland and measures all parties needed to take to address its end. On the genesis of the conflict, the meeting gave participants the opportunity for an open debate on the NRM's role in alienating the Acholi through its initial policy of impunity, destruction of civilian property and the vilification of the Acholi. There was, however, acknowledgement that a large part of the animosity stemmed from a leadership vacuum among the Acholi, a vacuum that had been filled inadvertently by the rebels. On the continuation of the war, discussion focused on the linkage between the government's support of the SPLA and Sudan's continued destabilisation of Acholiland through reciprocal support for the LRA. A major criticism of the military efforts expended on the war effort highlighted the low morale of the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) and inadequate commitment of resources to end the insurgency. Most participants also criticised the government for its failure to listen to the local community's view about ways to resolve the conflict. The *Bedo Piny* proposed a number of recommendations as listed above.³²⁶

Comprising a diversity of actors with different political persuasions, most of the Acholi in exile have had strained relations with the Museveni government. The history of mistrust between most of the exiles and the NRM had for long precluded meaningful dialogue on northern issues. The emergence of religious leaders as a force for peace and reconciliation presented an opportunity to reach out to the body of exiles, constituted since 1997 as the Kacoke Madit (KM), the convention of Acholi Diaspora. What has emerged is a reciprocal relationship of mutual commitment between the KM and ARLPI. Conscious of its limits to influence events on the ground, the exiles have appreciated the importance of drawing on local partners to help in forging new approaches to the plight of Acholiland. For its part, the ARLPI has engaged the exiles

³²⁶ For full details of the recommendations of the meeting, *Bedo Piny for Kuc*, see Okello Lucima (ed.), op. cit., 'Key texts and agreements': *Declaration of the Bedo Piny on Peace and Reconciliation in Acholi Land*. This is also available as a download document under the address: http://www.c-r.org/accord/Uganda/accord11/downloads/1998_JunBedoPiny.doc (23.02.2006).

because of the resource scarcity and the imperative of borrowing power from the wider international community. Tapping into the economic and political resources of the exiles has allowed the ARLPI to de-legitimise external supporters of the LRA in exile by sensitising them about the scale of the rebel atrocities. Local participants describe the London meeting as an eye-opener to the LRA's external supporters particularly in listening to accounts of atrocities against children. In starting a dialogue about the multi-faceted problems of the north, this collaborative relationship has laid the foundation for common approaches to long-term goals of rehabilitation and reconstruction. Furthermore, in establishing links with the Acholi exiles, the ARLPI has given the government an entry point into a critical Acholi constituency.

As mentioned previously, to underscore this growing relationship, the ARLPI sent a delegation of eight people to participate in the KM conference in London in July 1998 to present the recommendations of the *Bedo Piny* and solicit complementary support from the Acholi in the Diaspora. This meeting recommended that the LRA and government enter into a cease-fire as a preliminary step to a dialogue facilitated by a third party; appealed to the LRA to stop abductions, killings, and destruction of property; urged the Uganda parliament to reverse the March 1997 Act regarding the use of military force to resolve the conflict; called upon all the Acholi to promote peace, forgiveness, and reconciliation and called upon the government to normalize relations with Sudan.³²⁷ To provide continuity to the initiative and with the objective of creating new relationships, the ARLPI organised a high-level meeting with the Resident District Commissioners (RDCs), Local Council chairs, and MPs from both districts in September 1998 under the theme of 'Come Let's Rebuild.' The meeting dealt at length with approaches to meeting human rights abuses and atrocities in conflict. It also gave the government, through the Minister in Charge on Northern Rehabilitation, a chance to reiterate the commitment to upholding the ongoing comprehensive dialogue on the civil war. 'This meeting formally requested the ARLPI, as an impartial body, to spearhead the broad-based campaign of peace education and sensitisation under the framework of Community Peace-Building Programme.'³²⁸ Its centrepiece was the conscious process of actively involving the community to effectively participate in healing, restoration, reconciliation, peace, and development.

³²⁷ Ibid.

³²⁸ Gilbert M. Khadiagala, op. cit., p. 7.

The ARLPI has for the planning and the implementation of its activities its executive leadership as well as its team of employees and volunteers. The executive organ comprises of the Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Treasurer, Secretary and a few members of the Executive. These executive members are democratically elected for a period of two years. At the time of this writing the Chairman is the Catholic Archbishop of Gulu, John Baptist Odama. He was deputised by the Anglican Bishop-emeritus of the Church of Uganda Kitgum Diocese, Macleord Baker Ochola II. Now that he is on a sabbatical leave, his post has been taken over by Shiek Musa Khalil, the District Khadi of Gulu. The Treasurer is the Anglican Bishop Nelson Onono-Onweng of the Northern Diocese of the Church of Uganda with the seat in Gulu and the Secretary is Monsignor Matthew Ray Odong, the Vicar-General of the Catholic Archdiocese Gulu. Members of the executive committee are the District Khadi of Kitgum, Sheik Suleiman Wadrif; the Anglican Bishop of Kitgum Diocese, Bishop Benjamin Ojwang; Fr. Julius Orach, Orthodox Church Acholi, Monsignor Matthew Odong as Secretary General and others.

4.2 The Activities of the ARLPI

In describing the history of the ARLPI, its activities have also been touched upon. From the constitution, 'The main focus of activities is in the sub-counties from where volunteer peace animators (VPAs) are identified, selected and trained. The VPAs work in collaboration with the local religious leaders, local council leaders, NGOs and other stakeholders in their areas.'³²⁹ Their roles include:

- (a) To promote and facilitate a participatory dialogue on issues of conflict and peace,
- (b) To serve as catalysts/critical yeast for non-violence, peace and reconciliation,
- (c) To organise and facilitate community peace sensitisation workshops and seminars, and
- (d) To link the Community Peace-building Programme activities with the sub-county chiefs and LC III programmes, as well as other efforts and or organisations working in the promotion of justice, human rights, reconciliation and peace-building and overall community development.³³⁰

Listing the activities that had been carried out during 1999, the then Coordinator, Cosmas Lam Oryem mentioned the following: Training of Volunteer Peace Animators

³²⁹ Constitution of the ARLPI.

³³⁰ See website www.acholipeace.org (19.12.2005), op. cit; cf. Bishop M. Baker Ochola (April 15, 2004), op. cit; cf. Carlos Rodriguez, 'The role of the religious leaders' in Okello Lucima (ed.), op. cit., <http://www.c-r.org/accord/Uganda/accord11/therole.shtml> (23.02.2006).

(VPAs) for both Gulu and Kitgum districts, as well as holding two separate sensitisation seminars for religious leaders and women leaders from all the sub-counties in the two districts. There was also documentation of conflict and peace issues, together with exchange visits for people from the south to be hosted by local communities in Gulu/Kitgum and vice versa. In conjunction with the Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (A.C.O.R.D), ARLPI organised the International Peace Conference on the theme: 'Peace Research and the Reconciliation Agenda'. The ARLPI introduced national and international lobbying and advocacy on the conflict in Acholiland³³¹ and the need for building peace. It started also networking and collaboration in the peace process.³³²

All in all, the activities of the ARLPI have been and are still advocating a peaceful ending of the conflict in Northern Uganda between the warring parties, the LRA and the UPDF. Through their advocacy work they have travelled to meet with both sides of the conflict – with the LRA in the bush or wherever they could be met. Their other activity is the mobilisation and sensitisation of the affected local community on issues of peace and justice, promotion, protection and respect of human rights. This they have achieved through the training of VPAs, who in turn are the peace advocates, animators and guarantors of human rights and peaceful co-existence in their respective communities and with the neighbouring communities of the Acholi, especially with the Karimojong (Jie sub-group) in the east, with the Langi to the south, with the Madi to the west and with the Sudanese communities to the north. This advocacy for peaceful co-existence helped to quell a situation that could have degenerated into interethnic violence, when in 2002 the LRA entered Lango and Teso, a situation that without the ARLPI could have paralleled the one among the Lendu and Hema of the western Congo.³³³

³³¹ Cf. Martin Fuchs, „Die Leiden der Menschen an erste Stelle setzen. Ugandans Religionsführer bitten deutsche Regierung und Kirchen um Unterstützung“ in: *Forum Weltkirche*, Aachen: Mai/Juni 2004, 25-29.

³³² Cf. Website www.acholipeace.org for the 1999 report.

³³³ 'Fresh massacre in DR Congo', Story from *BBC News* published: 2003/06/01 21:57:33 GMT: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/africa/2954838.stm> (17.04.2006)

'The ARLPI . . . developed its activities in a number of directions: continuation of efforts to build a public consensus for peace through sensitisation, training and dialogue; advocacy for specific policies, especially the amnesty law; and mediating or supporting negotiations.'³³⁴ In short, the role and activity of the ARLPI centres on the self-understanding of the religious leaders that they are the advocates and guarantors of the human dignity and rights, especially in a situation of war, where dignity and rights are usually trampled over. They have done and continue to do this through teaching, writings, preaching, carrying on lobbying work, advocating peaceful negotiations and raising the issue of insecurity of Northern Uganda at both the national



and international level, where for many years these problems have been taken and minimised as only an internal one.

Members of the ARLPI meeting with rebels in the bush of Northern Uganda³³⁵

The ARLPI members carry on their activities also through examples. The fact that the religious leaders have put aside their religious

and denominational differences and consorted themselves under one umbrella is the best example ever to be given. We already stated earlier in the work that the history of Uganda and Africa is that of a people divided and belligerent in their denominational and religious affinity. 'It is to be admitted that in many places Catholics and Protestants were taught to see each other as open enemies.'³³⁶ Another example that the ARLPI members set was to spend four cold nights in the open places of Gulu town to accompany the children who 'commute' every evening to the relative safety of the public places and verandas of the town to avoid being abducted by the rebels

³³⁴ Carlos Rodriguez in Okello Lucima (ed.), op. cit.

³³⁵ The photo posted on Dec 17, 2003 by Wilobotek from the album 'Peace Overtures' is downloaded from the website of the Acoli Forum, <http://ph.groups.yahoo.com/group/acoliforum/photos/view/-95d7?b=1> and has this caption: Bishop Baker Ochola shakes hands with Brig. Yadin, his former student-turned rebel, as Archbishop Odama (extreme L) looks on after talks at Otici Camp, Guru Guru Hills July 21 (28.05.2006).

³³⁶ A. Hastings, op. cit., p. 129. As for the situation of the Muslims in Uganda, it was during Amin's reign that many of them gained access to state power and misused it for their own benefits. After the fall of Amin ' . . . Muslim and Nubian communities were lumped together with [him] and were seen as supporters and beneficiaries of his regime' that deserved to be treated so. See Cosmas Lam Oryem, op. cit., p. 4.

from their homes and/or camps.³³⁷ To be mentioned is also the provision of material, moral and spiritual support that the ARLPI members offer to the victims of the war.

4.3 Some achievements of the ARLPI

In listing their activities, we have as well mentioned the achievements of this interfaith organisation. Even if peace has not yet fully returned to Northern Uganda, the ARLPI has certainly achieved a measure of integral peace for the region as well as for the whole country Uganda.

Perhaps the first achievement of this inter-religious organisation to be mentioned is the fact that they have brought all the affected people together to pray for peace. War, injustice, violence and all those evils we see around in our world are not mere physical realities, but also spiritual ones. In order to overcome them or liberate people from them, one needs prayers, for 'liberation includes two aspects: a struggle *against* the "Powers" and a commitment to *transform* the "Powers" from within.'³³⁸ It was noted earlier that the beginning of the ARLPI could be traced back to the prayer for peace held in Kitgum on the 15th August, 1997.

Through prayers, the ARLPI has also managed to break the barriers to communication which had rigidly prevented any meaningful communication between the warring parties, the victims and the perpetrators. It cannot be claimed that the relationship in this setting has completely normalised or that the peace negotiations have succeeded. Nevertheless, there is a clear decrease in the animosity that had marked the 1980s and the 1990s when the ARLPI was not yet in place. It also needs to be mentioned here that members of ARLPI, many times at their own risk, have made personal contacts with members of the rebel groups, listened to their side of the story and also forced them to recognise what the government, the local population or the international community think about the fighters and the fighting as a whole. The last

³³⁷ Cf. ARLPI, 'United Nations, Are We Not Part Of You?' The Cry of Acholi Religious Leaders Sleeping in the Cold with Gulu Children Gulu, 26th June, 2003, http://www.acholipeace.8k.com/un_help.html (03.03.06); cf. Sarah Mundell, 'United in their call: An inter-religious approach to peace in Uganda receives the Niwano Prize' in: *Living City: The Focolare Movement Magazine*, Vol. 43, No. 7, July 2004, p.22. Also available as PDF-file on the address: www.livingcitymagazine.com (23.03.2006).

³³⁸ Donal Dorr, op. cit., p. 121. The chapter here is entitled 'Mission as struggle for liberation' and the 'Powers' described therein are 'not angels or demons in the traditional "extra-terrestrial" sense . . . [but] agencies or movements or philosophies which exercise a compelling quasi-spiritual power in our everyday world. These can be socio-political entities, political-cultural realities or mindsets' p. 110.

example of such a breakthrough is the euphoric first face-to-face meeting between the LRA members and members of the government of Uganda on 28th December, 2004.³³⁹

The ARLPI has also managed to bring the plight and complexities of Northern Uganda's situation into the open. It was and is still the case that the war in Northern Uganda had always been denied or its gravity played down by the government of Uganda and its allies. Beginning with documentations, letter writings, organising conferences and demonstrations as well as peace rallies and lobbying on an international level, the members of the ARLPI have travelled the length and breadth of the world to inform people about the tragedy of Northern Uganda. Significant among its publications are *Let My People Go! The forgotten plight of the people in the displaced camps in Acholi*, in July 2001. The next publication was a report entitled *Seventy Times Seven: The Implementation and Impact of the Amnesty Law in Acholi* in May 2002 followed by *War of Words* in March 2003. All these are documentations and expositions of serious issues that are pertinent to the situation in Acholiland and Northern Uganda as a whole. Such informative and qualitative works could be acknowledged for their accuracy and in-depth information. *Let My People Go!* clearly brings out the fact that people did not choose on their own to move to the 'concentration camps' but were forced to do so; moreover sometimes with violence and a threat of further violence if the people resisted or hesitated to go.³⁴⁰ *Seventy Times Seven* brings an in-depth analysis of the successes and failures of the Amnesty Law and what still has to be done if this law is to succeed. *War of Words* is an analysis of the distorted media reporting about the war in Acholiland, which in itself is a way of fighting against peace.

³³⁹ There was a lot of press coverage of this event. Some of it includes Carlos Rodriguez, 'Northern Uganda: Another attempt at peace' in *Leadership* No. 435, February 2005, pp. 8-12; Frank Nyakairu, 'Kony rebels promise total peace in 2005' in *The Monitor*, December 30, 2004; 'Uganda: Historic Meeting Between LRA And Government, General Ceasefire Agreement Announced' in *MISNA* of 30/12/2004; Alfred Wasike, 'Bigombe team meets Kony commanders' in *The New Vision*, Thursday, 30th December, 2004; 'Peace in sight for Ugandan north' in *BBC News*: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/africa/4133431.stm> Published: 2004/12/29 19:29:35 GMT (30.12.2004) and many others.

³⁴⁰ 'Uganda orders 100,000 from home' *BBC News*, website <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/low/africa/2296637.stm> (24.05.2006) published on Thursday, 3 October, 2002, 17:16 GMT 18:16 UK (17.03.2006) where the people were given only up to 48 hours to leave their villages and move to camps, otherwise they would face military wrath.

As mentioned already, the ARLPI has written a number of letters to international as well as to local organisations; to the affected people as well as to the perpetrators of the suffering; to government as well as to rebels. 'The ARLPI in northern Uganda has improved relationships among formerly estranged segments of the population even though these are not the armed insurgents who are causing the conflict. It has also focused national discourse on the problems of the north and been able to mobilize discussion beyond the area on solving its problems.'³⁴¹ One such letter was that addressed to the UN-Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Emergency Relief Coordinator and Head of OCHA, Jan Egeland, dated 9th November, 2003 and signed by the Chairman, Archbishop John Baptist Odama in which, among other things, it was stated:

'We must be very frank and tell you that our people in Northern Uganda feel abandoned and betrayed by the international community. Particularly, the UN is not doing enough to end the war.'³⁴²

Another letter was to President G. W. Bush of the USA on the occasion of his visit to Uganda on 11th July, 2003. Again these are some of the achievements in raising awareness. For example, the focus of Bush's visit to Uganda was 'finding out about the country's efforts to reduce the rate of HIV infection and to secure better treatment for AIDS sufferers'³⁴³ which itself is not a bad mission, but an incomplete and perhaps unfocused one in the context of Uganda.

The ARLPI works hand-in-hand with the Acholi traditional and cultural leaders like the Council of Elders Peace Committee, the Council of Chiefs and many others. This is especially for the purpose of forging reconciliation between the people who have inevitably killed each others' relations in the cause of this ongoing conflict. Another group that needs reconciliation badly are the returning abductees who have problems not only with the communities of their 'victims', but also with their own, for

³⁴¹ Larry S. Beyna, Michael Lund, Stacy S. Stacks, Janet Tuthill, and Patricia Vondal, *Greater Horn of Africa Peace Building Project: The Effectiveness of Civil Society Initiatives in Controlling Violent Conflicts and Building Peace: A Study of Three Approaches in the Greater Horn of Africa: Synthesis Report on Key Findings and Lessons for Improving Practice*, USAID and Management Systems International, June 2001, PDF-file (<http://www.usaid.gov/pubs/ads/glossary.pdf>), p. 32.

³⁴² ARLPI's letter to the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, Emergency Relief Coordinator and Head of OCHA, Jan Egeland, Gulu, 9th November, 2003.

³⁴³ See *The Tablet* of 19.07.2003 <http://www.thetablet.co.uk/cgi-bin/citw.cgi/past-00137> (27.01.2006)

often their victims are their own relations. We have already mentioned the situation of abduction and alienation of children where they are forced to kill their own parents and relations and whoever else in their places of abduction so that they may not dare return home. This reconciliation is achieved through the intertwining of the Christian or Muslim reconciliation ceremony together with that of the Acholi tradition, *mato oput*. The principle of conflict resolution in Acholi is to create reconciliation which brings the two sides together. Between individuals this involved elders, particularly the moral authority of the *Rwot kaka* (clan chief), investigating the circumstances, leading to an acceptance of responsibility for carrying out a wrong action and an indication of repentance. The terms were laid down by the elders such as 10 cows or a girl for compensation, implying potential for a future marriage, possibly elsewhere, producing replacement in the case of death and restoring a nexus of relationships. Then reconciliation occurred with the simultaneous drinking of a bitter root extract drink from a common calabash set on the ground — *mato oput*. Between groups the process required a delegation of elders to investigate the fault and identify the cause and for those concerned to accept their responsibility. The acceptance of responsibility is a group acceptance—*not so-&-so, son of X, but we have done this*. Then the compensation is determined, traditionally cattle or girls, and lastly reconciliation occurs with the 'bending of two spears' and *mato oput*. . . . In spite of their marginalisation from political authority, the *Rwodi-mo* continue on occasion informally to carry out reconciliation with a compensation element to the victim in addition to court decisions. This is to ensure restoration of relationships, which modern court proceedings neglect. Although rebels are seen to have rejected society, 'if society now establishes the means of reconciliation, the rebels will accept that authority'³⁴⁴. For the returning abducted children and/or rebels, this ceremony is preceded by a Church ceremony of reconciliation where a Catechist, a priest or whoever is leading the ceremony reads

³⁴⁴ Dr. Dennis Pain, 'The Bending of Spears,' available at: <http://www.km-net.org>. (27.02.2002); cf. Freda Nkuttu of the Millennium Consultants, 'African Traditional Methods in Uganda: A Case Study of the Acholi and Karamojong Tribes in Peace- Building; the Acholi' in: *African Traditional Methods in Conflict Resolution*, website-pdf-file: [http://www.usaid.or.ug/SO9%20annexes/CECORE%20African%20Traditional%20Methods%20%20in%20Conflict%20Res%20Reconc%20and%20ForgivenessValidation%20ATM%202%20\(last\).pdf](http://www.usaid.or.ug/SO9%20annexes/CECORE%20African%20Traditional%20Methods%20%20in%20Conflict%20Res%20Reconc%20and%20ForgivenessValidation%20ATM%202%20(last).pdf) (24.05.2006); cf. Vincent Emmanuel Okot Oburo, op. cit., pp. 72-75; cf. W. L'Pajule, '*Mato Oput*' on the Federo website op. cit., http://www.federo.com/Pages-/National_Reconciliation/.html#MatoOput#MatoOput (06.06.2003).

from the Bible, gives a homily stressing the point of reconciliation and *metanoia* and then performs a ceremony of reconciliation.³⁴⁵

'The ARLPI has invoked the compatibility of Acholi traditional beliefs with biblical injunctions to dramatize the synergy of institutional roles. Thus they have lobbied for the empowerment of traditional chiefs as complementary partners in building peace.'³⁴⁶

That this practice is allowed and even accepted by the Church in Acholiland must be seen against the background of the early missionary and Church's attitude towards any of the Acholi cultural practices where all cultural practices were uncritically and wholly condemned as 'satanic'.³⁴⁷ What the ARLPI has achieved here is an integral and existential inculturation that goes on to existential and life issues. Inculturation, as one African theologian remarked, 'does not consist in the mere changing of external trappings (such as replacing the Roman collar with an African traditional dress); rather it boils down to the question of how to strike a balance between a church which is authentically African and, at the same time, authentically Roman Catholic'³⁴⁸ for the case of the Roman Catholic Church. Yes, inculturation is the bringing of the *Gospel* on par with what affects people as individuals and communities and vice versa, thereby enriching the Church and transforming a given culture.³⁴⁹ The reconciliatory and mediatory role of the ARLPI is a sharp departure from practices elsewhere in Uganda that we have seen in this thesis, where religious leaders took sides and as such became agents of violence and death against the others, the

³⁴⁵ Hans-Peter Hecking, „Terror im Acholi-Land“, in: *Frankfurter Rundschau* (online), 02.07.2003 http://www.fraktell.de/_inc/_locals/print.php?cnt=242126&ref=/ressorts/nachrichten_und_politik/dokumentation/ (02.07.2003). This article has also been published on the website of Missio-Aachen <http://www.missio-aachen.de/menschen-kulturen/laender/afrika/uganda/laenderbericht02a.asp#0> (26.01.06) and that of the Comboni-Missionare in the DSP: <http://comboni.de/news/-weltweit/artikel.php?id=4330> (24.05.2006).

³⁴⁶ Gilbert Khadiagala, op. cit., p.12.

³⁴⁷ See especially here the book of the deceased Comboni Missionary, Simone Zanoner, *Kristo too, Kristo ocer: Lakristo Acoli lwodo i kom jo muto* (Acholi for *Christ has died, Christ is risen: An Acholi Christian reflects on the Dead*), Vicenza/ (for) Gulu: Tipolitografia I. S. G., 1989. This position is still held strongly by the Anglican Church of Uganda – unfortunately also by some members within the ARLPI. Compare a position similar to that of the ARLPI with respect to traditional medicines in Dr. Martin Hirt and Bindanda M'Pia, *Natural Medicine in the Tropics: Tropical plants as a source of health care production of medicines and cosmetics*, (Winnenden: Anamed (Action for Natural Medicine), 2nd ed., May 2001), especially the preface, pp. 7-12.

³⁴⁸ Emmanuel Obuna, *African Priests and Celibacy in a Culture where a Man without Children is a Waste*, (Rome: Leberit Press, 1986), p. 18.

³⁴⁹ For elaborate treatment of inculturation in this respect see John Bauer, op. cit., especially pp. 447-514, 'The Practical Realisation of Inculturation' and Donal Dorr, op. cit., pp. 91-143, 'Mission as Inculturation'.

so called 'enemies' group. If they had tried the path of reconciliation and mediation before, could we not expect that the history of Uganda's violence would have been different and many lives saved?³⁵⁰ 'Peace is . . . reconciliation with one's brothers and sisters . . . , [for] working for peace can never be separated from announcing the Gospel, which is in fact the "good news of peace" (Acts 10:36; cf. Eph 6:15) addressed to all men and women. . . .'³⁵¹ and religious leaders have this incumbent obligation to ensure peace and reconciliation without severing one from the other. 'It is treason against the Gospel when the Church chooses some individuals or certain organisations and makes them the basis and starting point of its witness!'³⁵²

Together with reconciliation for the smaller community is the achievement of the ARLPI in influencing the larger community in lobbying for and the coming into force of the Amnesty Act.

'ARLPI's accomplishments include leading the fight for the passage of the Amnesty Act in 1999, training hundreds of local leaders in peace-building and conflict resolution, and 'creating confidence and opening avenues of negotiations' by acting as 'Track 2' interlocutors between the conflicting parties.'³⁵³

The rebels, living in the bush with poor communications and marauding around without any proper knowledge of the Amnesty Law in place, must be informed of the coming into force of this law. This law, flawed as it was right from the beginning and now greatly made ambiguous by the new Anti-terror law of 2002, was a brain child and an achievement of the ARLPI. It solidifies the position taken by the religious leaders that the only meaningful way of ending the conflict in Northern Uganda is through negotiation and eventually reconciliation without any neglect for justice and

³⁵⁰ Cf. 'Human Catastrophe and Emergency in Northern Uganda': A presentation to the Diocesan Convention, Diocese of Southwest Florida, by Rt. Rev Macleord Baker Ochola II Retired Anglican Bishop of Kitgum Diocese, Northern Uganda/Bishop in Residence, Church of the Holy Family, Chapel Hill, NC. December 3, 2005.

³⁵¹ *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, op. cit., pp. 276-77 (#492, 493); cf. Donal Dorr, op. cit., pp. 128-143, 'Mission as Reconciliation'.

³⁵² Hansjörg Baumgartner (Hg.), *Zephania Kameeta - Im Wind der Befreiung*, a.a. O., 37; cf. Michael L. Budde and Robert W. Brimlow (eds.), *The Church as Counterculture*, op. cit., where the authors advocate for radicalism and love on the side of the Church when dealing with human issues; cf. Joseph F. Girzone, *Joshua: A Parable for Today*, (N. Y.: Collier Books Macmillan Publishing Company, 1983, 1987).

³⁵³ Zachary Lomo and Lucy Hovil, *Behind the Violence: Causes, Consequences and the Search for Solutions to the War in Northern Uganda*; Refugee Law Project Working Paper No. 11, February 2004, p. 46 quoting in foot note 272 Gilbert Khadiagala, op. cit., pp. 11-12. The PDF-file is available at the address: <http://www.refugeelawproject.org/working%20papers/RLP%20WP11%20Northern-%20Uganda.pdf>. (07.12.2005)

restoration of the relationships and property destroyed during these years of the war. Cosmas Lam Oryem, then working as the Co-ordinator of the ARLPI, put it all eloquently: 'We are either victims or perpetrators and members of a community enmeshed in the cycle of violence, so as stakeholders we all must do our part and meet the needs of each category.'³⁵⁴ That the amnesty is still in place, even in its present precarious state,³⁵⁵ must all be attributed to the insistence of the ARLPI that scrapping this law would mean allowing all the abducted children and whoever is in captivity with Kony to be lumped together as bandits, who, according to the military option of the government of Uganda, are to be wiped out. This is the government that in the first place did not protect and still does not protect these children from being abducted and drilled into rebel ranks, but is now ready to write them off as rebels!

'But there is also another dilemma facing the Acholi parent. Your child, and in some cases your children, were violently taken away from you. You were unable to protect and defend your child; not even the national and international institutions could do that. Now you are to pursue and kill him or her! What parent would ever do that?'³⁵⁶

It is in the context of this existential dilemma that the position of the ARLPI has to be understood and also evaluated as an achievement against a design that is not only dubious, but completely diabolic from its onset. This leads also to their stand against the position of the ICC that became a force to reckon with in the situation of Northern Uganda. The ICC was invited by the government of Uganda to start an investigation with the aim of prosecuting the LRA for their crime against humanity in Northern Uganda. This is no refutable fact. But the state in which the situation is would mean that eventually 'we end up having neither peace nor justice achieved.'³⁵⁷

³⁵⁴ Cosmas Lam Oryem, op. cit., p. 5.

³⁵⁵ See ARLPI, *Seventy Times Seventy: The Implementation and Impact of the Amnesty in Acholiland*. An Assessment carried out by Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative, Caritas Gulu Women's Desk and the Justice and Peace Commission of Gulu Archdiocese, Gulu: May 2002. See their later position on this law 'Position Paper on Amnesty Law' in: *Fighting History in Uganda: Mennonite Central Committee (MCC) Peace Office Publication*, (April–June 2004 Volume 34, Number 2), pp. 8-10; available as PDF-file on the internet address: http://www.mcc.org/respub/pon/pon_04_02.pdf (07.12.2005)

³⁵⁶ Cosmas Lam Oryem, op. cit., p. 5.

³⁵⁷ Statement of the Gulu Catholic Archdiocese's Justice and Peace Commission released on 8th February, 2005; cf. IRIN/UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 'UGANDA: Waiting for elusive peace in the war-ravaged north', 'Gulu, 9 Jun 2005: <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=47568> (Tuesday, 20 December 2005); cf. International Crisis Group, 'Peace in Northern Uganda: Decisive Weeks Ahead' in *Policy Briefing Africa Briefing N°22*, Kampala/Brussels, 21 February 2005; UNOCHA coverage of the Save the Children in Uganda's Statement against the involvement of the ICC can be found at: <http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/rwb.nsf/AllDocsByUNID/c1290f897272->

Tim Allen writes that, following a telephone conversation with the ICC Chief Prosecutor, the Acholi Paramount Chief Elect and the Chairman of the Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI), made the following proposals in a statement issued in November 2004:

'The recent public announcement concerning issuing of the Arrest Warrant of Joseph Kony, the leader of the LRA by the ICC is already having an adverse effect on the on-going peace process. This announcement is greatly undermining and jeopardizing the confidence building measures for dialogue. The leaders would therefore propose that the ICC issue a strong Public Statement recognizing and supporting the on-going peace process. We highly recommend that this statement be put on local, national and international media.

'We also strongly suggest to you to consider temporal withdrawal of your presence from the conflict area as you watch on what is going on in the peace process.

'The ICC should write to both the LRA and government of Uganda stating clearly its intention to halt any further investigation and prosecution and express its commitments to support the on-going peace process. This will be a concrete step in building confidence and trust on both sides.

'While we recognize your need to investigate into the crimes committed by the LRA against humanity, we would strongly suggest that the investigation encompasses the whole situation of the war in northern Uganda in order for true justice to be done.

'From our experience of the 18 years in the conflict, we have learnt that the military option has not produced sustainable peace in the region. We reiterate that the Amnesty Law and Dialogue options are the most relevant solution that befits our current situation. Therefore, the ICC intervention at this particular moment sends conflicting signals to the on-going peace process and could easily jeopardize its success.³⁵⁸

Another achievement of the ARLPI is then the reception and reintegration of some of the escaped former rebels, child soldiers and abducted persons to their own families and in communities. This is done in collaboration with the Caritas-Gulu and other organisations on the ground. A big reception centre is now in Pajule Catholic Mission where many of these returnees are received, counselled, treated, accompanied and eventually returned to their families. A documentary film, *Lost Children*,

75fac1256e3c005956eb; Tim Allen, *War and Justice in Northern Uganda: An Assessment of the International Criminal Court's Intervention* - An Independent Report, Crisis States Research Centre Development Studies Institute London School of Economics (Draft), February 2005.

³⁵⁸ Tim Allen, *War and Justice in Northern Uganda: An Assessment of the International Criminal Court's Intervention*, op. cit., p. 4 quoting in foot note 6 from 'Suggestions by the Acholi Religious and Cultural Leaders in Response to the Request by the International Criminal Court', Statement, Gulu 12/11/2004.

based on the journey of some of those 'rehabilitated' children has recently won an international award.³⁵⁹

As mentioned already, the ARLPI has managed to intervene and diffuse an explosive situation that could have caused an inter-ethnic bloodbath. When the LRA invaded Teso³⁶⁰ and Lango for the first time, away from their traditional area of operation of Acholiland, a lot of tensions grew. Quite often these were fanned by irresponsible political manoeuvres and utterances to the extent that the Itesot and Langi were armed with the intention of defending themselves which actually meant killing Acholi who were erroneously being equated with the LRA. For instance, the *Refugee Law Project* informs in one of their findings that 'the fear that has been generated has been translated into a more general anger towards the Acholi people, as Kony himself is an Acholi. At one end of the spectrum were those who equated Kony with all Acholi people'³⁶¹ and one head teacher who was interviewed is quoted as having said: 'We feel that the Acholis have come to destabilise the innocent and development in Teso without any genuine cause' and another school girl saying, 'Most Acholi students turn into rebels during holidays in order to get enough money for fees and pocket money. Kony is fighting because the Acholi are generally rebellious and they like fighting.'³⁶² Still alarming was the allegation that the RDC, representative of the central government, ordered that all Acholi living in Teso should be killed on the spot when seen.³⁶³ The report mentioned here refers to another expression of animosity and misunderstanding that had grown with the invasion of the LRA in Teso. One member of the then newly created tribal militia, the Arrow Boys, is quoted to have said:

'You know, these days people are fighting against the tribe [i.e. Acholi]; the Iteso alone, Karamojong alone, etc. For us, we don't have a problem. If the Acholi stop their habit of taking our children, we don't have a problem. We will not go outside Teso looking for Kony.'³⁶⁴

³⁵⁹ See *Lost Children*, <http://www.lost-children.de/en/home.htm> (24.05.2006).

³⁶⁰ See 'Partners in Suffering': Acholi Religious Leaders Pay Visit To Violence-Stricken Teso Gulu, 28th June, 2003: <http://www.acholipeace.8k.com/partners.html> (03.03.2006).

³⁶¹ Zachary Lomo and Lucy Hovil, op. cit., p. 39.

³⁶² Ibid., foot notes: 239 Interview with a head teacher, Soroti, 11/11/03 and 240 Group discussion with 10 school girls, Soroti, 7/11/03.

³⁶³ See for example, Kintu Nyago, 'Tread carefully on tribal militias' in: *The Monitor*, August 19, 2003; <http://www.monitor.co.ug/oped/oped3.php> (19.08.2003).

³⁶⁴ Ibid, p. 40, foot note 247 Interview with Arrow Group member, Soroti, 07/11/03.

It was at the height of this growing ethnic tension after the Barlonyo massacre on 21st February, 2004, where over 300 people were murdered at once in cold blood, that the ARLPI made its timely intervention by paying a solidarity visit to the other affected communities of Lango and Teso and, together with the religious leaders of those areas, issued a statement on the situation. In it, the call as ever was to respect human life, desist from recourse to violence and to the government as well as to the international community to intervene to guarantee security of people and property of the people affected by the war.³⁶⁵ Through this early intervention, the ARLPI diffused a volatile situation that was similar not only in character, but also in the persons behind it to that of the DRC between Hema und Lendu ethnic groups which ended with multiple casualties on both sides. It was actually genocide in Congo with over one million dead.³⁶⁶

The then Vice-Chairman of the organisation, Bishop-emeritus M. B. Ochola lists in his already quoted presentation other achievements of the ARLPI.³⁶⁷ They are among others peace-education for all and a mediatory role between the warring parties that subsequently led to the formation of various peace teams on the side of the government that in principle is opposed to negotiating peace with the rebels. The joint religious and cultural leaders' peace initiative already mentioned aims at encompassing all those within the regions affected by war, extending it to the national and subsequently to the international areas especially within the African continent.³⁶⁸ Fur-

³⁶⁵ See 'Statement by the Religious Leaders from Lango, Teso and Acholi on the Current Situation in Northern Uganda' issued from Kampala and dated 2nd March, 2004, available also on the Missio-Aachen website: http://www.missio-aachen.de/angebot-medien/pressendienst/archiv/2004/tcm_0-13-1_tcm_13-17151.asp#tcm:14-17150#tcm:14-17150 (24.01.2006).

³⁶⁶ Cf. 'Armed Activities on the Territory of the Congo (Democratic Republic of the Congo v. Uganda) International Court of Justice Summary 2005/3: Summary of the Judgment of 19 December 2005' http://www.icj-cij.org/icjwww/ipresscom/ipress2005/ipresscom2005-03_co_summary_20051219.htm (17.04.2006); Congo massacre 'leaves 1,000 dead' Story from *BBC News*: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/africa/2922595.stm> published: 2003/04/07 05:57:16 GMT (17.04.2006); 'Uganda-Rwanda tension mounts' *ibid*: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/go/pr/fr/-/1/hi/world/africa/2856211.stm> Published: 2003/03/17 09:51:13 GMT (17.04.2006); 'Great Lakes: DRC, Rwanda and Uganda agree on armed groups' disarmament', *UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs*: <http://www.irinnews.org/print.asp?ReportID=42875> (Monday 17 April 2006); cf. UN-Security Council, S/2001/357 of 12th April 2001, op. cit.

³⁶⁷ See M. B. Ochola II, *Hope in the Storm: Experience of ARLPI in Conflict Resolution of the Northern Uganda armed Conflict*, op. cit. For this section we will follow the list of achievements as presented in this document.

³⁶⁸ This point is more expanded and elaborated in the just published project proposal *Interfaith Network for Peace-building Programme (INPP)* that is planned for the time April 2006 – April 2009, Gulu: ARLPI, April 2006, §5.4.5f.

thermore there is support for former abducted children and war affected persons in terms of providing educational as well as employment opportunities, research, documentation and dissemination and integral human development in spite of the conflicts – an area that many religious institutions are traditionally co-partners of. ‘In Uganda the ARLPI was able to get the central government to increase investment in the affected regions and to interest donors in more support for local efforts to return services and economic activity.’³⁶⁹

These struggles of the ARLPI have been acknowledged on national as well as on international levels. The most important of these acknowledgements was the award of the prestigious Niwano Peace Prize in May 2004. ‘The ARLPI is the first African organisation to receive the Prize award.’³⁷⁰ The Niwano Peace Foundation was founded in 1978 to contribute to the establishment of world peace and the enhancement of culture by promoting research and other activities. It is based on a religious spirit and serves the cause of peace in such fields as thought, culture, science and education. In the award ceremony on 11th May, 2004, Nichiko Niwano, President and Founder of the Niwano Peace Foundation had this to say about the ARLPI:

‘It is a great honour to present the Niwano Peace Prize to the Acholi Religious Leaders’ Peace Initiative (ARLPI), in recognition of its extensive work in Uganda toward conflict resolution, protection of human rights, and promotion of peaceful coexistence among different ethnic groups. ARLPI is a cooperative peace organization founded by leaders of different religions: the Catholic Church, Anglican Church, Orthodox Church, and Islam. Since its foundation in 1998, some four hundred staff members and supporters have striven to promote non-violent conflict resolution, to educate people in creating peace, and to provide aid to the victims of armed conflicts. . . The ARLPI takes in such children [former child soldiers] and sponsors activities to heal their bodies and minds. Conflict is born from anger in the human heart. Healing the hearts of children forced to hurt other people can only be done with religious love and compassion, which lie at the opposite pole from war’s vicious actions. . . One member of the ARLPI told me, ‘The ARLPI is engaged not in doing purely human work, but in cooperating with God.’ I believe that the love sustained by such religious faith must certainly restore the brilliant state of mind that the children possessed before they became child soldiers.’³⁷¹

³⁶⁹ Larry S. Beyna, Michael Lund, Stacy S. Stacks, Janet Tuthill, and Patricia Vondal, op. cit., p. 31.

³⁷⁰ Sarah Mundell, op. cit., p. 21.

³⁷¹ ‘21st Annual Niwano Peace Prize Ceremony Address’ on the Niwano Peace Foundation website: http://www.rk-world.org/news/21st_npp_address.html (29.03.2006); cf. „Afrikas ARLPI wurde für den 21. Niwano-Friedenspreis gewählt“. News Release am Mittwoch, dem 25. Februar 2004, <http://www.prnewswire.co.uk/cgi/news/release?id=117906> (29.03.2006); cf. ‘ARLPI receives 21st peace award from the Niwano Foundation in Japan’, <http://www.km-net.org/e-news/2004->

Still on international level, the ARLPI has also been awarded The Paul Carus Award.

'CHICAGO – May 27, 2004 - The Board of Trustees of the Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions announced today the first recipient of The Paul Carus Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Interreligious Movement. Bishop McLeod Baker Ochola II and the Acholi Religious Leaders' Peace Initiative (ARLPI), a multi-faith peace group in Northern Uganda, were selected from international nominees for their work to end violence in their region. The role of religion in an increasingly violent world will be one of the main issues addressed by international attendees of the 2004 Parliament of the World's Religions in Barcelona, Spain July 7-13, where Ochola will receive the award.'

This was the official communication from the Parliament of World's Religions announcing this award.³⁷²

At the international level there was the invitation of the Archbishop John Baptist Odama this year to the UN-Security Council where he on 27th January, 2006 addressed its members on the situation of Northern Uganda and what the world community could and should do to end this tragedy. Among other things he asked:

'Is it moral to watch a fellow human die when we can help? Should diplomacy override our duties to save life and protect human liberty, and the security and sacredness of person? It is high time the international community intervened and stopped now the senseless war in northern Uganda. This is our appeal to the Security Council. . . The Security Council persuades Ugandan government to abandon the violent offensive approach into neighbouring countries in the name of fighting the rebels. . . Lastly but not necessarily the least, your Excellencies, you will please permit me to conclude by giving you my personal commitment. As I had stated earlier that international criminal court (ICC) need to reconsider staying their investigation and the attendant prosecution for the time being because it will jeopardize the fragile peace process. The ICC should instead take and probably charge me instead of Joseph Kony or Vincent Otti in exchange for the much needed peace in northern Uganda.'³⁷³

/may04/may10.htm#item4, 10th May, 2004 (20.09.2005); „Kirchen in Uganda spielen Schlüsselrolle im Friedensprozess.“ Pressemitteilung vom 24.02.2004. http://www.missio-aachen.de/angebote-medien/pressedienst/archiv/2004/tcm_0-13-1_tcm_13-17108.asp

³⁷² Council for a Parliament of the World's Religions, 'Religion in the Age of Terror: Chicago Organization gives first-ever interreligious Award to Ugandan Multi-faith Peace Group Working to end religious Intolerance and Violence', <http://www.cpwr.org/2004Parliament/parliament/carus.htm> (29.03.-2006); cf. The Paul Carus Award for Outstanding Contributions to the Interreligious Movement' on the website address: <http://www.cpwr.org/2004Parliament/parliament/carus.htm> (20.11.2005).

³⁷³ 'Archbishop in UN Security Council' in *Justice and Peace News: A Newsletter of Justice and Peace Commission of Gulu Archdiocese* Vol. 7-No. 14, March 2006, p. 3,5.

This presentation was made not only in the name of the Catholic Church, but also in name of the ARLPI, whose current Chairman is the Archbishop himself.

On the local or national level the ARLPI has also been given several awards such as The 2000 International Year for the Culture of Peace Uganda 2000 Peace Award. This was awarded to Bishop Nelson Onono Onweng (then Chairman of ARLPI), The 2001 UNESCO prize for Peace Education presented to Bishop Onono-Onweng, Guinness Power of Goodness Award July 2003 to Bishop Onono-Onweng and Guinness Power of Goodness Award 2003 to Archbishop John Baptist Odama.

In mentioning the achievements and awards that the organisation has received, the main aim is far from any triumphalism. It is rather a humble recognition of the dedicated struggle of this interfaith consortium in their quest for lasting peace in the war-ravaged region of Northern Uganda. In spite of its almost ten years of existence, there is still war or conflict going on. It is a sign that the ARLPI has not yet fully succeeded in achieving their declared goal and objectives. It is to this apparent failure and its causes, i.e., difficulties of the ARLPI and obstacles to peace, that we now turn.

4.4 Challenges, Limitations and Difficulties for the ARLPI

Included here is a series of challenges that the ARLPI as an organisation faces. There are two categories of difficulties, internal and external. We begin with the latter category of challenges which are also the challenges to peace in the region.

4.4.1 External Challenges to ARLPI

It is a known fact that 'ARLPI moderated the GoU approach to the conflict and pressed for peace negotiations but was not able to bring the parties to that point. Intent to sign a ceasefire was pronounced by the government. No settlement has occurred.'³⁷⁴ Now they have even lost contact with the rebels and the only one claiming still to have contact with the rebels is the disputed mediator, Mrs Betty Oyella Bigombe.³⁷⁵ This is because both parties are either not interested in the negotiation

³⁷⁴ Larry S. Beyna, Michael Lund, Stacy S. Stacks, Janet Tuthill, and Patricia Vondal, op. cit., p. 34.

³⁷⁵ Cf. Telephone interview the author conducted with Archbishop John Baptist Osama, Chairman of the ARLPI, on Thursday, 23rd March, 2006 where the Archbishop said: 'The contact is quite minimal these days, especially with the issuing of the indictment by the ICC. It is only Betty Bigombe who still has some regular telephone contacts with them. We have now only telephone contacts which come in sporadically.' (Transcription of the interview by the author)

or are suspicious of the ARLPI members. It has already been mentioned how many times in the history of this conflict in Northern Uganda meetings between the rebels and members of the ARLPI have been brutally interrupted by the government army,³⁷⁶ prompting Kony, the leader of the LRA, allegedly to order that all religious leaders who try to go to negotiate peace with them should be killed on the spot. They are government spies. 'We are being suspected on both sides; from the rebels that we are government agents and spies and from the government that we're rebel collaborators.'³⁷⁷ This is one illustration of the difficulties that ARLPI has to grapple with in its responsibility to negotiate peace. It is not an arbitrator whose help has been sought by the warring parties, but who is forging and forcing itself into that role out of necessity. The members are to reckon with the possibilities of falling victim of any of the parties wherever and whenever they are on the mission of peace, just as the case has been with the two elders who went on that fateful emissary in 1996. In fact the members of the ARLPI are themselves 'wounded healers' in the words of psychotherapy, for they themselves are among the victims. In many cases, it is believed that they are even prime targets, a method aiming to deter them from insisting that peace be negotiated. Bishop Ochola, one of the co-founders and core-members of the association has not only lost a daughter because of the conflict, but his 'own wife was brutally blown to pieces when the diocesan pick up in which she was travelling hit a land mine allegedly planted by LRA rebels, barely six miles away from the Diocesan headquarters.'³⁷⁸

³⁷⁶ One known example was on 28th August, 2002 involving three Comboni Missionaries Tarcisio Pazzaglia, Giulio Albene and Carlos Rodriguez where the three, after narrowly surviving death from the fire of the UPDF soldiers, were held captives by the army for three days. There was a lot of media coverage on this incident; some even very controversial. For a detailed account see 'Priests meet LRA in Kitgum' in *Leadership* No. 410, October 2002, pp. 10-14. There were many others even earlier when the Presidential Peace Team should have met with the rebels on 6th of March, 2003 but were interrupted by the army who went ahead and stormed the should have been place of meeting, sending the already waiting rebels in disarray. See here Richard Kavuma, 'Changing the game: Priest of peace aims to turn confrontation into cooperation' in *The Monitor*, March 28, 2004; also available online as <http://www.monitor.co.ug/specialincludes/agenda/rd03243.php> (28.03.2004); Conciliation Resources. 2002: 'Northern Uganda: One step forward, two steps back: Kacoke Madit Peace and Reconciliation Project for northern Uganda': http://www.c-r.org/pubs/annreps/AR02pdf-sections/CR%20Uganda%202001-02*.pdf

³⁷⁷ Interview with Archbishop John Baptist Osama, op. cit. The same point was also stressed by Bishop Nelson Onono-Onweng and Sheik Musa Khalil, Gulu District Khadi of the Acholi Muslim community, Vice-Chairman of the ARLPI, in separate interviews on Thursday, 30 March 2006 as well as by Mons. Matthew Ray Odong, Vicar General of Gulu Archdiocese and Secretary General of the ARLPI in another telephone interview on 24th January, 2006.

³⁷⁸ Macleord Baker Ochola, 'Human Catastrophe in Northern Uganda', op. cit.; cf. Richard Kavuma, op. cit.

Still more about the peace animators who have become victims themselves is to be listed like the Comboni Missionary, Fr. Rafaeli di Bari who was brutally murdered on the 1st October, 2000, barely a kilometre from a military post which had given him the permission to drive further. Of late, Fr. John Peter Olum was seriously injured when his vehicle was shot at, leaving a number of other passengers with him dead. He himself sustained serious injuries. Among the Catechists, Fr. Joseph Okumu, Director of the St. Joseph's Catechists' Training Centre, gives us a chronicle and list of those who have perished in the course of carrying out their mission and preaching peace.³⁷⁹ The death toll applies as well to the members of the other religious groups that make up the ARLPI.

This brings in the main problem which is the problem of everyone that there is still no peace. Almost ten years in existence, the ARLPI has certainly achieved much, but their ultimate goal, the disappearance of war as the starting point of peace has remained elusive. Even many years after the report written by Gilbert Khadiagala 'the persistent question the ARLPI obtains from the people in Acholiland is: Where is the Peace? It underscores the dilemma of advocating peace that seems to lie with parties beyond the reach of local actors.'³⁸⁰

The exact extent of economic improvement is not known, but it seems evident in the ARLPI case that no economic improvement has been achieved in these years of the war. The region has not gained the economic improvement and growth that ARLPI aims at achieving. In fact as it was discussed under the aspect of economic situation, the poverty level of Northern Uganda is now so, that 95% of IDPs in Kitgum, Pader and Gulu live in absolute poverty compared to about 38% at national level; 84% of IDP households are dependent upon food relief and as a result in Kitgum district 48% of children are stunted.³⁸¹

There are buildings springing up in the towns of Gulu and Kitgum, for instance, but the ownership of such structures is still disputed and the common question asked

³⁷⁹ See Joseph Okumu, 'Modern Martyrs' in: *Leadership* No. 442, September 2005, p. 4.

³⁸⁰ Gilbert Khadiagala, op. cit., p. 18.

³⁸¹ Cf. Civil Society Organisations for Peace in Northern Uganda (CSOPNU), *Counting the cost Twenty years of war in northern Uganda*, a report released Kampala on Thursday 30 March 2006; cf. Jeff Dorsey and Steven Opeitum, op. cit; cf. Justine Nannyonjo, *Conflicts, Poverty and Human Development in Northern Uganda*, Bank of Uganda, Research Department, prepared for the WIDER Conference on Making Peace Work Helsinki, 4-5 June 2004.

by all concerned is 'Who is building these big houses; where do they get the money?' It is feared that many of the desperate people are forced to sell off their land to those in power who actually have money, hence the shooting up of structures witnessed.³⁸²

The reconciliation effect of the ARLPI is almost restricted only to Acholiland, although mention has been made in negotiating peace with the neighbouring communities of the Acholi: the Jie-Karimojong, the Langi, the Itesot and the Madi. In contrast to the New Sudan Council of Churches, for instance, that managed to negotiate peace between the Dinka and Nuer who were at war with one another, the case of the ARLPI involved not the parties from northern and southern Uganda who were engaged in the conflict to which the initiative was addressed, but only the parties who increasingly found themselves on the one side of the conflict, in Acholiland. Specifically, local councils, Resident District Commissioners, and the military were brought together for dialogue through both the Kitgum Joint Peace Forum (KJPF) and the District Reconciliation and Peace Team (DRPT). These processes have fostered, nonetheless, a great improvement in working relationships and attitudes between civilian and military leaders in Acholiland.³⁸³ We will show soon, however, how the involvement of the ARLPI with the KJPF & DRPT discredited the independence of the ARLPI since these two other organisations were led by people who are members of the government and representing the hard line militaristic position of the government. No one knows exactly how the other Ugandans do see the Acholi ethnic community vis-à-vis the war still raging on. Many, as shown, still hold the Acholi responsible for the insecurity, viz: they are supporting the rebels even when they are the most affected victims of the rebels.³⁸⁴

The fact that the ARLPI is and has been wading uncharted water, be it in peace advocacy or in ecumenism, makes the work battle that are inevitable in the early stages of articulating new roles and positions. Hence, the organisation has to undergo a lot of re-organisation and restructuring which itself is not the most urgent

³⁸² Cf. 'Rwot Acana II wants resettlement not decongestion' in *Justice and Peace News* Vol. 7-No. 14, March 2006, p. 8, where the caption to his photo reads: Rwot Onen Acana II advises Acholi not to sell their land. He said land is the only asset Acholi people are left with. He wants people resettled to their ancestral land.

³⁸³ Cf. Larry S. Beyna, Michael Lund, Stacy S. Stacks, Janet Tuthill, and Patricia Vondal, op. cit., p. 54.

³⁸⁴ Cf. Ouaranto and Pollenberger, 'Will Government and LRA seize this chance?' in *Leadership* No. 445, January 2006, p. 16; cf. Carlos Rodriguez, 'Acholi people want peace- but the men with the guns don't' in *Leadership* No. 416, May 2003, pp. 9-11, etc.

need. But this is also inevitable, for to be effective and deliver the desired goal, a well defined and coordinated structure must be in place. The ARLPI has been thus hampered by the move to an institution which must become independent and self-reliant. This is but a pie in the sky for a situation like that of present Acholiland where almost all economic activities have come to a halt, where the human catastrophe is on the increase.

A solution, which smacks of dependency, is to seek funds from donors. This was successful at the beginning of the activities of the ARLPI, but over time, these sources of finance have dwindled. In the recent telephone interviews that the author made with the executive members of the ARLPI, it was a recurring theme for all the questioned, a kind of chorus: 'We lack funds to carry out many of our plans'.³⁸⁵

'With one programme director in Gulu, an assistant in Kitgum, [and now assistant field officer in Pader] and three office workers, the ARLPI operates on a shoestring budget. Since September 2000, the UNDP stopped funding the ARLPI's activities, leading to a frantic search for new sources of assistance. In the fall 2000, the ARLPI submitted a \$336, 0000 proposal to donors seeking to expand the training and peace building programmes under the rubric of "capacity building and relationship building." . . . Peace campaigns epitomize the ARLPI's institutional outreach and collaboration, but they might dent its image, particularly when donor funds are not spent appropriately.'³⁸⁶

The diverse social agenda of the ARLPI may have dissipated the amount of focus on peace in the conflict itself or other smaller-scale conflict issues. None of the local projects have been able to join with others to lead to a broad national constituency or coalition for peace. Even the Jie-Karimojong and Acholi inter-tribal meeting has not yet yielded the fruit of peace that all desire. During the dry season, when the Jie warriors and cattle keepers come to Acholiland, or at the beginning of the rainy season when they move back to their land, there is always a lot of havoc and violence, which completely overshadows the relative peace which might have prevailed before.³⁸⁷ In theory, the ARLPI initiative was supportive of formal government, but it

³⁸⁵ Telephone interviews with Archbishop John Baptist Odama on Thursday, 23rd March, 2006; with Sheikh Musa Khalil, Gulu District Kadhi and Bishop Nelson Onono-Onweng on Thursday, 30 March 2006; with Monsignor Matthew Odong on Tuesday, 24 January 2004; with Betty Omuk Akwero, Program Coordinator, on Thursday, 6 March 2006.

³⁸⁶ Gilbert Khadiagala, op. cit., p. 18, 9.

³⁸⁷ Cf. 'Don't kill Acholi, marry them instead' in *Justice and Peace News* Vol. 7-No. 14, March 2006, p. 4; cf. Romano Longole, 'Continuous Insecurity in Northeast Uganda' in: *Fighting History in Uganda, Mennonite Central Committee Peace Office Publication* Volume 34, Number 2, April-June 2004, pp. 6-8.

competed to some degree with governing processes such as local representation and social services. The ARLPI helped support the formal apparatus of the state such as that which should be played by local and indeed national government officials. Local officials felt they should be responsible for peace negotiations with the LRA, and the APG felt that its MPs should be Acholiland's principal advocates and representatives before the central government through improving local civilian-military relations. But complaints were heard that the ARLPI's expanding activities, policy statements, institutionalisation, and becoming the 'conscience' of the local area as well as its increasing international visibility and funding acumen were leading it to possibly usurp roles. In fact the political attack from the side of the politicians has undermined the relative acceptance that the ARLPI had enjoyed at its start. This is because the ARLPI, on the other hand, decided to link up with the central government, as well as with the local government whose officials or appointees were only interested in furthering their political convictions or ambitions at the expense of the suffering local population. The ARLPI could not avoid this alliance either, for it did not want to alienate critical partners in the peace initiative.³⁸⁸

In the end we could say that the problems that hinder the return of true peace in Northern Uganda are also the external problems that the ARLPI has to grapple with. They are tied around the politics, economy and the status quo of the Ugandan society as described under the present situation vis-à-vis Northern Uganda.

4.4.2 The internal challenges of the ARLPI

We have already mentioned several times that the ARLPI is the first organisation of its kind in the whole of Uganda, the whole of Africa perhaps, and elsewhere. And consequently, there are inevitable flaws which stem from the inner organisation as well as the composition. They are ARLPI specific challenges, difficulties and shortcomings.

The first of these is the fact that members of the organisation still belong to their respective religious communities and as such, are limited by the existing limitations and restrictions that hinder, for example, ecumenism, inter-religious dialogues and inculturation. Whatever the Catholic Church of Gulu does, for example, must be in conformity with the practice and belief of the universal Catholic Church. This inevi-

³⁸⁸ Cf. Gilbert Khadiagala, *op. cit.*, p. 14.

tably brings about tensions. There are members of the Churches and perhaps mosques who look askance at the initiatives of their leaders and condemn them outright for having erred from the true practice.

As such, the organisation seems to be working in complete isolation from their respective international faith communities. We have already mentioned how the Archbishop of Gulu feels he needs the support and co-operation of his fellow Catholic hierarchy in Uganda.³⁸⁹ Fr. Deusdedit Nkurunziza has clearly spelt out what the Catholic Church in the AMECEA region must do if it is to be believed that it has not turned its back on the sufferings of Northern Uganda,³⁹⁰ but the realisation of this recommendation still leaves a lot to be desired. From the Anglican Church, we let Bishop Ochola, a victim himself and a committed member of the ARLPI, speak for himself:

'Today, I too, like Mr. Olara Otunnu, speak with a painful and heavy heart as a pastor who, by God's Grace, has also been made bishop in His Church, the Anglican Church of Uganda, which is part of our Anglican Communion. I speak with a heavy heart because I look back and see our consistent failure in prophetic witness as a church community and national Anglican Church of Uganda. I am especially pained because this failure has mostly been among us the leaders, the shepherds, that is, the House of Bishops. If we as a Church had stood up much earlier and spoken up with a united loud and clear voice about the catastrophe in Northern Uganda sooner than later, who knows how many lives we might have saved?'³⁹¹

Related to the aforementioned problem is the reportage by organisations belonging to the different faith communities which tend to be biased towards their given communities. When, for example, a Catholic organisation such as Caritas or Missio, makes a report of the activities of the ARLPI, the emphasis is on the Catholic Church and its contributions, sometimes to the exclusion of the other religious groups, thus severely affecting the spirit of ecumenism and inter-religious co-operation which is the backbone and precondition for the success of the ARLPI. Asked by the author what kind of problems they encounter in their trying to break the cycle of inter-religious animosity that had always set religious groups against one another, the Archbishop John Baptist Odama has this to say:

³⁸⁹ See what Comboni Father John Baptist Antonini's report in the Comboni Press, 'From the Missions: Acholi Slavery and Hopelessness.' *Comboni Mission Newsletter* Vol. 4, No. 2, 2003, p.10.

³⁹⁰ See Deusdedit R. K. Nkurunziza, 'Insurgency in Northern Uganda: A Challenge to the Church in AMECEA' in *AFER* Vol. 45 – No. 4, December 2003, pp. 314-328.

³⁹¹ M. B. Ochola, 'Human Catastrophe in Northern Uganda', op. cit., 3 December 2005.

'The most challenging moment for us internally is the fact that our faithful at the grassroots level haven't grasped the importance of unity in diversity and respect for one another in spite of their religious belongings. These very facts have also been played upon by politicians and those who would not love to see us united to bring a common cause. They have tried to divide us at the level of leadership of the ARLPI. We have nevertheless maintained our unity, in spite of our differences.'³⁹²

Notwithstanding the professed unity in diversity, it is to be expected that any human organisation has its flaws. In this respect, it is worth reading an e-mail that the author received from one of the former workers of the ARLPI:

'I may not have enough time to share my experiences with ARLPI here. But, certainly the inter-faith experiences were very enriching which is within the outcomes of Vatican II on the need to work with other faiths. ARLPI achieved a lot due [to] that orientation and inclusiveness, which is good for peace. You know, some people may manipulate religious orientation and practices to discredit [it]. I left because I had to go for further studies . . . and when I came back there was no opening for me in the organisation. I even did not want to come back to the same post. Though the person who succeeded me and [NN] in particular saw me as a threat and made sure they did not create a post for me.'³⁹³

This difference goes further to the fact that, although the ARLPI members pray and meditate on the Words of God (from the Bible and the Koran) together, the Christians are not able to concretise their call for, and claim of, unity by celebrating the Eucharist together. Any prayer moment for peace has to end without a Eucharistic celebration. But if we believe that the Eucharist is the centre of all our Christian life and activities, then it is even more strongly wanting in a situation of great trial like that of Northern Uganda that every moment is accompanied or directed by the Eucharist. This apparent insurmountable division is counter-productive and contra witness which makes the organisation incredible in their respective Christian Churches, anyway as all the Christians have always been in their divisions.

Related to this division is the mushrooming of independent Churches and sects and their 'different' teachings. Whereas the mainstream Churches in Northern Uganda, without denying or relegating the personal guilt of the population for their suffering, see that the war has persisted because of political and economic issues

³⁹² Telephone interview with John Baptist Osama on Thursday, 23rd March, 2006.

³⁹³ E-mail received by the author from the former worker of the ARLPI, Date: Tue, 20 Dec 2005 20:26:01 +0300 Subject: Re: ARLPI and documents available. Details have been altered to ensure the anonymity of the writer and those who caused their leaving the ARLPI.

which need to be redressed, the sects go the other way insisting on personal conversion and repentance as a precondition for the ending of the war. The war and suffering, according to them, are signs of God's punishment for the sinfulness of the Acholi. One example:

'As I went on with my journey, trying to answer the one thousand questions from my bewildered visitors, I remembered a radio programme I had listened to the day before. It was broadcast by a local station run by a certain brand of the many 'born again' churches which continue to mushroom in the country. The preacher, talking in English and Lwo, recalled the many hardships and misfortunes the people of Israel endured during their years of exile in Babylon. 'Because of their sins,' he concluded. In a similar fashion, the people of Acholi today are in the displaced people's camps. 'Because of their sins,' he repeated (or blasphemed, in my opinion).'³⁹⁴

The author recalls discussing with some youth and catechists of his parish of origin, Christ the King Kitgum Town Parish, how some were very angered by the 'crusade' of one Pastor Julius Peter Oyet of the Life Line Ministry Church that took place in Kitgum town in early 2004. During that crusade, it is alleged, Pastor Oyet called on all attendants to forward their rosary beads together with condoms that they carried in their pockets, to be burnt off since they belong to the same category of deviation from the way of God. The angered catechists and youth from the Catholic Church had wanted to storm and disperse the crusade of Pastor Oyet and perhaps would have done so, if it had not been for the timely intervention of local religious and political leaders who were able to soothe the situation.³⁹⁵

It is to be noted that this brand of Christianity is on the increase, and sometimes many are even purposefully sent by the politicians of the day as a political strategy.³⁹⁶ Thus Christianity becomes once again 'the opium of the poor, the sigh of the oppressed' as Karl Marx once said. The First Lady, now an MP-elect belongs to or leads one of these churches that convened a 'New Year's Peace Prayer for Acholi' at the end of 2004 when her husband and the military were throwing away the call to

³⁹⁴ Carlos Rodríguez, 'Forced labour back on Acholi roads' in *The Weekly Observer* of 23 – 30 March, 2003.

³⁹⁵ Cf. Meeting of the Catechists of Christ the King Parish with the Archbishop John Baptist Osama on Saturday, 31st July, 2004. The author was on home leave and attended this meeting.

³⁹⁶ Cf. Philip Jenkins, op. cit., pp. 135-39; cf. Ariane Martin, *Sehnsucht – der Anfang von allem. Dimensionen zeitgenössischer Spiritualität*, Ostfildern: Schwabenverlag, 2005.

negotiation and resorting to war as the only way of solving the 'problems of banditry' in Northern Uganda.³⁹⁷

Another problem of the ARLPI is the fact that two important people have resigned from it. They are Fr. Carlos Rodríguez and Lam Cosmas Oryem. This was and is still a big blow to the organisation for Fr. Carlos Rodríguez was among the founding members and had remained an important person in the organisation. When the author contacted him to ask for reasons for his resignation, his simple remark was: 'I found out that the ARLPI is an organisation with which I could not work any more.'³⁹⁸ This is an indication of growing unrest within the organisational structure of the ARLPI. Some members feel themselves alienated and that the organisation is interested in non-important issues rather than the essential one, the restoration of peace in Acholiland. The Acholi parliamentary group (APG), for example, was absent from the district institutions which the ARLPI joined with the local politicians and government representatives to build up. This absence is tied fundamentally to growing conflicts over roles and positions, which stem from the ARLPI's institutionalisation. The APG supported the ARLPI's initial objectives of finding ways to end the rebellion and promote reconciliation. From the perspective of the APG, these were manageable goals that coincided with the routine institutional mandate of religious leaders. Problems have arisen, however, because the APG is wary of the multiplication of the ARLPI's roles as it wades into the uncharted waters of development and reconstruction.³⁹⁹

Growing institutional tensions might reflect tough battles that are inevitable in the early phases of articulating new roles and positions. Yet, there are two dimensions to the institutional tensions that deserve attention. The first, inextricably tied to national politics, proceeds from the perception among some MPs that, although the ARLPI has evolved as an alternative entry point for the government to north, this has come about without significant alteration in the NRM's approach to the civil war or the

³⁹⁷ See John Odyek, 'UJCC renews call for talks with LRA' in: *The New Vision*, Friday, 9th December, 2005: <http://newvision.co.ug/D/8/13/470210/Janet%20prayers%20Northern%20Uganda> (24.05.2006).

³⁹⁸ Telephone interview with the author on Monday, 9th January 2006; the author received later a copy of his letter of resignation from the ARLPI where all the reasons are clearly stated. It is a counter witness for the members of the ARLPI to proclaim justice but not live it among themselves!

³⁹⁹ Cf. Gilbert Khadiagala, op. cit., p. 12. In the following we take up the quotation word for word from this report.

wider problem of northern economic and political marginalisation. With the polarisation of national politics along the Movement and Multiparty-divide, Acholi MPs (most who are multiparty activists) have less trust for the NRM. They claim the government's peace overtures are half-hearted since the continuation of the war benefits army commanders. Moreover, they contend, the NRM prefers the status quo because then it can use the war to justify the continuance of the Movement system. These criticisms have been extended to the donor-funded peace mobilization campaigns led by KJPF and DRPT which the MPs claim target people who might have relatively little control over the rebels, reinforce collective guilt of the Acholi and have a narrow focus. These campaigns, they contend, are opportunities for local leaders to use donor funds for personal ends.

The second dimension has a local flavour and is tied to intra-Acholi leadership feuds. It stems from the APG's concerns about its leadership position being usurped. There is also fear by some MPs that in the long term the ARLPI might become a launching pads for political careers. This view finds articulation in the claim that the religious leaders would be more effective using their existing institutions rather than creating new umbrella ones such as the ARLPI. This aspect of the conflict is equally bound to have implications for donor funding since some in the APG attribute the ARLPI's institutional evolution to donor resources. Hence they criticise the ARLPI for mobilising donor funding by charging that these efforts overstep the 'original modest, but well-intentioned priority of peace.' Similar criticisms are made of the role of donors in the anointment of traditional chiefs, a process that critics deride as misguided since the traditional leaders might not be effective in the modern context of war and cultural change. One of the donor organisations criticised by the APG, NUPI, has already been mentioned in this work.

We may conclude with Gilbert Khadiagala thus:

'Middle level community track II efforts work better when they focus on narrow issue areas such as peace and reconciliation, which generate broad consensus and are easy to mobilise opinion around. The question of focus is tied to one of role multiplication that generates the need for institutionalisation. The dilemma, however, is that even focusing on narrow issues requires a modicum of institution building, which the ARLPI has had to do. As these roles multiply, local actors are forced to create more elaborate organisational structures. This explains the emergence of institutional conflicts, as the ARLPI takes on a life larger than what some of its supporters envisaged. Perhaps one way out of the problem of role multiplication and institutionalisation is for such organisations to articulate clearly their missions from the outset. For

faith-based institutions in conflicts, it is also critical to define their relations with other existing institutions. The long-term mission of the ARLPI has yet to be effectively articulated to the lower rungs of the religious hierarchy, creating the impression at present, that the initiative is led and driven by a few individuals. Potential intra-organisational problems might arise without a conscious attempt to define its future vis-à-vis its targets and constituencies.⁴⁰⁰

4.5 Prospects of the ARLPI

The ARLPI had their restructuring meeting at the end of March 2006 when this part of the thesis was being written. From what the author was able to obtain and conclude, the organisation has realised the need for restructuring and bringing itself down to the grassroots level. Bishop Nelson Onono-Onweng, in the interview already mentioned, clearly confirms this state of affairs: 'We at the higher level have worked alone without involving our people at the grassroots level. We are going to restructure ourselves so that at the local level corresponding with the existing local council, we shall have also VPAs.'⁴⁰¹ Asked about how he is to integrate his role as chairman of the ARLPI with the pastoral work of the diocese, Archbishop John Baptist Odama answered thus:

'Yesterday we had a meeting in which we were planning restructuring ourselves. We would like now to extend to the grass root levels by having peace animators/workers at the political organisational levels of sub-county, parish, sub-parish and village. We plan also to have similar or complementary organisation for our Church structure at the Parish, sub-parish and chapel level. Our Small Christian Communities shall be places not only to reflect on the Sunday gospels, but also where peace will be discussed and applied to the daily life of the villages and camps. Yesterday there was also a workshop for those who will be animators/trainers of the animators.'⁴⁰²

The Inter-faith network for Peace-building Programme, INPP, which is the grand master plan of the organisation for the years 2006 to 2009, mentions these as its goals:

Overall goal: To create a conducive climate for sustainable peace and development in Uganda; Project purpose: Enhanced capacity of communities to engage in a non-

⁴⁰⁰ Ibid., p. 17.

⁴⁰¹ Bishop Nelson Onono-Onweng in telephone interview with the author on Thursday, 30 March 2006

⁴⁰² Archbishop John Baptist Osama in telephone interview with the author on Thursday, 23rd March, 2006.

violent approach to conflict resolution and peace building process in northern Uganda. The intended results of the project should be then the following:

- ‘1. Capacity of communities, in peace building, enhanced.
2. Peace mediation and mediation services strengthened.
3. Community Peace Support mechanism strengthened.
4. Institutional Support mechanism for peace and dialogue strengthened.
5. Advocacy, Information and Lobby for Peace enhanced.
6. Women Interfaith Network strengthened.
7. ARLPI capacity in peace building supported.’⁴⁰³

Whether or not the organisation is going to receive the funding necessary for the implementation of this grand project remains a question beyond the scope of this thesis.

4.6 General Concluding remarks: A concise Theology of, and recommendations for peace, justice and reconciliation in Uganda

We have seen what it has taken Uganda to reach the current state. It is a sick nation in need of peace, reconciliation and healing, but also greatly threatened by the political event of the February 23, 2006 presidential and parliamentary elections, where the incumbent retained office. The judicial challenge brought by the first runner-up opposition was thrown up by the court-ruling of 3 to 4 in favour of the election results. But in the words of the Supreme Court Judges, there are serious concerns on some issues which they remarked:

‘In the result, by majority decision, it is ordered that the petition be, and it is hereby dismissed. We make no order as to costs. We are constrained to comment on a number of matters which have given us grave concern:

- The continued involvement of the security forces in the conduct of elections where they committed acts of intimidation, violence and partisan harassment;
- The massive disenfranchisement of voters by deleting their names from the voters’ registers, without their knowledge or being heard;
- The apparent partisan and partial conduct by some electoral officials;

⁴⁰³ ARLPI, op cit., March 2006. The document was received by the author from the Project Co-ordinator of the ARLPI, Ms Betty Omuk Akwero via e-mail on 4th April, 2006.

- The apparent inadequacy of voter education.⁴⁰⁴

These are serious issues that should not be left only to the politicians. The politicians will always look only for situations favourable to their political whims and exploit them at the cost of the others. The Church has, therefore, an urgent task and mandate to work towards the realisation of a just and peaceful society in Uganda. First of all there is the civic education of citizens in matters pertaining to elections, civil rights and obligations, peace, justice and reconciliation. The civic education given by the government and its agency, the Electoral Commission, has always been only just before elections for the instruction of how to vote 'wisely' and nothing else!

The Church in Uganda has to strive to regain her role in connection with the armed forces by re-instating the post of the Military Chaplaincy.⁴⁰⁵ It is only in this position that she could have some influence on the behaviour and activities of the soldiers, who, many times, are the objects and perpetrators of the human rights violation.

As much as the Catholic Bishops irritate the general public with their stand and writing on abortion⁴⁰⁶, on condoms or on homosexuality, they should also be able to irritate the corrupt and undemocratic politicians with their concrete actions on issues related with peace, justice, national as well as intertribal reconciliation and fight against corruption, nepotism, ethnocentrism and other evils that now dog the integrity of the nation as well as that of the Church. They should become real thorns in the flesh of our politicians and public servants and never show any signs of collusion with any on dubious issues – cooperating certainly with the government for the welfare of the people and of the nation, to promote democracy, justice, peace and the overdue reconciliation. It is only when they fulfil such roles that they can be genuinely and credibly called the 'conscience of the society'⁴⁰⁷. If they do not do it now, people will become disgusted and begin to suspect that the 'Pajero' gifts at consecration are compromises.

⁴⁰⁴ 'The Supreme Court Ruling' in: *Monitor Online* printed from: <http://www.monitor.co.ug/news/news-04073.php> (07.04.2006).

⁴⁰⁵ See Jean-Marie Nsambu, 'No more military chaplains for the Uganda Army' in *Leadership* No. 439, June 2005, pp. 8-13.

⁴⁰⁶ Cf. Catholic Bishops' open letter on Abortion' in: *Leadership* No. 446, February 2006, pp., 22-3.

⁴⁰⁷ Cf. Paolino Mondo Twesigye (1991), op. cit., p. 282.

Talking about peace, mentioning it, or writing about it in a 4-page pastoral letter is of little value when it is not followed by any concrete actions. Action is what is crucial for Uganda now – a national programme that is just and sincere in its settings from the side of the Church is what can now help Uganda from sliding back into a state of uncertainty that surrounds the recently concluded elections. As Bishop Zephania Kameeta remarked about writing, we also say it for Uganda that ‘renewal and redemption were not scribbled down on paper (in expensive books) that the poor cannot even afford. They happened or occurred.’⁴⁰⁸ This is now even more important for Uganda than it may be for Namibia during the time of Kameeta's struggle, for in Uganda of today not everyone is able to read and write. Both Frs. V. E. Okot Oburo and P. M. Twesigye are united in stressing and demanding that the Bishops' Conference translate the pastoral letters into vernaculars and circulate them, even encouraging that they become integrated into school curriculum and adult literacy programmes.⁴⁰⁹ If each Bishop would translate their pastoral letters into the vernacular of his diocese, it would give more value to those letters. But to achieve that, it means each Bishop should also be *au fait* with the language and culture of the people he serves. Are they all anyway?

Fr. Albert Nolan gives us another aspect of the Church when he calls on Churches, especially on the issues of peace, justice and human rights to become radical and even controversial. He says,

‘The Church that tries to avoid everything controversial will end up by becoming a very controversial Church. It will be criticised for sitting on the fence. It will be criticised for betraying the gospel. Any preaching of the gospel that tries to remain neutral with regard to issues that deeply affect the lives of people, like the issue of the poor and the rich, is in fact taking sides. It is taking sides with the status quo, even if that is not its intention, because its neutrality prevents change.’⁴¹⁰

The Church in Uganda must then be able to read the signs of the times and fully proclaim and fulfil its prophetic roles, thus becoming the universal sign of liberation

⁴⁰⁸ Jörg Baumgarten, op. cit., p. 133. This address of Kameeta was delivered at the preparation of the World Council of Churches' meeting in Harare in 1988 and used materials from these sources: Ulrich Duchrow, *Alternatives to Global Capitalism*, A. Hugh Lewin, *Community of Clowns* and others.

⁴⁰⁹ See V. E. Okot Oburo, op. cit., p. 153 and P. M. Twesigye (1990), pp. 110-112, where he even gave the figure of illiteracy at the time, about 60%. Therefore, one cannot and actually must not content oneself with having published a pastoral letter. There is still more to be done after writing.

⁴¹⁰ Albert Nolan (1988), op. cit., pp. 13-14.

which it should really be.⁴¹¹ This, in view of the recently concluded elections, the everlasting situation of Northern Uganda and many other social issues, is more important than ever even if at the time of writing this page the situation in northern Uganda seems to have calmed down. This apparent calm is but only a normal lull like many this conflict has often experienced.⁴¹² The Church of Uganda has to take seriously the comments of the Supreme Court Judges about the situation on the ground in the country and the Besigye's saga with the government deciding to spend Shilling 2.5 billions on hired lawyers who should pin him.⁴¹³ The recommendation of Clement Majawa seems most fitting at this moment:

'A free and democratic society is the ideal that every nation should be striving for. Human beings are in constant search for free expression of their ideas and integral development. This desire for freedom and development is at the heart of people's struggles throughout their lives. Thus the Church's crucial role [is] of guiding them as they fight against 'sins of injustice and exploitation, and the structures produced by these sins'. To do this, the Church should put in place pastoral programmes which will empower people to take full responsibility in building up the society. This task calls for serious commitment to creating an atmosphere where *genuine democracy and development* can flourish; a slow process which should be undertaken in a spirit of mutual trust.'⁴¹⁴

For the ARLPI we could confidently conclude that their activities, even if apparently not in conformity with the traditional understanding of Pastoral and in spite of many internal setbacks that the group faces at the moment, are a good step in the right direction. After all, 'all branches of theology, whether theoretical or practical,

⁴¹¹ Cf. Roman Siebenrock, Willibald Sandler (Hg), *Kirche als universales Zeichen. In memoriam Raymund Schwager SJ*, (Wien – Münster, Lit Verlag, 2005).

⁴¹² Cf. Carlos Rodríguez, 'Forced labour back on Acholi roads', op. cit; cf. Chris Dolan, *Views on Northern Ugandan Conflict from inside the War Zone. Report on COPE fieldwork findings, Northern Uganda: COPE Working Paper 5*, (London: A.C. O. R. D, April 2000), p. 4 where he characterises the war as having four phases following repeated patterns.

⁴¹³ Cf. Carlos Rodríguez, 'Shs 2.5bn to nail Besigye? What a pity!' in: *The Weekly Observer*, 18th May, 2006; <http://www.ugandaobserver.com/new/oped/oped200505183.php> (22.05.2006).

⁴¹⁴ Clement Majawa, op. cit., p. 117. in the previous sections he lists the roles of the Church as challenging the government to create structures that will liberate people from poverty and injustice; initiating programmes of integral development in collaboration with the State so as to bring about genuine democracy; offering constructive criticism to the government where the latter is not open to authentic democracy; helping people to build a spiritual and moral society; fighting against corruption at all levels and safeguarding cordial coexistence between Church and State, *ibid.*, pp. 113-7.

purpose in one way or another to make priests *the ministers of Christ, and the dispensers of the mysteries of God* (1 Cor 4:1).'⁴¹⁵ And as Archbishop Odama puts it,

'We are not going to integrate our activities into any other pastoral strategies. Our activities are themselves pastoral work. How can we organise Small Christian Communities, for instance, or any other pastoral strategy when our people are still cramped in the camps – concentration camps, where they don't have even a tree under which they could reflect on the Words of God? Getting peace now is our pastoral task number one!'⁴¹⁶

A similar position had already been written by Pope Paul VI in his post-synodal apostolic exhortation, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, as follows:

'The Church, as the bishops repeated, has the duty to proclaim the liberation of millions of human beings, many of whom are her own children—the duty of assisting the birth of this liberation, of giving witness to it, of ensuring that it is complete. This is not foreign to evangelisation.'⁴¹⁷

And indeed this is true, for 'a pastoral evaluation cannot be achieved in quantitative terms of figures and statistics. The pastoral success is rather measured in terms of quality. Jesus himself understood this very well and was satisfied with the formation of twelve apostles.'⁴¹⁸ Moreover the 'substantial content of evangelisation is expressed in our "symbol of faith" and to bear witness to this faith is the first task of every Christian as evangeliser.'⁴¹⁹ Yes, '*How lovely on the mountains are the feet of him who brings good news, who announces peace, who announces salvation and says to Zion, "Your God reigns!"*' (NAU Isa 52: 8) and indeed '*Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied. Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*' (NAB Mt 5:6, 9-10)

⁴¹⁵ 'Pastoral Theology' in the *Online Catholic Encyclopaedia* <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14611a.htm> (09.04.2006); cf. Josef Müller, „Pastoral“ in: *LThK*, Bd 7, ³ 1998, 1434; cf. Phillip Müller, „Seelsorge“ in: *LThK*, Bd 9, ³ 2000, 383-7.

⁴¹⁶ Telephone interview with the author on Thursday, 23rd March, 2006; cf. Paul M. Zulehner, *Pastoraltheologie, Bd. 4 Pastorale Futorologie. Kirche auf dem Weg ins gesellschaftliche Morgen*, (Düsseldorf, Patmos Verlag, 1990), especially pp. 38-49, 168-181 and from 221 up to the end.

⁴¹⁷ Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi: Apostolic Exhortation on Evangelization in the Modern World* promulgated on December 8, 1975, no. 30.

⁴¹⁸ Rodrigo Mejía, 'Small Christian Communities in Eastern Africa 26 Years on: Lights and Shadows' in Patrick Ryan (ed.), *News Strategies for a New Evangelisation in Africa*, (Nairobi: Pauline's Publications Africa, 2002), p. 67.

⁴¹⁹ Ibid, 'Conditions for Promoting Justice and Peace: An Integrated New Evangelisation', in *ibid*, p.56; cf. Donall Dorr, *op. cit.*, pp. 76-166, 'Mission as Evangelisation, as Inculturation, as Struggle for Liberation, as Reconciliation and as Option for the Poor.'

The situation in Northern Uganda and in Uganda as a whole should become a fulfilment of the prophecy of Isaiah: *They will build houses and live in them; they will plant vineyards and eat their fruit. They will not build for others to live in, or plant for others to eat; for the days of my people will be like the days of a tree, and my chosen ones will themselves use what they have made. They will not toil in vain, nor bear children destined to disaster, for they are the race of Yahweh's blessed ones and so are their offspring.* (NJB Isa 65:21-23). This is only possible when we Christians and those who believe they have received the call to 'watch over us' seriously listen to and make it their own this exhortation of St. Paul to his followers, the Elders in Ephesus: *Keep watch over yourselves and over all the flock which the Holy Spirit has placed in your care. Be shepherds of the church of God, which He made his own through the sacrificial death of His Son.* (Acts 20:28)

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