

LETTER FROM KAMPALA

Note:

The following is a letter I wrote immediately after my return from Uganda last March. Some of it has been overtaken by events, in relation to the war against the rebels and recent economic policy decisions. I decided however that it might still be of interest to AFSAAP members not least because of the paucity of information about Uganda that reaches us here in Australia.

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I write in fact from Adelaide, and a month after my return from East Africa, simply because this is the first opportunity I have had, since we began what is already an extraordinarily busy academic year, to do so. At the risk of seeming presumptuous, however, I decided you might still be interested in how my visit went; news both personal and political so to speak: on the one hand about my own doings, on the other about the changes in Uganda, especially since the NRA took over twelve months ago last January. So I hope it is not too late to write, or that my comments have not altogether been overtaken by more recent events.

I was in East Africa for three months, from early December to late February, of which ten weeks were in Uganda. Much of that time was spent in Kampala, where the environment was infinitely more peaceful and hopeful than it had been on the occasion of my last visit, in July-August 1985. I stayed at first at the Church of Uganda guest house on Namirembe, and so was plunged immediately into Kampala life so to speak. The view from my window across to Rubaga and the old Kabaka's palace, and of the early morning mist in the valleys and the flat-topped hills was just the same as it has always been. The first couple of nights however I was kept awake into the early hours by the discos in Mengo below us, and was told "people are happy to be able to have their discos again" which summed up one important change. In the mornings I was awakened by more melodious sounds: first the call to the mosque at 5.30, then the soldiers singing at 6 o'clock, (I assume as they did their early morning march) followed finally at 6.30 by the birds. In the evenings I could walk up Namirembe hill and enjoy the peace of the cathedral grounds, green and beautifully cared for, along with quite a few other people who were doing the same, and the children who play on the grass. I find there is still a tremendous sense of place about Namirembe and the cathedral: European with its vaulted nave, Byzantine with its copper dome and cross, its red bricks wonderfully mellowed and the whole building an integral part of the landscape, commanding those wonderful views across the countryside, and the green hills dotted with red-roofed houses. And it is truly African, not only in its setting, but in its congregation, its music, (the choir seemed to practise every evening so there was always the sound of lovely music in the air), and its place in history. On two separate evenings I found myself explaining the headstones in the little graveyard first with a young American also staying at the guest house (en route to Arua where his family are at present working with the C of U refugee rehabilitation programme) and then with a young Ethiopian refugee who knew remarkably little about Uganda or its past civil and religious wars. Over Christmas I reread Lugard's Uganda diaries, which, not quite a hundred years later, have a peculiarly contemporary ring about them. The bullet holes in the walls of the guest house testify to Namirembe's more recent experience of war. Not only there but everywhere of course in Kampala a great many people have amazing stories to tell, which heighten the present sense of relief one has at the peace that followed.

Namirembe guest house is looked after very well by a nice young Chiga woman, who, prior to taking up this position, was working in one of the town hotels. Given the cost of living, of which more anon; the fact that there was no running water, the whole guest house complex being dependent on one pipe linked up to Mengo Hospital's supply which

is turned on once a day, each morning, at which time staff and children queue to fill unnumberable jerry cans for the day's supply; and all sorts of other problems like unpredictable power cuts, it runs very well. It was always full of bishops and country clergy, and often some of their flock, mostly but not entirely from the west of Uganda; expatriate mission people, a number working with Life Ministry, for example in Hoima and in Mbale. Some Tearfund people came to visit some of the community-based primary health care projects with which they are associated, including a very interesting Englishman working in Nigeria, and it was interesting to hear of the work there as well. I greatly enjoyed meeting Bishop Kivengere and his wife, and other people from African Evangelistic Enterprises. After Christmas we had visitors from Covenant College, Tennessee, whose links with Uganda began with one of their own Ugandan students who started an organisation, Wings of Hope, I think to channel American Church assistance to Uganda churches. The Covenant College missionary makes regular visits for teaching and other mission work. My impression was of greatly increased activity among the evangelicals of the Church of Uganda and of the fundamentalist churches, and their overseas mission contacts.

I moved over to Makerere latish in January.

Makerere is as green and pleasant as ever; tidier, comparatively peaceful, and I understand all the kitchens in the halls of residence have now been properly rehabilitated. At the graduation ceremony the Vice-Chancellor also announced a number of other assistance projects agreed upon. Overall however the situation did not seem to have changed that much from 2 years ago: water remained a problem, the library still awaits restoration, books and periodicals are still a critical problem, housing is still enormously under pressure. At MISR (where I am a research affiliate) as everywhere else, there is still a great deal to be done before one can assume it is truly back on its feet. So that one hopes the donors' conference that was to take place at Makerere in March has had a positive outcome.

As on Namirembe, so on Makerere, people experienced the war at first hand, and I listened very humbly to the stories of how they coped; and doubted whether I could have possibly demonstrated such courage. We had a nice little Christmas party at MISR, organised by Peter Mpinga, who still carried on, and who recalled that the idea of a Christmas party originated with Derek Stenning, in 1964. Then (1964), he told us, "it was a bottle of sherry and lasted fifteen minutes, long enough for people to greet each other after which they went home." Our party, which was in the afternoon, went on a good deal longer, and we had beer and peps, meat and groundnuts and Dan Mudoola, now Director, gave a little speech as well as Peter. It was good to see so many old friends, not just at MISR but all across the hill, and as in the past so once again I feel great respect for the way so many individuals handle what remains a very difficult situation. Inflation erodes Makerere as it does everywhere else, and the constant imperatives of survival must impede the academic and intellectual endeavour. Nonetheless, quite a number of staff have been drawn into one or other of the inquiries set up by the NRM, including the Commission of Inquiry into Local Government, and the Human Rights Commission of Inquiry, which was holding public hearings while I was in Kampala.

This year, unlike 1985, I did travel outside Kampala and Buganda. Without transport of my own, I was dependent on lifts so you may of course ask why I didn't simply take buses. Had I been there longer I guess I would. But I confess to a desire to avoid them, not simply out of concern for comfort, but because of the long delays that occur at road blocks, where I observed long lines of passengers waiting as NRA soldiers checked identity cards. The soldiers are these days polite and courteous, and do not ask for bribes, certainly not in my experience. But they do check everyone, and it takes a good deal longer when it is a bus load rather than a landrover. So I was relieved I did not have to join such queues, and was grateful for the lifts I was given: with Unicef to Mbarara, Oxfam to Soroti and to Jinja on a separate occasion with the company secretary of the Kakeru Sugar Works. The roads are not good, there is no doubt of that, although in some

places they are less bad than in others. Accommodation is often very difficult (unless of course you stay in the hotel at Mukono which was 87,000 shillings a night and really does have hot and cold running water, or the Katatumbwa resort hotel five miles out of Mbarara which was 100,000 shillings a night!) Somewhere I read a definition of travelling (as distinct from tourism) as "depriving oneself of accustomed comforts" and certainly just at present comfort is at a distinct premium in Uganda. But the Mwea Lodge was booked out last Christmas! And comfort is a relative concept, so that given that the Soroti Hotel had been looted of virtually everything less than two years ago, I thought that what they provided us with was more than adequate (bed, jerry can of water and plastic basin in lieu of running water in the bathroom, food, clean rooms, friendly staff). And the countryside hasn't changed: the wonderful sense of space you have as you move into the drier, open Teso country beyond Mbale; or the views of the mountains as you travel west, and leave the green, untidy Buganda countryside behind. Above all, people are friendly and welcoming, and in my experience, in trying to get back to research at district level, without exception, helpful. The main problem at that level was again, transport: it was good to have a lift to Mbarara, but once the landrover dropped me off in the town, and went on its way to Kigezi, I then had to walk. Even so, one way or another, I managed some worthwhile expeditions off the main road so to speak.

The whole atmosphere both in and out of Kampala was remarkably different from two years before. There was a lot of traffic on the roads, although it thins out greatly as you go north from Mbale towards Soroti. The Kampala-Masaka Road is always busy, as it is down to Mbarara, not least with lorries laden with matooke, an indication of the importance of Ankole these days for Kampala's food supplies. All the old roadside trading activity is there as in the past, although everything costs a great deal more these days. Lots of people seemed to be travelling! In southern Uganda at least. Kampala itself by day was full of people, although a lot of them did not seem to have anything to do. The traffic moves a good deal faster than it used to. Throughout the day the mini-buses provide an excellent, if not particularly comfortable means of transport down to Kampala, wonderfully organised: 500 shillings from Namirembe into town. Twenty people packed into the combi, the bus boys at the pick-up points shout out destinations and put the *musungu* into the front seat. The same from Wandegeya. The markets at Nakasero, Wandegeya, Owino, are full of fruit and vegetables, meat, basic goods like soap and cooking oil - but not sugar! There is every kind of business and craft at Wandegeya, including three hairdressers and two bars that offer rotisseries chickens, and Chikuwo, a "market" of shops on the site of the old Asian go-downs below Kampala road - was always doing brisk business. Both there and at Wandegeya I found myself thinking above all of the similarity these days with the West African scene. There was a liveliness and bustle of activity on Kampala streets, and even more so the main street in Jinja, that implied a lot of trade. (Josephine Harmsworth took me to the enormous Jinja market, with its amazing range of goods, including she tells me, the biggest secondhand clothing market in East Africa to which people come from far and wide).

The first point to be made therefore, a year after the NRA took over, is that there was a degree of peace in Kampala and the Buganda countryside that had been absent for a long time and most important of all the NRA were an ordered force. There was a real attempt in progress to cope with the rehabilitation of the "Luwero Triangle", and to resettle returning refugees to the south west and in West Nile. There was a Commission of Inquiry into Human Rights holding a public inquiry (at that stage in Kampala) which was a major item of reporting in the local and especially the vernacular press. For the first time for many years those in power seemed to be: (1) trying to control the armed forces and to prevent the kind of violence perpetrated by the military of the past; (2) publically committed to greater participation by the mass of the people in the political process and the making of the decisions that affect their daily lives. Hence, the interesting innovations of the Resistance Committees being set up from village upwards in what amounts to a new local government structure and which have caught many people's imagination; (3) seeking a more equitable distribution of basic commodities by putting it into the hands of those committees.

But the peace was very fragile. This was brought home to me in many different ways, and at different levels. In the first place social violence has not gone away Walking on Namirembe one evening for example I met one of the cathedral warden's very distressed because thieves had stolen six amplifiers and most of the red carpet from down the nave. I understand they managed to retrieve most of the carpet when someone tipped them off that it was being sold in Nakulabye market, but the preacher the following Sunday had to preach without amplifiers. Certainly there was much less gunfire in Kampala at night than I remembered, although towards the end of my stay there was more reported shooting around the suburbs, at Mwenge (at the foot of Tank Hill) and Nakulabye. Car robberies at gun point have by no means stopped. Most people remain very cautious about moving around at night. More fundamental is the culture of violence that has been bred by scarcity, but to understand which one has to seek to understand what is going on inside society itself.

In the second place there remained the severe dislocation of society in much of the northern part of the country. The war dragged on in Acholi.¹ While I was there, there was a succession of incidents, engagements between 'rebels' and the NRA, and since I left there have been more. In the north east, notwithstanding the lull that followed the NRA sweep through Karamoja late last year, the cattle-raiding has not been brought to an end. In Karamoja itself inter-clan/district raiding continued. War and prospective famine remained therefore part of the situation in the north and north east.....People were very concerned about the food shortages that must continue over the coming months in Soroti until a harvest can be gathered (always providing they have been able to plant with the rains). There can be no doubt moreover of the suffering that people in the Acholi countryside, and especially the Kitgum area, have faced as a result of the continued fighting between the NRA and the remnants of the soldiers still supporting the old UNLA and the former regime. I am sure that you heard the Bishop of Gulu's BBC interview last February when he claimed the situation in the "Acholi triangle" was worse than it had been in Luwero. Whether or not that is so, there can be no doubt that the ordinary Acholi have been caught between two forces and in the continuing struggle for power, and it will be a long time before the consequences of this continuing conflict are overcome.

It was the economic dislocation however that constituted the greatest danger to the peace, for a great many people in the south as well as the north of the country. What hit you first and hardest and longest in Kampala was the inflation. When I arrived at the beginning of December the bank rate for the dollar was 1,400 shillings, the black market rate was 9,000 shillings. When I left ten weeks later, the bank rate was the same, but the black market rate had peaked at 20,000 shillings. It had started to go up again at Christmas, but then at the end of January seemed to go haywire, and in mid-February jumped from 15,000 shillings to 20,000 shillings in a few days. The newspapers publish the Magendo rate along with the bank rate of the major currencies, so there is no difficulty in finding out what it is. In fact, by mid-February it was a major pre-occupation of many people, since prices follow the Magendo rate. The Kampala markets were full of produce and goods - but the prices were astronomical. I did my shopping at Wandegeya which gave me a pretty good introduction to the problems of housekeeping in today's Uganda - 1,600 shillings for a litre of milk, 3,500 shillings for a loaf of bread, 10,000 shillings for a kilo of meat, 25,000 shillings if you want a chicken cooked on the rotisserie (I didn't), 5,000 shillings for a pineapple, and 1,000 shillings for one sweet potato.²

¹ and since the time of writing has extended into the Teso area. There have also in recent months been disturbances in Eastern Province.

² Since then, in May, the Uganda government has introduced a new currency, so hopefully this will have changed this situation.

What this meant in terms of human suffering is all too obvious. For the foreigner or Ugandan with access to foreign currency and who is willing to change it on the street, Kampala must, at present, be one of the cheapest places in the world to live well and many Ugandans are aware of this and resent it. For the majority of Ugandans the story is different. A nightwatchman in Makerere earns 9,000 shillings a month (and is not always paid on time); a professor 80,000 shillings and I suppose a permanent secretary in the government about the same. By mid-February a bunch of matoke could cost up to 20,000 shillings, a bar of washing soap 10,000 shillings, and so it went on. At Christmas time, I felt deeply offended at the sheer greed and exploitation explicit in the prices demanded for shoddy merchandise in the shops on Kampala Road, and by mid-February I felt the trading community was holding both government and society to ransom. What all this means in terms of survival you know. No-one could live on their wage or salary and everyone has to have a second and even third source of income. There are all too many women sitting on the Kampala streets these days, usually with a baby or small child beside them, with a small pile of tomatoes, or pencils or something else in front of them. At one level Uganda had become a nation of petty traders.

Civil servants and others in the wage sector turn their hands to a variety of activities besides. Firinooni Banugire in the Economics department in Makerere has written a very interesting paper on the impact of the economic crisis on fixed income earners, which has a lot of fascinating detail as to how people actually cope, some by legitimate, some by illegitimate, means. He brings out amongst other consequences what is all too obvious: the way in which government has become a milch cow for the great majority of public servants, with "magendo-sharing mechanisms" which have eroded the government machine until it is a shell of its former self. The erosion began many years ago, since the rot started under Amin, but the crucial point now is that no-one seems to know how to stop it or to reverse the economic crisis. I am sure I do not have to labour this point, but what I believe is equally important to remember is the real anguish with which many, many Ugandans seek to maintain their integrity, or at least some of it, in the face of the enormous problems of survival they encounter. Josephine Harmsworth has written a very interesting and provocative, as well as honest, paper (to appear in a book on *Children and War* that Cole Dodge, of Unicef, has edited due to appear soon) on parenting, and the problems as she sees them, that parents face in their efforts to bring up their children with a moral sense when the world around them forces upon them a survival behaviour that contradicts the code of honest behaviour that they try to teach. The same kinds of problems confront so many people.

The trouble is of course, as one young civil servant, a recent Makerere graduate struggling to make do on the 30,000 shillings a month that is his salary, put it to me, "The funny thing is that there are some very rich people in Uganda" and that is exactly it. Not everyone is poor, and there is some enormously lavish, ostentatious, conspicuous consumption. The first night I was in Mbarara I was kept awake all night by a wedding party, or "after party" as it is called, which took the form of a disco that went on until 7 a.m. (I was told later that such affairs are called "transnites" and the custom of going on until dawn originated in the Obote Mark II years when it became too dangerous to go home in the dark small hours). Whether or not that is the case, certainly it was a big party, beer flowed (as I was told later) and it must have cost millions of shillings. The same must apply to the spate of big weddings that were taking place in Kampala while I was there, which prompted one young Munyankole friend to say "The exiles are wedding". Apparently big fund raisers are in fact held to collect the money for such occasions, but that only makes it worse, and I was very interested that Museveni used the occasion of the wedding of the NRA Army Commander Elly Tumwine (who himself had only a small wedding luncheon for twenty people at State House) to criticise "excessively extravagant weddings" with too much emphasis on expensive ceremonies and parties and "making money out of the bride price". What was also interesting was that he specifically linked the pressures that resulted from relatives' demands upon soldiers for financial

assistance with the danger of corruption in the army itself. There is certainly little doubt that the corruption nurtured by scarcity as well as greed hasn't gone away.

The NRM regime was thus facing enormous problems. First, the war not only constituted the major drain upon its resources, but involved also so many other issues, not least those of maintaining NRA discipline and what I call "purity" in its dealings with the civilians. Given that the "rebels" originally refused a political solution and themselves then invaded across the Sudan border, it is difficult to see how the NRA could do anything but seek a military solution now.³ But the price paid has already been high, in terms of the isolation and withdrawal of the Acholi and the legacy of alienation. The same danger applies to Karamoja. Thus, the hardest task must be the long term re-integration of north and south on new, not old terms, and that is one task that no-one seemed to have faced up to. What people seemed determined about in Kampala however was never to allow the armed forces to be controlled again by "the north", or to give up the control by "the south" over the military or to allow the shift in the balance of power that the NRA victory has brought to be lost.

The second problem is the apparent chaos of the economic situation. Defence expenditure constitutes a major constraint. There are the enormous costs of rehabilitation and reconstruction, in terms of both money and men, when experienced management is in very short supply. Industry was limping along at 30% capacity. The regime had accepted responsibility for the Obote Mark II Regime's debts, so 50 per cent of the coffee earnings (\$200 of \$400 million) goes in debt servicing. There remained an acute shortage of foreign exchange, and while coffee remains virtually the only export crop, coffee is less profitable to the farmer than matoke. Matoke however benefits some much more than others, and the profits do not seem to go into productive investment. The need to diversify away from coffee has been recognised for a long time, but recognition by itself is not enough, as the drive to encourage greater production of beans for the market makes clear. You need a working marketing system as well. Farmers in Kigezi have been doing very well, smuggling their beans across the border into Rwanda. This has made all the difference for the small people in their attempt to survive in the face of inflationary prices. Kampala however has to stop that smuggling! It seems comical in one sense, given the emphasis at the OAU level on the expansion of inter-African trade! It is generally acknowledged that Ugandans have survived the economic decline over the past five years (and longer) because the great majority have access to a home farm, and there is no reason to doubt that. But you also have to bear in mind that rural poverty is in many cases the basic constraint. "You need money to return to the rural areas" as James, a Makerere nightwatchman said to me, when I asked him why he did not go home to Hoima and farm his small family plot. So that it is important to remember that in many ways the local community is being asked to assume an increasing share of the costs of local services (this has been true of education for many years).

Discussion about economic reforms seemed to focus primarily on devaluation but the issues are much more fundamental. What seemed clear was that no conventional economic solution seemed likely to work. Yet the professional advice seemed to be primarily from the "conventional" economists. Even more important perhaps, the decline of the bureaucracy raised doubts as to the capacity of the regime to implement any policy. 80 per cent of the budget goes on keeping the government machine going but it provides precious little in the way of services by return, and this failure plus the continued economic crisis and rising inflation must mean a steady loss of credibility. I found myself saying over and over again, in connection with the Resistance Committees, you cannot decentralise the power you don't have. In fact you could argue that the RCs reflect people's power, not regime power; but the real point is the grass roots need some

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assistance from the centre if they are to make these committees a reality; and all too often the centre cannot give it. This was obvious in relation to the availability or otherwise of basic commodities: it is no good putting distribution into the RCs' hands if there is nothing to distribute or so little that the temptation to siphon it off to the black market is too great to resist.

The seeming inability of the NRM to resolve the economic crisis makes it all the more important to bear in mind that not everyone in Uganda is pleased to have the NRA and Museveni in power; and that the old cleavages have not necessarily been overcome or even brought under control. In 1986 the NRM abolished political parties but the local power structures remain, subsumed within its "broad-based government". One needs therefore to bear in mind the old divisions within southern Uganda, rather than focus solely on the "polarisation of north and south" if one wants to understand the threat to the integrity of the NRM regime.

One of the most interesting events during my stay was President Lule's state funeral and the events surrounding it, all of them televised: the arrival of the body at Entebbe airport, the journey of the cortege to Kampala, and to Parliament House, the lying in State and then the state funeral, with the service at Namirembe Cathedral and the burial in a new and special (presidential) burying place on Kololo airstrip. Over that week (which ended with the celebrations of the first anniversary of the NRA takeover) we had a series of discussions on the TV with three different panels of people, all talking about Lule's life and work. Museveni himself gave the address at the funeral at Kololo, when he emphasised Lule's unreserved commitment to the armed struggle. "Lule" he said, "created a big clan (the NRM) into which all the family will fit." But what came over to me in all the panel discussions and the events themselves was a sense, so far as Buganda is concerned, of the "traditionalist" element in retreat. The social basis of authority in Buganda has been eroded over the past twenty years at least. Think for instance of the chiefs. You have to remember also that a whole generation, born in 1966, have come of age never knowing a Kabaka! People in their fifties may regret the loss of the Kabakaship and all it stood for, but perhaps the younger ones don't care. Life does move on and I doubt the Kabakaship is a real issue, and certainly Ronnie Muteba's behaviour suggests he will not make it so.

The sense of being Baganda however remains, intensified by the experience of Luwero coming on top of long years under Obote. Baganda feel they have been injured and they will fight for their identity. It was pointed out to me that what has been different in the mid-1980's as compared with the 1960's is that this time many young Baganda fought with the NRA. Thus, the younger generation, as well as the older, has a strong focus on the centre and many want a real change from the past in terms of values as much as anything else. Moreover, there is a new rich who get rich on "selling air" (winning government tenders, e.g. for food stuffs and taking the money without supplying the goods). There is a new business class, born out of the Amin years. In one sense the crucial battle in Uganda seems to be between those *Mafutamingi* who went on to consolidate (regularise?) their position under Obote Mark II and the older established business class. It is being fought in southern Uganda and I suspect that is of much greater importance for an understanding of the lines of conflict today than the north-south divide. The UPC has been totally discredited - like the CPP in Ghana - but the forces that bred and nurtured the UPC have not disappeared. And while the NRA leadership may have rejected the instrumental notion of politics as a "winner takes all" game that applied in the past, this does not apply to all their followers. Thus, at both local and national level, tensions remain, making it all the more important for the NRM not to become a patronage regime, but also making it difficult for it to institute fundamental change. Hence, the real question must become whether the central core of the NRA/NRM can retain sufficient independence to introduce (impose?) the reforms it sees as essential and which at this stage (so far as one can sense), a great many ordinary Ugandians would support. Perhaps the greatest danger however derives from the fact that the enormity of the country's problems makes it quite impossible to move fast, or to make any significant changes

overnight in the overall situation. You cannot restore roads or water supplies or health clinics overnight. Equally important, changing the values that are seen to have emerged in the Amin years, and to constitute a basic constraint on the recovery of a truly democratic civil order, is a slow process. At the heart of it all there is a real ideological conflict in progress although it is one in which the groups involved are not always by any means clear.

During the week of the January 24th anniversary celebrations I saw the TV film of Museveni's swearing in a year before. What came through was the tremendous sense of exhilaration of that moment - Museveni himself was relaxed, confident, straight. One had a sense of a great occasion, of history being made. Now, a year later, the mood is undoubtedly more sober; understandably, given the fundamental nature of the constraints on the regime, seeking to sustain its position and to ensure some genuine recovery. The NRA's own conduct has not gone unchallenged, and Tumwine late last year acknowledged the need to tighten up discipline. The stories of "tying" in Karamoja and the Eastern region cannot all be untrue. Museveni's insistence upon a "broad-based regime" (the result no doubt of necessity as well as commitment) leaves him vulnerable at many of the critical interstices of the regime. The continued importance of the "State connection" for the business sector adds to that vulnerability. There is little doubt that he has up to this point enjoyed genuine support, but it is important to remember that his constituency could be reduced to the regional one, and that his power derives from his hard-core NRA force. For all the emphasis upon the RCs as the way to participatory democracy, Uganda still has a military-based regime, and much must depend on the integrity of the NRA. The NRA has however been much extended, and has now begun the critical task of its transformation into a "conventional" national army, including the integration into its ranks of the other armed groups.

Museveni therefore has to perform a continuous balancing act, not only to retain control of his "broad-based" government, but to prevent any one group or interest from possessing him. A whole lot of other tensions remain. A whole generation has come of age unwilling to leave it to their elders, and who intend neither to accept the "status quo:" nor to let the "old ones" go back to "old ways". The role of the church is not altogether clear. The Muslim community has undoubtedly come into its own, of that there seems little doubt - but that does not seem to constitute a source of religious division. Finally, but not the least difficult, indeed in many respects it seems the greatest problem, Uganda copes with an immense management problem, at all levels.

I confess I alternated between despair and hope. Despair at all the difficulties Uganda faces, and the tragedy of so much lost over the past fifteen years. Hope because there are so many people who really do get on with a job - resettling refugee returnees, trying to get grass roots going. In both cases I remain conscious above all of the fragility of state-society relations. How then does it hold together? Well, I do have ideas about that so maybe in due course I will write another letter.

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Adelaide
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