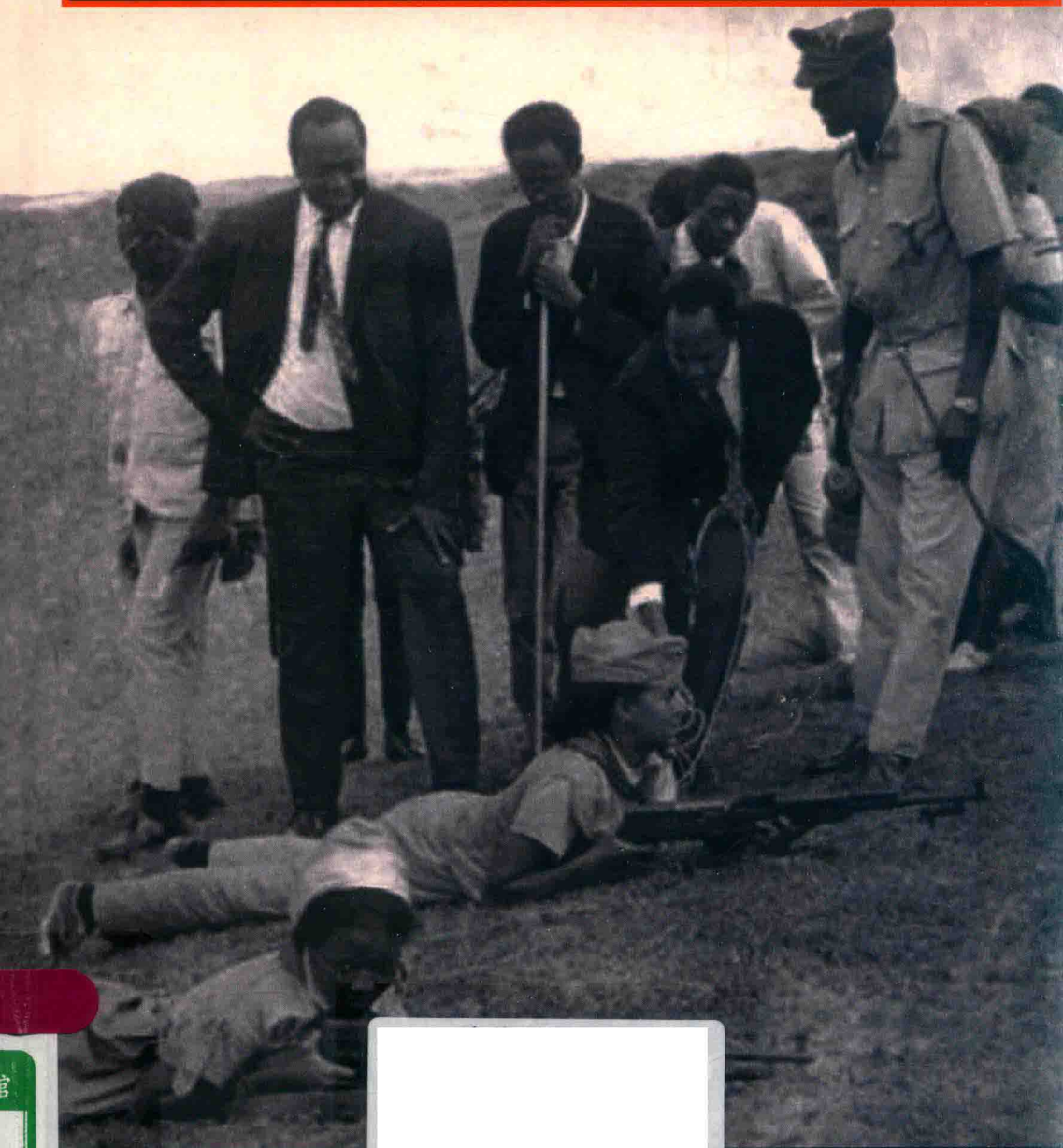


NEW AFRICAN HISTORIES

IN IDI AMIN'S SHADOW

Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda



Alicia C. Decker

In Idi Amin's Shadow

Women, Gender, and Militarism in Uganda



Alicia C. Decker

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In Idi Amin's Shadow

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1890–1975

*For my mom,
who never stopped believing in me
(and who kept sending the “Beetlejuice”)*

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Abbreviations

CID	Criminal Investigations Division
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality
IBEAC	Imperial British East Africa Company
ICJ	International Commission of Jurists
IGP	Inspector General of Police
IWY	International Women's Year
KAR	King's African Rifles
KY	Kabaka Yekka
NCC	National Consultative Council
NEC	National Executive Committee
OAU	Organization of African Unity
PSU	Public Safety Unit
SADF	South African Defense Forces
SRC	State Research Centre
UCW	Uganda Council of Women
UNLF	Uganda National Liberation Front
UPC	Uganda People's Congress

A Note on the Use of Names

Throughout the book I refer to most people by their first names unless they are public figures and known primarily by their last names. I have used pseudonyms for everyone I interviewed unless they spoke with me in an official or professional capacity. Pseudonyms are clearly marked in the list of oral interviews that is included in the bibliography.

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INTRODUCTION

In Search of Amin's Women

"DURING AMIN'S time, there were not many problems apart from our people disappearing and being killed," explained Namuli Kasozi, a sixty-year-old market vendor from the outskirts of Kampala. Namuli is my pseudonym for this robust, spirited Ugandan woman, one of the many people I interviewed who lived through the harrowing years of Idi Amin's reign. "Big Daddy," as he was affectionately known, the so-called father of the nation, was president of Uganda from January 1971 until April 1979. While others experienced his rule as a time of terror, Namuli suggests that there was relative quiet for those in the shadow of the many reported kidnappings, disappearances, and killings. "I was not a person who used to move a lot because that regime affected so much people who could move from one place or one bar to another bar. But for me, I was not among those people."

This brief statement, which echoes many that I recorded of women living through this period, reveals a great deal about Amin's military dictatorship and how some Ugandan women experienced his rule. While Namuli acknowledges the violence that is commonly associated with the regime, she insists that it did not have a major impact on her life because she was not one of "those" people. She carefully sets herself apart from those who moved "from one bar to another bar," implying that such people were morally debased and perhaps even got what was coming to them. The fact that she says "there were not many problems apart from our people disappearing and being killed" also suggests that her life had some degree of normalcy despite the violence. This tells us