

The last king of scotland: political corruption and government exploitation in ug...

[Government](#), [Colonialism](#)



“ The Last King of Scotland” is a historical movie that focuses on the history of Uganda in the early 1970’s during the reign of Ugandan dictator and military officer, Idi Amin, whose regime (1971-79) was noted for the sheer scale of its brutality (Britannica, 2018)). In search of a new life, fictional character and Scottish doctor Nicholas Garrigan travels to Uganda and finds himself becoming the personal physician and close advisor of Idi Amin. At first Dr. Garrigan is pleased with his position with Amin, however, as he gets closer to the dictator, Nicholas comes to realize Amin’s inhumane and blood soaked rule. Tangled in Amin’s tight grasp, Nicholas has to make crucial decisions and face the fight of his life in hopes to escape Amin’s dictatorship.

Although “ The Last King of Scotland” is a fictional movie based on a novel by: Giles Foden, therefore the storyline is made up. However, there are snippets of historically accurate information that gives the viewer a glimpse of Uganda during the rise of Idi Amin’s power. The movie portrays Amin’s personality as ever changing in order to manipulate and input a certain emotion towards his people and advisers. This mirrors his actual historical behavior in his time of reign as he was noted for his abrupt changes of mood, from buffoonery to shrewdness, from gentleness to tyranny (Britannica, 2018). Throughout the movie it also shows frequently how Amin throws opulent parties equipped with luxuries and festivities. This echos the reality of the dictators tenure as he lived a lavish lifestyle while contributing to the collapse of Uganda’s economy (Britannica, 2018). Amin also sought to stay in power at all costs, resulting in human rights violations via mass killings of 300, 000 people throughout his reign whenever he felt threatened (Biography. com Editors, 2007). This information shows in the movie nearing

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the end when Nicholas uncovers the truth of Amin's soulless regime through pictures of mass killings shown to him by a newscaster. Another example of true events that the movie shows is Amin's act of expulsion of all Indian and Pakistani citizens in 1972 which brought about the country's economic decline and is portrayed in the movie as well to show Amin's carelessness for his people and economic wellness (History. com Editors, 2009).

Finally, another historical event that the movie mimics is Operation Entebbe and the freeing of hostages at Entebbe airport in Uganda after Amin was directly involved in the hijacking of a French jet airliner (Britannica, 2018). The director alters the information slightly to make it fit the storyline and uses this event to show Amin's efforts in making a good image in hopes to stop rumors and clear his name. However, his plan backfires and the movie uses the event to end the storyline of Nicholas escape by using the hostage situation to break out of Amin's tight hold after having no other way to leave. Although the movie is pretty historically accurate, the director adds in events that never happened to make the movie more interesting such as a scene where Nicholas helps Amin from getting assassinated. The film is seen through the perspective of doctor Nicholas Garrigan. At first Nicholas sees Amin as a good ruler who promises good change for his country. However, after finding out about Amin's true charge for power, Nicholas' perspective on Amin gradually evolves throughout the movie and he is seen as the cruel ruler that he truly is. Idi Amin is portrayed as the villain in the story and represents fear due to the mistreatment and abuse of power that ran through his government due to his dictatorship and control on his people. In

the movie, you can see many social, economic, and military takes of dictatorship on Ugandan people through poverty, economy issues, and the everpresence of brutal soldiers. These views are relayed in the movie in many ways through different scenes that show the impact of Amin's reign on the people as well as through scenes of Nicholas realizing Amin's cruel ways. For example, some scenes show people once riveting with joy, now laying in overcrowded hospitals due to epidemics and military brutality. The movie also shows the spread of poverty and uncleanliness throughout the villages as economic problems arise due to Amin's reckless decisions such as the expulsion of the Asians (Hlstory. com Editors, 2009). Amin's use of military is also big in this movie as Amin uses his soldiers as a scare tactic to ensure his people will obey him and to obtain his authority (Hlstory. com Editors, 2009).

Almost all the scenes feature Amin's soldiers carrying guns to show how the military want to let the people know that they are in charge. Cinematic devices and techniques help illustrate the changing environments and moods that Amin instills in Uganda. In the beginning, many scenes instill uplifting and native music, bright colors, and showcase up close shots of Ugandan people smiling and dancing in order to emphasize their happy spirits and excitement for Amin's reign. This mirrors how in real life Ugandans joyfully welcomed Amin because he was a larger-than-life figure and yet simple enough to shake hands with common people and participate in their traditional dances (Grahame, 2006). However, nearing the end of the movie as Amin's true colors show, more somber scenes were shown through

the use of little light and dull colors such as blue and black in contrast to the bright orange and yellow colors shown in the beginning to emphasize a loss of hope and despair. Dramatic and more silent music are added as well to add suspense and mystery as to what comes ahead in the storyline. In addition, montages of uncomfortable images such as insects and somber images of dead bodies are used during times of suspense to instil fear into the viewer and create a somber aroma as well. The film does a good job at making the viewer more informed and filled with emotions while still bringing entertainment. To inform, the film features factual information and events in history such as Operation Entebbe to give the readers a sense to how the dictatorship of Amin affected the lives of his people in the 1970s by enforcing fear and terror into the communities of Uganda (History. com Editors, 2009). In addition, the film looks to inform people on how dictators treat their subjects and administrators by using gruesome scenes to display how Amin mistreats and abuses anyone in search to end his power.

This also adds on to the films desire to invoke emotion like sadness into the viewer through harsh scenes showing the brutality of Amin's ways of leadership. The film also seeks to inform people on how dictators can use their words and put up acts in order to persuade their people that they can "help" better their lives. For example, in the film Amin gives several speeches promising a better future and a hope for change in Uganda, however, throughout the movie it unfolds that he was just using the people's desires in order to take power. Finally, the film seeks to entertain the viewers by adding the storyline of Nicholas and his journey to escape Uganda to engage

the viewers. They do this by setting up Nicholas' storyline in the beginning and gradually building up by adding subtle hints of Amin's true colors to make the viewer want to know more about what is going to happen. The film mainly focuses on the way Amin shaped Ugandan history by the way he summoned many economic and social problems. For instance, the movie uses many points to show how with the uprising of Amin's power, a negative turn is invoked in Uganda. Many events that occur in the movie such as the economic crisis after the deportation of all asians out of Uganda show Amin's negative impact. These economic crises also caused an increase in poverty throughout the communities in Uganda.

Furthermore, the movie focuses on the way Amin affects the Ugandan society through his strict ways of ruling. For example, in the movie, the people are not able to speak out against the government and are constantly held under a close watch due to Amin's paranoia of losing his position. In real life and in the movie, he began terrorizing the general public through the various internal security forces he organized the State Research Bureau (SRB) and Public Safety Unity (PSU), whose main purpose was to eliminate those who opposed his regime (History. com Editors, 2009). This affects the people's freedom and restricts them from speaking their truth. These are just some examples on how Amin shaped Ugandan history for the worst by causing economic and social problems.

The Last King of Scotland tells the story of Idi Amin and his personal physician, Nicholas Garrigan. The story is told through the eyes of Nicholas from within the palace walls and discusses the central development message

of political corruption. The film also explores the social and economic impact of Amin's leadership and the effect of his brutality and crimes against humanity (Biography. com Editors, 2018). With the use of factual and historical events, the viewer is also able to get an idea of Uganda's history as well as being entertained. Throughout the film, Amin's true desires unfold and the viewer is able to understand the exploitation and corruption of the government during his rule over Uganda. By watching this movie, it is clear that following Amin's reign was a path of political corruption and government exploitation that shaped Uganda's history and the lives of many.