Every Wednesday, the National Memory and Peace Documentation Centre (NMPDC) in Kitgum organises a Film Exhibition & Debate. The aim of this activity is to provide the community with the opportunity to watch an educational movie, after which we engage in a discussion.

On May 29th, *General Idi Amin Dada* was screened. This film is an expose of the life and times of Idi Amin, at a time when he was becoming increasingly notorious in the world. Filmed by a French movie crew, Amin probably saw this as a chance to score a public relations coup with the world, but he ends up being his own worst enemy. The documentary makers created two movies: one for Amin’s propaganda usage, and one also portraying a negative image of Amin. Idi Amin banned the latter from Uganda, which is the version we watched.

**DEBATE**

25 people participated in the movie night. The discussion focused mainly on the images that people hold of Idi Amin. The participants claimed to have always learnt about the bad side of Idi Amin. This documentary showed them another, less brutal and maybe even likeable version of Amin.

“I always thought Amin was a very bad leader. But what I was seeing here was different. This biography seems to tell something different about Amin. It seems that Amin was a brave and strong leader. Brave in a way that he commanded everything that he wanted to be done and strong enough to face everything that came his way. He was also a open leader, very open communication with his people. However, I can say Amin is kind of a hypocrite though sometime. He tells people about love. But you cannot teach people to love you if you don’t love them. Amin did not care about his people. He killed his minister of Foreign Affairs.”

“I personally thought Amin was very bad. But now after seeing this program, it seems that Amin is so far the best. Amin was a strong leader. But Amin was very suspicious. That is why is not president up to now. Corruption in Amin’s time was not so bad. Nowadays it is much worse. Museveni is no better than Amin.”

“After watching this movie, I would like to say Amin was a person of high courage. If I am to compare the current regime with Amin’s they are mostly the same. Both were militaristic. Only, Amin used direct contact to his fellow Ugandans. Comparing the leaderships, during Amin’s regime there was not so much corruption as that you see at the moment.”

“When I look around this room I don’t see anyone who was around during Amin’s regime. We have been taught about Amin. And about him being a bad person. I do think Amin also had a soft spot, even though we always hear that he bad. But this documentary obviously shows only his good side. But he did also have a soft spot and he loved his country. Also, looking at this documentary, compared with The Rise and Fall of Idi Amin which gave us the brutal truth, this movie also gave us some of his good sides. So he was a bad person, but had his soft spots.”

“I think about the issue of Amin. My grandfather, who served in Amin’s army, told me that when he served Amin he found a lot of stuff that were being hidden about previous regimes. Now Amin was killing people who were covering things up. So this is why Amin did this. And Amin also tried to save the economy. In the current government, they steal the Ugandan economy. Amin was open about his regime. Museveni claims to be democratic but it is a silent dictatorship.”

Taking up the advice from the audience, the team has decided to screen *The Rise and Fall of Idi Amin* during the next movie night.