NIM AID, IDI AMIN

JEFF GRANT
Hastings, New Zealand

Ever since he came to power in 1971, the Ugandan dictator Idi Amin has attracted considerable publicity, mostly adverse. As Robert Funt points out in the November 1977 Word Ways, this tyrant is of special interest to palindromists. The time seems right for a short logological analysis of IDI AMIN.

The word AMIN is defined as 'amine' in The World Book Dictionary (Doubleday, 1970), and is shown as a variant of 'ameen', a minor Indian official, in Webster's Third Edition. AMIN has at least eight transposals (there are probably more) -- ANIM, INAM, MAIN, MANI and MINA from the OED, IMAN from Webster's New Geographical Dictionary, MIAN from Webster's Second Edition, and NIAM from the Times Index-Gazetteer.

I have been unable to find a dictionary transposition of IDI AMIN, although MINI-AID seems plausible (a type of small hearing-aid, perhaps?), and there is the two-word term IN ADIMI. 'Adimi' is a town on the Sea of Japan in the Russian SFSR.

Transdeletion is somewhat easier -- AMIDIN, DIMINI, DIAMIN, MIDIAN and DAMNII all appear in major English dictionaries.

The only legitimate transaddition I have been able to locate is AMINDIVI Islands, the northernmost group of the Laccadive Islands in the Arabian Sea. Other attempts at transaddition include the implied terms MID-INDIA and DIAMINIC, of or relating to a diamine (c.f. 'aminic' in Webster's Third). By adding two letters to IDI AMIN and then transposing, the words DIAMIDINE, INDIANISM, MIDIANITE (all Webster's Third) and IMINO-ACID (OED) can be formed.

It can be seen that IDI is the start of IDIocy, and AMIN is found in dreAMNg. Here is a quick quiz where the words described contain either IDI or AMIN. For example, the clue 'dryness' would lead to arIDity.

1. vigorously healthy  
2. staying power  
3. news  
4. possession of ready cash  
5. starvation  
6. to look over  
7. interbred  
8. frothy  
9. midday (obsolete)  
10. breeding places

If you remove the three I's from IDI AMIN it leaves DAMN, which
can be quickly turned into the appropriate palindrome DAMN MAD. Apparently this phrase appeared on T-shirts worn by some radical students at the Idi Amin University in Kampala. However, it seems all these garments were removed (together with their wearers) and replaced with shirts bearing the inscription AMIN ANIMA! or I DIG IDI.

Finally, here are two compositions supposedly written by a dissident Ugandan palindromist (and T-shirt manufacturer) shortly before his reported fall from the thirteenth floor of a police station in Entebbe.

**IDI**

To Idi Amin I say 'Fie!'
Did I gibe Big Idi?
(Deify a sin.)
I'm a idiot!
'O stop, sedate bastard!' I bark.
Rats! No casinos I oppugn.
Is Uganda's aging nig
A sad nag using up poison?
Is a con stark?
Rabid rats abet a despot,
So to Idi Amin I say 'Fie!'
Did I gibe Big Idi?
(Deify a sin.)
-- 'I'm a idiot.'

**MISSIONARY'S LAMENT**

Idiots! Open an epos to Idi;
-- Cite negro fetor!
Will age kill Amin,
As I hem a newer enemy?
A leer frets no man I'm aiding;
I arraign Idi Amin,
-- A monster!
Free laymen ere we name
His animal-like gall.
I wrote for genetic Idiots,
'Open an epos to Idi!'