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THE COLONIAL ROOTS OF INTERNAL CONFLICT
IN UGANDA

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THE COLONIAL ROOTS OF INTERNAL CONFLICT IN UGANDA.

By and large independent Uganda has been characterised by violence and a dictatorial ruthless leadership; there has been a pervasive atmosphere of despondency and hopelessness amongst the majority of her people until recently. Viable political institutions have not developed, there is no basic consensus and the country is hopelessly divided. Indeed independence has become a traumatic and debilitating experience.

The purpose of this paper is to establish the role of colonialism in the postcolonial agony of Uganda. Colonialism we hope to demonstrate, failed miserably, through omission or commission to lay the foundations for the building of a nation out of the protectorate. The manner in which 'protection' was effected the nature of the administration established and the colonial economy imposed were the basic elements of which the recipe for the chaos of the postcolonial period were formed.

Both the sword and the bible, those familiar twins of imperialism, were effectively wielded against the pre-colonial leaderships and people of what emerged as the Uganda Protectorate at the beginning of this century. Bible and sword became weapons of division. The bible plunged a part of Uganda, Buganda, into a civil war in the 1880s which left her divided and weak, destroyed her monarchy in the process and left her an easy prey for incorporation into the British Empire by Captain Lugard and his motley crew in the 1890s. The divisions introduced by the bible soon embraced what became the protectorate and these divisions still plague independent Uganda and influence her negative politics mightily. These divisions are a solid legacy of colonialism.

Between 1890 and 1920 imperialism wielded the sword in earnest to secure and pacify her colonial possession, Uganda. Those three decades were decades of violence, a time when the premium was put by imperialism on the establishment of law and order, when the virtual purpose of government was to police the populace. Violence or the threat of the use of violence was used on many other occasions to put down the natives during the colonial period. Imperialism was intorelant of opposition and relied more on the sword than on dialogue. It is that legacy of violence that imperialism bequeathed to a whole generation of leadership in postcolonial Uganda.

When Uganda acquired her final geographical shape in the early 1920s she embraced a people from three linguistic groups, namely: Sudanic, Nilotic and Bantu, from two major African language families - Nilo-Saharan and Congo - Kordofanian.¹ There was very little or no linguistic and cultural affinity amongst these people and it should have been obvious to the people who brought them together into one central protectorate administration that a lot of work had to be done to mould them into nationals of one country. This work was not done because British imperialism thrived on division and it was never her intention to create nation-states out of her colonies.

The British conquered Uganda through the use of force and fraud and these two methods created wounds within the body-politic of Uganda that independence has not yet healed.

In the establishment of colonial rule the British used Africans to fight for them, Africans who then stayed under one administration with the conquered people and became citizens of the same country. Nubians and Buganda played a prominent role in the conquest of Uganda and a bitterness transcending generations was created which is part of the tale of our more recent agonies.

Nubians were used by Baker, Emin Pasha and Gordon to man forts in Acholi from the early 1870s to around 1890. Pain notes that the behaviour of the Nubian forces left a bitter folk memory among the Acholi.² On the eve of his sojourn into Uganda, in 1890, Captain Lugard assembled seventy Nubian askaris recruited for the Imperial British East African Company by Captain Williams in Egypt. In 1891 Captain Williams joined Captain Lugard in Buganda with another seventy five Nubian askaris. Lugard further sought the services of the remnants of Emin Pasha's troops under the command of Selim Bey stranded on the Zaire side of the Semliki river. In October 1891 Selim Bey crossed the Semliki river into Toro with around two thousand Nubian soldiers and another thirteen thousand followers, women and children. This Nubian contingent was further consolidated in 1894 when another ten thousand men and families under another Nubian commander, Fadhl-el-Maula were ferried into Bunyoro across

Lake Albert. It is these Nubians who helped defeat Bunyoro and Buganda in the 1890s and helped in the many pacification campaigns that the British carried out in Uganda and beyond up to the outbreak of the first world war. They formed the core of the Uganda Rifles established in 1895. An essentially alien force had formed the core of the Colonial army in Uganda. Commenting on the Nubian visitation H.H. Johnston, Uganda Commissioner (1899-1900), observed:

"themselves ex-slaves, they had all the cruelty and unscrupulousness of the Arab slave-traders, whose names, principles and religion they had inherited".

The British were aware of the cruelty and unscrupulousness of the Nubians when they set them loose in Uganda!

Apollo Kagga and Semei Kakungulu, rival chiefs in Buganda, were used extensively in the conquest of Uganda and a wrong impression was, therefore, created that Buganda per se was responsible for the conquest and that Buganda as a nation participated in the grand designs of British imperialism in Uganda. If Buganda had participated as a nation then why was Mwanga a rebel? Why was he hunted like a wild beast by Kakungulu?

Between December 1893 when Colonel Colvile declared war on Bunyoro and 1895 when conventional warfare came to an end there, Kagga had deployed around twenty thousand men to fight the Bunyoro. In 1897 when Mwanga

started to struggle for the self-determination of Buganda in Buddu, Kaggwa again mobilized a large army to fight Buganda nationalists. Mwanga rendezvoured with a Bunyoro general, Ireta in May 1898 and crossed the Nile in July 1898 to join Kabarega in Lango where they were both captured by Kakungulu on 9th April 1899. Kakungulu, thereafter, encouraged by Johnston, the British Commissioner, embarked on the conquest of eastern Uganda in the mistaken understanding that that the British would allow him to establish a kingdom and a dynasty of his own as king of the Bakedi.⁴ The depredations of the Baganda mercenaries in Bunyoro and eastern Uganda left a bitterness that has not yet disappeared. Through their use of the Baganda to conquer Uganda the British had established a lasting hatred between the Baganda and a sizeable chunk of the rest of Uganda, weak premises on which to build a nation. With this all embracing deployment of the Baganda by the British a colonial myth was woven into the historiography of Uganda, namely that the Baganda had a long tradition of martial dominance over their neighbours.⁵ To make this bitterness deeper, when the Banyoro were conquered, the British annexed all Bunyoro territory south of river Kafu to Buganda as a reward for the support Kaggwa and his men had given to the British. This Bunyoro territory was incorporated into the kingdom of Buganda, when for the first time Buganda's boundaries were defined both on the

ground and on paper in the 1900 Uganda (Buganda) Agreement.⁶ The territory excised from Bunyoro was estimated to have been around one quarter of precolonial Bunyoro territory and included the heartland of precolonial Bunyoro, Mubende where the precolonial royal burial grounds were located. Colonialism created the problem of Bunyoro irridenta, a problem which the British avoided to solve and thrust it upon Ugandan leaders, leaders who did not create the problem in the first instance, to solve on their departure.

Kaggwa's and Kakungulu's men were set up by the British, once conquest had been accomplished, as agents of their imperialism in western and eastern Uganda. They were deployed as administrators whom Kabwegyere refers to as 'tutor mechanics'⁷ to peddle the so called Kiganda model of administration in other parts of the protectorate. The missionaries used Baganda agents to peddle the catechism around as well. The Baganda had truly come unto their own as the 'Japanese of Africa'⁸, an accolade that did not endear them to their neighbours. Buganda became the favourite child of imperialism and aroused the envy of the other children. This partly explains the many skulls that now litter the Luwero Triangle.

where force was not used to conquer fraud was used. Fraudulent agreements were concluded between the British

and Buganda, Toro and Nkore at the beginning of this century providing for the acceptance of British protection and loyalty to the British crown and establishing a local constitution. In a Privy Council judgement (Sobhuza II vs Miller, 1926) it was established that agreements with Native Rulers can never bind the British Crown.⁹ Ibingira observes that agreements lacked the force of law and bound ^{the} British crown during its pleasure.¹⁰ Initially the Native (agreement) rulers did not know that the agreements they concluded did not have the force of law but even when they found out they continued the charade of the efficacy of these agreements. They, indeed, turned them into fortresses against Ugandan nationalism. To this theme we shall return later. Suffice it to note that the British had created a big divide in Uganda between the agreement and non-agreement areas, a divide which soured political development in Uganda.

Having used force and fraud to establish the protectorate the British proceeded to use the same means to maintain themselves in power. They established a force of internal coercion whose loyalty to them had to be above board. The Uganda Rifles Ordinance (1895) specifically included a clause (clause 58) empowering the Uganda Rifles to take action against any local group(s) in the Protectorate which engaged in active opposition to the administration.

The formation of a loyal force had exercised the minds of the founders of the Uganda Protectorate. According to Lugard, the founding father of the colony, the Nubians constituted the best material for soldiery in Africa.¹¹ By the beginning of this century and definitely by the beginning of the First world war the British had made up their mind as to whom they wanted to man their colonial armies in Africa. They had evolved 'the martial tribes thesis'. According to this thesis the Central African 'races' possess military qualities in direct proportion to the amount of influence left by foreign invaders.¹² In the Uganda context "the Nilotic and Sudanic tribes of northern Uganda show signs of the effects of former Asiatic invasions to which they owe their war-like characteristics".¹³ Omara-Otunuu argues convincingly that the factors governing the deployment of colonial troops were that a soldier should be of a different 'race' from the people of the area in which he is deployed, that he should be geographically distant from the people into which he is deployed and that he should be of a different religious faith from the population to which he is posted. The British tried as much as possible to look for soldiers who fulfilled some or all of the above criteria. As a matter of policy colonial armies in Africa were recruited from 'remote' tribes detached and even hostile to tribes central to the colonies.¹⁴ In Ghana, for example, 60% of the

colonial army at the time of independence had to be recruited from the northern nationalities. In Nigeria, the Hausa dominated the colonial army and in Sierra Leone, it was the northern Karankos, the Mandingos, the Fula and the Limbe.¹⁵ These tribes were also largely Moslem, the religion preferred in the African colonial forces. In Uganda the Nubians were ranked first in the order of preference because they were an entirely alien mercenary element who did not have any sentimental attachment to Uganda and would be trusted to be loyal without any reserve or compunction. They were also Moslems which ensured that they remained safe from the virus of westernisation, a virus which was cultured through the agency of christianity.

At the end of the 19th century (1897) the Nubians ~~enjoyed~~ pushed themselves up through the 'Sudanese Mutiny', a mutiny which became the most serious threat to the establishment of colonial rule in Uganda the British had faced yet. The Baganda and the Indians were called in to rescue the Union Jack.¹⁶ The Nubians never quite ~~recovered~~ recovered their ground within the colonial army and it was not until the overthrow of the first Obote regime in 1971 that they recovered their dominant position within the armed forces. By 1914 the Acholi had gained the ascendancy; Omara-Otunnu observes, "the largest contingent (of soldiers) was recruited from the north, especially from the people of Acholi and by 1914 Acholi

had become the main recruiting ground for the K.A.R. (Kings' African Rifles) a pattern which continued well into the postcolonial period".¹⁷ Omara-Otunnu argues that it was not the martial race concept that guided the British into recruiting Acholi; the Acholi were the ones who offered least resistance to the establishment of British rule. He further notes:

"The Acholi were preferred to the Baganda because of their political disposition. Having been exposed to British rule for longer, the Baganda were familiar with the British and were more assertive of their interaction with them. Whereas the Baganda were perceived by British military officers to be arrogant and in-subordinate, it was hoped that the Acholi would be more amenable to the authority of the British. The Acholi were also preferred because they had very loosely organised and territorially small political and military units. So large-scale military mobilisation under a single political leadership was impossible".¹⁸

(emphasis added)

It is not true that the Acholi offered the least resistance to the establishment of colonial rule. Between 1911 and 1912 the Lamogi people of Acholi rebelled against the British and considerable resources were deployed by the British to put down this rebellion. A lot of lives were lost amongst the Lamogi.¹⁹ What endeared the British and to northerners in general was their remoteness from the centre of the country, their relative lack of the trappings of western civilization and their rather single political and military organisational backgrounds. Around these factors was woven the myth

of the martial races of the north, a myth which prospered during the colonial period and until January 1986 when the remnants of the Kings' African Rifles were at last driven from power in Kampala. So powerful was the myth that the northerners believed that they were the only ones who had been divinely ordained to bear arms in Uganda while the rest believed that they were incapable of bearing them.

The colonial army remainly largely invisible. Since independence, in 1962, and especially after the 1964 mutiny of the Uganda Army the army became very visible and a key institution in the political life of the country, soldiers have maintained that visibility and importance up to to-day. This key institution was neither national nor nationalist and given the above background, it could not have been expected to have been so. A lot of internal conflict leading to virtual genocide in some parts of Uganda in the more recent past arose over the fact that this key institution of the postcolonial period was built on the British foundations of remoteness and hostility to people in the centre of the country. Colonialism built up the army as an instrument of coercion, as a pacifying army and not as a peoples' force to cater for their defence against external aggression. Until recently the army in Uganda was an instrument of internal coercion. It could not be trully national because

some Ugandans were not thought or meant to have the precious martial qualities which the British had attributed to Ugandans of northern origin. This concept beautifully fitted Obote and Amin. Both were northerners who clearly appreciated the political advantages of having armies where they had a close linguistic and cultural link. So confident was Obote about this linkage that in the campaigns leading to the general election of December 1980 he could ask his rivals, the leaders of the other political parties who happened to come from the south and west of the country, where their army was and if they did not have them, he asked them how they hoped to take power. To Obote, with his ethnic army in place, the ballot was irrelevant. For some twenty four years of Uganda's independence the hegemony of the north was made possible by the faithful pursuit of colonial policies in the recruitment and deployment of the army and by actually retaining K.A.R. veterans of the colonial era, veterans who had only little or no education at all, as the military leaders."²⁰ It is no coincidence at all that all the defeated armies and factions of armies from the Amin coup d'etat of 1971 to the debacle of the Okellos in January 1986 have retired to the north and beyond into the southern Sudan and northeastern Zaire to take refuge amongst their relatives and it is no coincidence that armed opposition to the National Resistance Movement government is from the north.

This is one of the most bitter legacies of colonialism.

From the triumph of conquest the British moved on to the next logical stage requisite to the consolidation of power, namely to administration. A dual system was devised, that of native authorities and a central administration. In the domain of native administrations the boundaries of the native authorities were delineated, wherever possible, along ethnic lines. So that with a few exceptions of the districts of West Nile, Bugisu, Bukedi, Toro and Kigezi where the ethnic units were not considered viable enough for each of them to form a district, in the rest of Uganda native authorities coincided with ethnic boundaries. This ethnic delineation of administrative boundaries did not change even after independence.

To accompany the ethnic delineation of boundaries was the indirect rule policy which was introduced by Lugard, first in northern Nigeria but which, in time, came to embrace the whole of British Africa. Cohen observes that the policy of indirect rule developed as a result of local initiative without the policy being laid down from London and that it was not until the 1930s that the Colonial Office began to encourage the pursuit of such a policy.²¹ That great historian of British Africa, M. Perham found merit in the policy of indirect rule because it broke the shock of western annexation,

was economical, kept the peace and induced a sympathetic inquiring attitude in colonial officials towards African Society.²² This policy of indirect rule held centre stage in the field of administration and politics in Uganda until the late 1940s when in a despatch to the colonies the Colonial Secretary Creech-Jones in 1947 enunciated a new policy on local government aimed at converting the system of indirect rule into a democratic efficient and modern system of local government. It is this despatch which led to the enactment of the Local Government Ordinance in 1949. This ordinance gave legal and corporate powers and responsibilities to the district councils and introduced the elective principle within local administrations. The ordinance, however, did not apply to Buganda. On analysing the ordinance Burke reaches the conclusion that "as the administrative districts (including kingdoms) generally coincided with tribal residence, the 1949 ordinance in effect provided for the institutionisation of parochial tribally oriented local governments".²³

Within the domain of native administrations Buganda was governed by the Uganda Agreement of 1900 and the rest of Uganda by the Native Authority Ordinance of 1919, a constitutional arrangement which emphasized the division between Buganda and the rest of the country.

Although Buganda was legally just another province of Uganda and although the agreement, as noted earlier, bound the British Crown at its pleasure and was not justifiable, Ibingira observes that agreements with African rulers were for political reasons strictly adhered to by the British rulers who departed from them only in rare cases when it seemed in the best interests of peace, good government or imperial authority to do so.²⁴

Many historians of Buganda emphasize the importance of the agreement in creating the distance between Buganda and the rest of the country. Morris argues that: "the kingdom of Buganda stood in a completely different position from the rest of the country. In Buganda there existed what may conveniently, if not accurately, be termed a native state, whose relationship with the Protectorate Government was defined in considerable detail by the terms of the Agreement of 1900".²⁵ In a book published this year Omara-Otunnu asserts: "the agreement ensured for them (the Baganda) a privileged status vis-a-vis the rest of Uganda, thereby regularising and fostering inequalities between Buganda and the other provinces of the country."²⁶ So whether or not Buganda's agreement gave Buganda a special and privileged position in Uganda that is what both the Baganda and non-Baganda believed. The British encouraged this belief although legally Buganda was just another province

of Uganda. This constitutional division made the unity of Uganda extremely difficult to achieve and was a potential cause of conflict in independent Uganda. Indirect rule operated within the framework of the Uganda Agreement and the Native Authority Ordinance.

Perhaps Pratt's definition of indirect rule is as good as any. He says that by indirect rule is meant the appointment of tribal chiefs as agents of local rule - the use in local government of those men whom the people were accustomed to obey.²⁷ In Uganda, despite the claims to the contrary, classical indirect rule as was practised by Lugard in northern Nigeria could not be applied to the whole of Uganda and "indirect rule" was imposed wholesale on the atomistic societies of the east and north of Uganda where the search for the traditional authorities proved to be an uphill task.

Buganda had a highly centralised and hierarchical system of traditional administration. Although the monarchy had become seriously emasculated by 1900, the rest of the traditional administration still held. It was a system much admired by the British. So the 'Kiganda model' of administration was exported to the rest of Uganda. The model was accompanied by experts from Buganda, the agents who imposed it wherever the British established a civilian administration. This imposition of the 'kiganda model' went against the grain of classical indirect rule

where the native traditional authorities had to be the agents of indirect rule. The failure to find the indigenous chief or in some cases where these were available, to use them, and the imposition of Buganda agents caused much bitterness and trouble. In Bunyoro, for example, the imposition of the 'kiganda model' and agents led to the Nyangire Revolt in 1907, a revolt that Uzoigwe dubs a passive revolt against British overrule.²⁹ There were many much revolts in the east and west of the country, revolts which forced the British to withdraw the agents from most of Uganda by 1930. Peoples' anger was directed not so much against the British as against the Baganda and this agency system sharpened the cleavage between the Baganda and the non-Baganda. The British were adept at diverting peoples' anger against themselves but in the process of diverting this anger they removed the possibility of the development of a genuine national consciousness amongst the people of Uganda. Their system of administration had created enemies amongst the people of Uganda.

In some areas where the native authorities were not coterminous with ethnic groupings secessionist movements developed as was the case in Toro. So serious was the Bamba and Bakonzo grievances that in March 1962 they formed the Rwenzururu Movement. Isaaya Mukirane, their leader, asked for a separate district for the Bamba and Bakonzo complaining that seventy years of being ruled as slaves

by an alien and arrogant people should be ended.²⁹ In June 1962, Mukirane established the kingdom of Rwenzururu, comprising the counties of Bwamba, Bunyangabu, and Busongora, and declared Rwenzururu an independent state. The Rwenzururu movement maintained its momentum on and around the Rwenzori mountains until the second ruler of the Mukirane dynasty, Charles Iremangoma came down the mountain, in 1983 and handed over his kingdom to the Uganda Government.³⁰ Even after the handover there are still lingering sentiments of Rwenzururu nationalism to-day. The Rwenzururu movement, for a good twenty years, tied down considerable resources in an attempt to suppress it. Lives and property were lost and the real cost of that conflict has not yet been worked out. Even in the divide and rule game the British were not purists. The Bamba and Bakonzo wanted a district of their own since they were badly treated by their Batoro overlords, who actually engaged in name-calling, imposed on them by the British. The British argued that a Bamba and Bakonzo district would not be economically viable and yet throughout the colonial period around 70% of the revenues of Toro originated in the counties of Bwamba, Bunyangabu and Busongora. At times the British simply paid lipservice to indirect rule in concrete situations where the policy would have worked well. A state of neither unity nor disunity was sometimes fostered by British imperialism to the great suffering of its subjects.

Throughout the colonial period, government meant local administration to most people. The protectorate administration at Entebbe remained remote and the people largely uninvolved in it. To most people the protectorate administration was a whiteman's affair. It remained mysterious and was deliberately mystified by the colonial administrators. It is true that the people, from time to time saw the District Commissioner on baraza. That was the limit to which protectorate administration stretched itself in most cases. The daily and basic concerns of the ordinary people were taken care of by the local or native administrations. Very few people looked beyond their local administrations either to the other local administrations or to the protectorate administration and those who did were looked upon as trouble makers by the protectorate administration.

During the inter-war period British colonial policy makers began to think about the future of their colonies. They envisaged the possibility of self-government within the British Commonwealth for their colonies but at some remote future not yet on the horizon and they believed that they had almost unlimited time in which to work on the political development of the natives. Indeed where self-government was mentioned at all it was casually presented as the end product of indirect rule. Even when the British began to envisage

self-government in the remote future they continued to regard Uganda merely as an administrative unit and never in terms of a nation.

Peoples' participation in or the creation of national institutions were not encouraged. For example, in 1922 there was a suggestion that an African Central Assembly should be formed to provide all the natives of Uganda with a single political forum but this suggestion was vetoed by the Governor. Again in 1925 the Governor vetoed a meeting proposed for the leaders of Buganda, Bunyoro, Busoga and Toro. When both the Legislative and Executive Councils were established by Order-in-Council in 1920, the Legislative Council became a planters' and merchants' forum for the championing of European and African political and economic interests. Africans did not gain access to the Legislative Council until 1944 and to the Executive Council until the early 1950s.³²

Representative institutions were opposed by imperialism and the basis of the colonial state was autocracy. How could a legacy of autocracy translate into democracy overnight once independence was granted? It was feared that representative institutions may divert the attention of the educated Africans away from their tribal institutions and bring these detribalized Africans into prominence. Imperialism also made the false claim that the educated Africans were unrepresentative and

more importantly that they would be less amenable to official guidance than the native administration chiefs. British policies, both directly and indirectly favoured and aided the continuation of tribal loyalties and blocked the development of supra-tribal links and the participation of Africans in centralising or nationalising institutions.

Natives like Kulubya were the favourite children of imperialism because they went along beautifully with their masters when it came to preventing Uganda from becoming a nation. Asked why he was opposed to representation in the Legislative Council, Kulubya answered that; "If we get a representative in the Legislative Council it is quite possible that with one or two representatives that he will be outvoted... by the majority and when he has been outvoted in that way it will be difficult for us to open the questions because we have our representative there"³³ (emphasis added). Clearly Kulubya was thinking in the narrow terms of Buganda; the us and the outvoting was within the Buganda context. These representatives were not conceived to pursue the interests of Uganda but those of Buganda. It is that thinking that directly lead to the rejection of direct elections in Buganda, to the advocacy of electoral college status for the Lukiiko in the 1962 elections, to the formation of Kabaka Yekka to act as a power broker in the National Assembly and ultimately to the desecration of Mutesa II's Kingdom in 1966.³⁴

The nature and shape of self-governing Uganda exercised the minds of colonial policy makers during the inter-war period and more specifically after the Second world war. The format was perceived in terms of a loose federation of independent native states, in an assembly of native authority delegates to stand alongside the Legislative Council which would eventually have powers and a status equal to it, in terms of regional councils of native authority and urban representatives to which eventually wide delegations of power would be given and also in terms of a central assembly whose members would be drawn from the native authorities.³⁵ At this juncture metropolitan institutions were deemed unsuitable for the politically primitive colonies such as Uganda was. And yet at independence we were bequeathed the Westminster model!

As noted earlier, Creech-Jones, Colonial Secretary, issued a new local government policy in a despatch to the governors in 1947. This new policy was intended to offer the possibility of building a foundation of local democracy on which the structure of parliamentary government was, hopefully, to be based. In Uganda the despatch was translated into the Local Government Ordinance of 1949. This ordinance did not apply to Buganda at all and it was rejected in several other places as well.³⁶ So the new policy was not the democratising agent it was conceived to be and was superseded by the

District Councils (District Administrations) Ordinance of 1955 where the district councils emerged as the local authorities in charge of a variety of local services and with an increased access to finance to take on the services.³⁷ The new style local administrations spawned local notables who represented their respective largely ethnically homogeneous districts in the Legislative Council. Many of them peddled anti-colonialist slogans but they were by no means nationalists having a Uganda-wide consciousness or appeal. They represented the narrow interests of their districts and not those of Uganda as a whole. Obote, for example, who became Prime Minister of Uganda in April 1962, could, as late as 1960, accept the chairmanship of the Lango District Council! This is the kind of politician that the colonial policies of indirect rule and parochialism had helped create. Once the anti-colonialist rhetoric was over would these brand of politicians be able to forge a nation or would they use the central government bequeathed by imperialism to advance parochial interests to which they were accustomed during the colonial period? It is significant that an insignificant number of politicians stood outside their tribal areas of origin for elections either before or after independence.³⁸

In the 1950s the British pursued a contradictory policy in Uganda. Cohen tells us that the policy was on the one hand to build up central institutions,

namely the executive and the legislative and on the other to build up the political and social institutions of each part of the country. In Buganda this meant the giving of the Lukiiko an elected majority and the Buganda Government a ministerial system of its own and in the rest of the country an increased elected element in the district councils. How could both central and local institutions be strengthened concurrently? Was not imperialism setting the two on a collision course? In the pursuit of this policy the Buganda Agreement of 1955 virtually created a state within the state situation for which Uganda has had to pay in considerable blood?³⁹ Burke's remarks on the development of local government in the 1950s is instructive.

He says:

"Local government in Uganda had developed in the shadow of the Uganda Agreement. The quasi-sovereign status of this large kingdom encouraged the smaller and less powerful monarchies to acquire a similar status. The prestige, ceremony and special privileges surrounding the kingdom governments in turn, colored the development of local government throughout the remainder of the country. Not only were British administrators accustomed to thinking in terms of special agreements, prior consultation, hereditary deference, but the leaders of the newly emergent non-monarchical districts were quick to emulate the kingdoms and to demand similar prerogatives for themselves. Thus in contrast to Kenya and Tanganyika local government in Uganda evolved in a quasi-federal milieu." 40

In the first year of Uganda's independence (1962-63) most of the non-monarchical districts appointed their district constitutional heads and districts competed with

each other in their imagination to invent impressive titles for their constitutional heads.⁴¹ Each district became a mini-state with its constitutional non-hereditary monarch. This was the quasi-federal milieu and yet Uganda was not a federal state. The 1962 independence constitution was a composite one consisting of elements of unitarism, federalism and semi-federalism, not the basis for a successful forging of a peaceful and united nation. The contradictory policies referred to earlier pursued by the great reformer Sir Andrew Cohen, unintended by him, were to lead to the constitutional crises of the 1960s, crises that were moderated by the sword. If Sir Andrew had been less timid he would have seized the opportunity offered by the deportation of Ssekabaka Mutesa II, in 1953, to impose a unitary system on Uganda across the board and he was inclined towards unitarism. Instead Cohen and his less able successors at Entebbe allowed constitutional development to drift helplessly without any real guidance or indeed policy. In order to muddle through the constitutional jungle of the 1950s and early 1960s prior to independence the British appointed commission after constitutional commission in order to buy time, time to jettison the colony and set it adrift after a decent period of constitutional development confusion.⁴²

The real problem was that the British neither dared to agree nor to disagree with Buganda. They

simply muddled through the constitutional problems with as much dissimulation as only the British can muster. The constitution which the British bequeathed to Uganda at independence was a real disaster.

It is true that Africans were brought into the Legislative Council at a reasonable pace in the 1950s; it is true that Cohen promised direct elections by 1961 and appointed the first African ministers to his Executive Council in 1955. It is also true that in 1958 some members of the Legislative Council were directly elected by the people for the first time in the history of Uganda. Karamoja, Bugisu, Ankole and Buganda were not part of this exercise - a sizeable chunk of the country. In the 1961 general elections the Mengo establishment manouvered Buganda into almost completely boycotting the poll.⁴³ Uganda had very little experience in the operation of the parliamentary democratic system and most of Uganda's leaders joined the Legislative Council, for the first time, in 1961, on the eve of independence. Somehow, with this preparation the British expected our leaders, without any experience behind them, to operate the Westminster model successfully! Besides, colonial regulations had prevented civil servants from participation in politics so that, in the main, politics attracted people who were unemployed or unemployable. As Professor Ingo Von Munch observes, 'politicians without a profession are a great misfortune'.⁴⁴

That was Uganda's misfortune at independence because political practices imported without modification from the metropolis were imposed in the colonies. These type of politicians looked for security of tenure in political posts. So how could they have been democratically removed?

During the colonial period very little effort was made to train Africans for responsibilities in the civil service. Although some three ministers were appointed by Cohen in 1955, there were very few senior African civil servants. For example the first Assistant District Commissioners were not appointed until 1958 and there was no African permanent secretary until after independence. Pratt had this to say on the matter, "There were still no Africans in the provincial administration in responsible positions. In 1951, for example, only five Africans had senior posts in the Protectorate departments. There was therefore, in these crucial years no serious efforts made to build the institutions and to train the men for the self-government that would come far sooner than Entebbe dared admit."⁴⁵ It is clear that the British intended to retain residual responsibilities in Uganda. This was a misreading of post-colonial nationalism.

Ugandans had no common language and still have no common language in which to communicate to one another

and how can a people who cannot communicate to one another really become united?

In the inter-war period there were attempts by the colonial government to introduce Kiswahili in the school curriculum and between 1930 and 1943 the teaching of Kiswahili was enforced in primaries three and four outside Buganda but after that the policy was to subordinate vernaculars (and that apparently included Kiswahili) to English. At a conference on language education policy in 1945 it was decided that, "the development of a lingua franca has very little connection with immediate expediency, being essentially concerned with enduring values and hence with a penetration which, however gradual, shall steadily become co-extensive with the country".⁴⁶ Applying these criteria neither Kiswahili nor Luganda nor any other 'remainder' had admissible claims. The policy was therefore, to encourage English and Kiswahili was abandoned. Kiswahili was seen by the Christian leadership, which was very influential during the colonial period, as the language of Islam and they discouraged it. To the Buganda conservatives Kiswahili was seen as the language of prostitutes and thieves. Kiswahili was maintained in the colonial army and after independence Kiswahili acquired notoriety as the language of violence.

In spite of a colonial language policy intent on the promotion of English, throughout the colonial

period english was only taught from the upper primary classes onwards and by the time most Ugandans ended their formal education (primary six) they normally had had only two years of english and never really learnt the language to have been able to communicate effectively. So, unlike Tanganyika and Kenya, Ugandans, because of what happened to kiswahili in 1945 cannot yet communicate to each other across the board. This is a serious impediment to unity, again a legacy of colonial bungling.

Colonies were basically looked upon as sources of raw materials needed to feed the industries of their owners and as markets for their manufactures. The colonial economies were, therefore, geared to this basic function and not to the development of the economies and peoples in the colonies. The little development that did take place was incidental to the basic functions of colonial economies. The infrastructure that was developed was designed to facilitate the movements of raw materials from the colonies and the social infrastructure was largely developed by non-governmental organisations but mainly missionaries. Cohen tells us that, "there was more emphasis put on the protection of African society than on helping Africans to develop and this opinion pervaded the colonial office!"⁴⁷ The corner-stone of Gladston's finance principles was self-sufficiency

and self-sufficiency was the policy which guided the colonial administrations for most of the colonial period. Grants-in-aid were grudgingly given by the British Treasury and then only in cases of extreme difficulty. Deficit financing was not allowed at all.

Uganda was considered to be self-sufficient in 1915 and grants-in-aid from the British Treasury were stopped. This policy was modified somehow at the beginning of the Second World War, when through the Colonial Development and Welfare Acts, British money was made available through the Colonial Development Corporation for social and economical development. The amounts were small and had come late.

In 1903 colonialism found a raw material that Uganda could produce - cotton to which the peasants literally became slaves. King cotton and plantation rubber, cocoa and later coffee divided the country into "productive" and "non-productive" zones, zones of production and labour recruitment respectively. This division of Uganda into two economic zones had dangerous political and social ramifications.

Cotton was first introduced into Buganda and then into the Eastern province mainly because of easier communications - water and rail transport being available. European planters also established their plantations mainly in Buganda, Bunyoro and

Busoga, again mainly for ease of communications. These, therefore, in British colonial officialdom became the "productive" zones and the rest of the country, the north and the west, the "non-productive" zone by the early 1920s. There was a deliberate policy of holding back agricultural development of the "non-productive" zone. In 1925 the Director of Agriculture who was not yet aware of this policy or had overlooked it started encouraging cotton production in west Nile but was curtly warned by the Chief Secretary that "the policy of government is at present to refrain from actively stimulating the production of cotton or other economic crops in outlying districts on which it is dependant for a supply of labour for the carrying out of essential services in the central producing districts."⁴⁸ This policy had the effect of keeping the "non-productive" zone underdeveloped because most the able-bodied men emigrated to the "productive" zone to labour in the cotton fields and in the rubber, coffee and cocoa plantations. It also enclucated inferiority and superiority complexes amongst Ugandans along the "non-productive"/"productive" zones axis. The Ormsby-Gore Commission warned:

"When among such people as the Baganda and Basoga, labourers were introduced who came from tribes considered inferior and who worked under conditions which the Baganda and the Basoga could not themselves accept the latter tended to feel that unskilled manual labour was a form of employment suitable only for

inferior tribes. There was even a danger that the question might in time become one of 'caste'."49

So, colonial economic policy had helped bring about a polarisation amongst Ugandans and had inadvertently encouraged "development in the 'productive' zone and by the same token prevented development in the "non-productive" zone. Unfortunately the colonial economic structures are still with us and there has been very little effort made since independence to take development to the "non-productive" zone especially to the north of the country. The enthusiasm with which the destruction of property was undertaken in the Luwero Triangle was a logical conclusion to the colonial economic policies. The two zones were evening scores.

Since there were no raw materials to extract from the "non-productive" zone there was also no need to develop infrastructure and there was therefore total neglect of this zone. The economic zoning of the country is perhaps the most terrible legacy of British imperialism which was to invariably lead to conflict in the absence of a vigorous economic plan for the "non-productive" zone after independence.

We have been independent for almost a quarter of a century and we cannot indefinitely continue to harangue the imperialists for the chaos that obtains in our country. If the will is there, we can begin to build viable political economic and social insti-

tutions but in this effort there will not be much to learn from our former colonial masters. The Westminster model is not easy to replicate. It will not be easy to replicate the economic revolutions that turned British into an industrialised society; we have to establish our own paths to political social and economic development but above all we have to remember that we as Ugandans have one destiny and that we shall rise or sink together.

FOOT NOTES.

1. For a detailed survey of the linguistic complexity of Uganda, see; Ladefoged, Glick and Criper, Language in Uganda, Part I, (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1971).
2. D.R. Pain, "Acholi and Nubians: Economic Forces and Military Employment," pp.23-36; in C.P. Dodge et, al, Beyond Crisis: Social Development in Uganda. Proceedings of a UNICEF/MAKERERE UNIVERSITY Seminar, Mweya Lodge, 1st-6th, April, 1986.
3. H.H. Johnston, The Uganda Protectorate, Vol. II, (London: Hutchinson & Co. 1902) pp.237-8.
4. A. Roberts, "The Sub-imperialism of the Baganda", Journal of African History, Vol.III, No.3, 1962, pp.435-450.
5. P.G. Powesland, Economic Policy and Labour, (East African Studies No.10, Kampala: EAISR, 1957) p.25.
6. For a comprehensive study of the agreement, see, J.V. Wild, The Story of the Uganda Agreement (Nairobi: The Eagle Press, 1950).
7. T.B. Kabwegyere, The Politics of State Formation: The Nature and Effects of Colonialism in Uganda, (Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1974), p.175.
8. H.H. Johnston, The Uganda Protectorate op cit, p.301
9. Quoted in G.S.K. Ibingira, The Forging of an African Nation (New York/Kampala: Viking and Uganda Publishing House, 1973), p.13.
10. Ibid, pp.14-15.
11. Quoted in D.R. Pain, "Acholi and the Nubians,..." p. 25.
12. H. Moyses-Bartlett, The King's African Rifles (Aldershot: Gale & Polden, 1956) p. 139.
13. Ibid.

14. W.F. Gutteridge, Military and police forces in colonial Africa", in L.H.Gann and P.Duignan, Colonialism in Africa, 1870-1960, vol.2, p.287.
15. Ibid. 288.
16. For a detailed study of the mutiny see, J.V.Wild, The Sudanese Mutiny, (Nairobi: The Eagle Press 1950)
17. A.Omara-Otunnu, Politics and the Military in Uganda, (London: Macmillan, 1987), p.43.
18. Ibid.
19. A.B. Adimola, "The Lamogi Rebellion 1911-12", Uganda Journal, vol.18, No.2, 1954,
20. All the army commanders that Uganda had between independence and January 1986, Opolot, Amin, and Tito, Okello were KAR veterans who joined it in the 1940s.
21. A. Cohen, British Policy in Changing Africa (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1959), p. 25.
22. M.Perham, The Colonial Reckoning (New York: Alfred.A.Knopf, 1962), p. 68.
23. F.G. Burke, Local Government and Politics in Uganda (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1964), p.39.
24. G.S.K. Ibingira, The Forging of an African Nation pp.18-19.
25. H.F. Morris and Read, Indirect Rule and the Search for Justice (London: Oxford University Press, 1972) p. 27.
26. A. Omara-Otunnu, Politics and the Military..., p. 37.
27. R.C. Pratt, "The Politics of Indirect Rule, 1900-1955", in D.A. Low and R.C. Pratt, Buganda and British Overrule, 1900-1955, (London: Oxford University Press, 1960), p. 163.

28. G.N.Uzoigwe, "The Kyanyangire, 1907: Passive Revolt against British Overrule", in B.A. Ogot (ed), War and Society in Africa, (London: Frank Cass, 1972), pp.179-214.
29. F.G. Burke, Local Government...., p. 233.
30. For a more detailed study of the movements; see M. Nwachuka, "The Origin and Development of the Rwenzururu Movement, 1900-1962, Mawazo vol.5, No.2, December, 1983, pp.60-75.
31. Barazas were open air meetings called by colonial administrations to listen to peoples' grievances and problems.
32. The first Africans to be appointed to the Executive Council in 1952, were Mukasa and Kulubya and to the Legislative Council in 1945, Kawalya-Kaggwa, Zirabamuzaale and Nyangabyaki.
33. Report of the Joint Select Committee on Closer Union, vol.II, 1931, p. 577.
34. Obote unilaterally abrogated the 1962 independence constitution and replaced it with his own constitution, in which he made himself executive president and removed the federal status of Buganda and the semi-federal status of the western kingdom, making Uganda a unitary state.
35. These views are minimised in R.C. Pratt, "The Politics of Indirect Rule"..., p.278.
36. Busoga and Bunyoro did not welcome this ordinance.
37. For a more detailed account of the Legislation see C.A.G. Wallis, Report of an Inquiry into African Local Government in the Protectorate of Uganda, (Entebbe:Government Printer, 1953).
38. J. Kakonge stood in the East Mengo constituency of Buganda and not in his native Bunyoro and was returned in the general elections of 1961 simply because that constituency was dominated by the Lugazi Sugar estates where the workers who were the dominant voters were not of local origin. Daudi Ochieng was to go to the National Assembly in 1962 as a Kabaka Yekka member

for although he was not a
Buganda he was a great
friend of Ssekabaka
Mutesa II.

39. Between 1964 and 1985, starting with the Naku-labye incident in which police opened fire and killed innocent people at a night club, through the large scale killings Buganda made following the 1966 constitutional changes to the Luwero Triangle Genocide of the 1980s, the blood-letting in Buganda was almost endless.
40. F.G. Burke, Local Government...., p.230
41. The Langi got a won-nyaci, the Sebei, the Kingoo, the Bakiga, the Rutakirwa, the Bukedi District, the Senkulu and so on.
42. The following reports were produced:
 - (i) Reports of the constitutional Committee, (Entebbe: Government Printer, 1959.)
 - (ii) Report of the Uganda Relationship Commission, (Entebbe: Government Printer, 1961).
 - (iii) Report of the Constitutional Conference, HMSO: Command Paper, No.1523, 1961).
43. Only 3% of the potential voters in Buganda registered for the poll in the 1961 general election.
44. Quoted in the German Tribune, No.275 31st May, 1987.
45. R.C. Pratt, "The Politics of Indirect Rule...", p.284.
46. T.B. Kabwegyere, The Politics of State Formation...
p. 217.
47. A. Cohen, British Politics in Changing Africa, p.18-19.
48. Entebbe Secretariate Archives, SMP 8297 (U.S) paragraphs 68 - 84.
49. Report of the East African Royal Commission cmd 2387, 1925, p.73.

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