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On September 30th, 1888 the Imperial British East Africa Company received a Royal Charter from Lord Salisbury's Government. The Chairman was Sir William Mackinnon, already chairman of the British India Steam Navigation Company. At the end of 1886 the British and the Germans had made their first agreement partitioning East Africa. Germany had obtained the lion's share, but Great Britain gained control of Mombasa, the best harbour on the coast. By an exchange of notes in 1887 the British and German governments agreed to the so-called hinterland doctrine, whereby he who held a stretch of coastline had a pre-emptive right to the interior lying behind. By 1890 the scramble for the area of the great lakes was leading to a crisis, a crisis that might have created a Fashoda incident (when Peters and Jackson raced each other for Uganda) nine years before Fashoda. But diplomacy disposed of the problem, and by the Anglo-German Agreement of 1890 Germany recognised inter alia a British sphere of influence which included Buganda. When the Agreement was signed in July the East Africa Company's operations were virtually confined to the coast, but the British Government had been doing their utmost to persuade the company to send an expedition to occupy Buganda for some months past. Eventually the Company dispatched Captain Lugard, who in December 1890, gained an entry into Buganda. This could scarcely have been done at any time during the previous fifteen years. But by 1890 the Baganda were broken up into three or four mutually hostile parties, not one of which was in a position to keep the Europeans out, two of which were prepared to help him in. Yet it was one thing to allow European agents to come in: it was another thing to acknowledge their control. Lugard stayed in Uganda for some twenty months during which the crucial question between him and Kabaka Mwanga was, who was overlord? This and the hostility between the two dominant Christian parties was at the root of all the confusion - the inaptly called "religious wars" - which so fully occupied Lugard's time. Because of this he could do no trade and his operations became increasingly costly, with the result that the East Africa Company soon decided that they could not maintain him and his force in Uganda any longer, and sent him orders to withdraw. These he received in December 1891 just when the situation was leading up to a crisis, and he was naturally horrified. But meanwhile the Company had told Bishop Tucker and the C.M.S. of what they were going to do and they too were equally horrified. Tucker then made an arrangement with Mackinnon of the Company whereby they would agree to maintain their agents in Buganda for a further year, if Tucker could find them £15,000 to help cover the cost. The C.M.S. were not in a position to hand money over to a commercial company, so Tucker made a remarkable appeal to the friends of the C.M.S. and starting with an anonymous gift of £5,000, he had collected more than he wanted, within a week. He then tried to extend his fund to cover the cost of a lake steamer for the Company, but significantly enough, he was severely criticised for this in evangelical circles, and the fund remained at around £16,500. That was enough however to help the Company remain in Uganda for a further year.

Mackinnon made it clear that at the end of 1892 the Company would certainly then have to withdraw from Uganda. It was unlikely that Tucker would be able to repeat his appeal with equal success, and the unfortunate company was unlikely to attract more capital. The year interval was therefore to be used primarily to persuade the Government to take over Uganda and pay for British operation there from Treasury funds.

This both parties were reluctant to do. The classic British policy for the scramble for Africa had been to carve out by diplomacy a sphere of influence and then send in a Chartered Company, in this way relieving the British taxpayer of the cost. This had been successful for some years and there had been no declarations of direct imperial protectorates in Africa since early on in the scramble, in 1885, when rather reluctantly an Imperial Protectorate had been declared over Bechuanaland. But here in

Uganda the classic policy was breaking down. What was the Government going to do?

It had to find another policy. Salisbury, who was Prime Minister till August 1892, and also Foreign Secretary, in which capacity he dealt with East Africa, decided that his policy would be to help the Company build a railway, which by cheapening the otherwise extremely costly communications, would keep the Company afloat.

But this was a half measure which overlooked the already dire financial straits in which the Company found itself and the situation in Buganda itself, which had so perturbed the minds of Bishop Tucker and the C.M.S. in the previous autumn. For though a railway would help in the long run, what was to happen in the interval between the withdrawal of the Company from the interior, and their return on the tracks of the railway a few years later? Of this Salisbury scarcely seems to have been aware: if he was, he postponed making any further decision until after the General Election of July 1892, at which, as it happened, he was defeated. The result was that for seven months of 1892 no further step was taken by the Government than the authorisation of a railway survey.

Buganda was three months journey from the coast, which meant that if British agents were to be retained there some decision had to be made by October 1st, 1892. There was no discussion of the Uganda question during the election. It was too delicate. Once it was over everything had to wait for the entry into office of the new government, Gladstone's fourth and last, which did not take place till August 15th. That left six weeks. On the 15th, Lord Rosebery became Foreign Secretary, but for a month nothing was done. On September 13th the C.M.S. became desperate and its General Committee passed a resolution appointing a deputation which should wait on Lord Rosebery at the Foreign Office. He saw them on September 23rd.

The year's delay had scarcely improved the situation in Buganda. Lugard and both Christian parties had been involved in the battle of Mengo in the previous January, and though Lugard had pacified the country by June, he had only done it by dividing the country unevenly between the three religious parties, who only agreed to the settlement and refrained from flying at each other's throats because Lugard had shown that his Maxims were more deadly than their antiquated muzzle loaders. From the available evidence - and it is sufficiently diverse - there need be little doubt that the C.M.S. were right in saying that the Company's withdrawal at this juncture would have led to anarchy and bloodshed. All this and much more was clearly put forward by the C.M.S. delegation and Lord Rosebery promised to lay their views before his colleagues.

He had already laid before them the views of Sir Percy Anderson, the Head of the African Department of the Foreign Office. Anderson suggested that on the Company's withdrawal, the Government should annex the whole area up to Lake Albert in order to forestall French and Congo control of the Upper Nile which would threaten the British position in Egypt. This led to an astonishing literary cloudburst from Sir William Harcourt, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, against this monstrous Jingo plot. Few were as downright as Harcourt but his view was shared in general by Gladstone and most of the Cabinet, and not even Rosebery was prepared to defend Anderson's proposals. The fact was that the vast majority of the Cabinet were opposed to any kind of extension of the empire whatsoever, and in particular the extension of direct imperial responsibility: they argued that the empire was too large already. There the Uganda question might have ended, despite the C.M.S. who after all were interested parties.

But even before the C.M.S. saw Lord Rosebery, he had had a cable from his Consul General in Zanzibar, Sir Gerald Portal. Portal had been to Mombasa and there met Lugard who had come down to the coast on his way to England where he planned to tell the British public about the situation in Uganda. After talking to Lugard and to some others, Portal solemnly warned Rosebery by cable that there would be anarchy and bloodshed in Uganda

if the Company withdrew. This altered the situation in the Cabinet. Rosbery fought an apparently hopeless fight, yet on September 30th, with not a day to spare, the Cabinet "adhered to the acceptance by their predecessors of the principle of evacuation" but agreed to pay the Company to remain in Uganda for a further three months, ostensibly to allow evacuation to be more carefully organised but in fact to give the Cabinet three more months in which to make up its mind in a matter on which they were hopelessly divided.

By this time - the end of September 1892 - the press had taken up the question. But like the Cabinet it was divided, with all the Liberal papers opposing annexation and with the Times and a few of the Conservative papers in favour. A Liberal paper, The Globe, wrote a leading article that "great as our reserves are, they might easily be strained to the breaking point were England to accept the responsibility of establishing law and order in all parts of the Dark Continent where anarchy prevails. She has made, and is still making, enormous sacrifices on that altar but her people may be pardoned if they look askance at this new demand". The Manchester Guardian went further. "For our part", a leader said, "we hope the Government will decide absolutely against interference of the kind suggested". On the other side was The Thunderer: on October 1st The Times declaimed against "the cowardly and disgraceful nature of the 'scuttle' we are asked to effect, in order to save at the outside £40,000 a year, until Administration becomes, as it probably soon would self supporting". The writer was probably Flora Shaw, the Times colonial expert, who later became Lugard's wife. He himself wrote to the Times at length on October 6th, soon after his arrival in England. He wrote again ten days later. By that time there was a spate of letters in the papers about Uganda, particularly in The Times: they were mostly in the same vein; "I am not an explorer", one correspondent wrote to the Standard on October 4th, "nor a shareholder in the East Africa Company, but, like thousands of my countrymen, I am deeply interested in the fate of Uganda". Stanley delivered an oration about Uganda on the 6th when he received the Freedom of Swansea: one or two others made speeches: Chamberlain wrote a letter. - All pronounced in favour of retention. On October 25th the Morning Post reported "the growing disaffection caused in the country by the proposal to abandon Uganda." This was a little premature, but by the 7th of November The Times could say with accuracy that "evidence of the true sentiment of the nation upon the question of Uganda is accumulating with satisfactory rapidity".

In a leader of September 30th The Times made the point that "at the present moment the question of Uganda suffers, in common with most others, from the political apathy following a general election". Parliament had met in August to turn Salisbury out of office: it had then adjourned till January to give its members a holiday after the strains of the election. Even the Cabinet dispersed and had to be recalled from as far away as Austria and the north end of Scotland. It was not therefore possible to launch a Parliamentary campaign. The Times in that same leader therefore went on to say that "Everything must depend ... upon the way in which the time of grace is used by those - and we believe their number is very great - who would deplore the abandonment of Uganda". The hint was taken - and what followed seems to be a remarkable example of The Times' influence. No other paper, not even the Manchester Guardian or the Pall Mall Gazette argued half as effectively, and The Times was calling quite clearly for the retention of Uganda. It was upon this simple point that public opinion now concentrated.

In a file in the F.O. archives there is a collection of Memorials, Petitions and Resolutions - 175 in all - urging the retention of Uganda. I have no doubt that there were other meetings called to discuss the question of Uganda, but I think this collection - all of which was forwarded to the F.O. during October, November and December 1892 - provides evidence of the character of a remarkable movement of Victorian public opinion. The resolutions came from at least 100 meetings that were specially called to discuss Uganda - which compared with other movements like the Corn Law League is a goodly number for less than three months - and with one possible exception, all the resolutions - all 175 - were in favour of the retention of Uganda, and appear to have been passed unanimously.

The earliest resolution is dated October 13th, but taking them all in all it appears that the campaign reached its height in the first half of November. It is a little difficult to be absolutely precise with the figures as in some cases only the date on which the resolutions were forwarded to the Foreign Office is given, but with this reservation they are otherwise clear enough. For five weeks, from the last week in October to the end of the fourth week in November, taking the country as a whole, there were at least 20 meetings of all kinds in each week. The meetings really began in the third week of October when there were five: in the fourth there were twenty. During the first half of November there were 36 meetings during each of the first two weeks. By the third week the number was down to 20. On Monday, 21st November, the Government's decision to send a Commissioner to Uganda was announced, but by the end of that week there had, nonetheless, been a further 22 meetings, some of them presumably arranged a week or two beforehand. During the week ending December 3rd there were 10 meetings, but in the next only six. By then it was over. It was therefore a short, sharp campaign.

If we take the resolutions forwarded from a single county, say Yorkshire (though of course it is the largest) we can get some idea of the range of organisations from which resolutions came. There were 19 meetings in Yorkshire which sent petitions or resolutions. These included Ruridecanal chapters, large public meetings in Town Halls, Chambers of Commerce, Diocesan Conferences, Friends of Missions, Branches of the C.M.S., village and parish meetings, Conservative organisations and Ruridecanal conferences.

Taking the country as a whole there were 161 sets of Resolutions and Memorials and 14 petitions. Seventeen came from various branch meetings of the Church Missionary Society; eight from branch meetings of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, a missionary society of high church, perhaps Anglo-Catholic, views (an indication from the start of the diversification of support). Nineteen came from Parish meetings, many of them convened by the vicar, but not all: the 14 Petitions also came from Parishes, some of them originating in yet more Parish meetings. Five came from Presbyterian church meetings, and one from a Wesleyan Methodist. Seventeen from Clerical Societies or Rural Deanery Chapters - in other words from small gatherings of Anglican clergymen. Six came from Ruridecanal Conferences, and one from an Archidiaconal one. Seventeen from Diocesan Conferences or Synods, one from the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland and there was a remarkable Memorial signed by the heads of all the separated Prebyterian Churches of Scotland. More than 100, (that is more than half) therefore, came from the Churches.

But these were not necessarily the most significant, since with the exception of the Diocesan Conferences, they were mostly from the smaller gatherings, which would not carry the same weight as the larger meetings. Only six political organisations - all of them branches, and only one Liberal - sent resolutions. A dozen came from Town and City and County Councils. I reckon that five fall into a miscellaneous category of Mutual Improvement Societies and Y.M.C.A. Parliaments. And then twenty-four came from Chambers of Commerce and twenty-two from large public meetings, many of which were held in Town Halls.

Can we gain any impression of the meetings themselves? Here one or two of the petitions give an idea. The village of South Creake in Norfolk sent a petition from its Vicar, Church Wardens and Parishioners. It looks as if a meeting was held in the Parish Hall. 104 people signed the petition - ten of them were illiterate, and simply put their marks. The list is headed by the Vicar (a Spencer Compton - possibly a relation of the Liberal Unionist leader the Duke of Devonshire) but it was also signed by the Congregational minister - not a denominational affair it would seem. Three people named Cook from the "Manor House" signed - there are still Cooks in South Creake to this day, my father married one to a Mr. Grubb in 1941. Among the villagers names there were five Wasey's, five Vipan's and five Comin's. How much of English history is in all this - and they were meeting, not to elect the first Parish Council (that came the next year) but to urge Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to retain Uganda.

In Cambridge there was a "largely attended Public Meeting" in the Guildhall on November 25th. The Vice Chancellor, Dr. John Reile, Master of Christs, was in the Chair. The resolution was proposed by the great Regius Professor of Greek, Sir Richard Jebb, who was also one of the M.P.'s for the University. He was seconded by the Master of Trinity, and as Dr. Reile reported, the meeting was attended by a "large proportion of the Heads of Colleges and Professors as well as other graduates of the University". They desired "respectfully to urge upon Her Majesty's Government the importance of maintaining British influence in Uganda".

In Bristol there was a campaign in miniature on its own, with 12 meetings in the town and others nearby in Somerset and Gloucestershire. In Bristol itself the campaign began on October 17th with two of the earliest meetings in the whole country - one of the local C.M.S. Union of Young Clergy and the other of what were somewhat obscurely called "Bristol Residents". On the 21st there was a Parish meeting at Long Ashton and a meeting of the friends and supporters of the C.M.S. in the Victoria Rooms. A few days later a parish meeting at St. Luke's: on the 28th a meeting of the Israel's Identification Association at Clifton and a day or two later of the Bristol Protestant League. On the 4th, 7th and 8th November, three further Parish meetings and a meeting of the Bristol Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church of England. And that evening - the 8th - the climax, the crowded meeting in the Guildhall with the Mayor in the Chair. Bristol was quick off the mark and made up its mind early. With the exception of the Guildhall meeting, all the meetings were religious and Protestant - there was no move by the Town Council or the Chamber of Commerce - but then Bristol always has been a Protestant stronghold, and its early connection with the slave trade has always given it an interest in succouring the dusky heathen: but how clearly a town's reaction stands out. Norwich was similar. The county is after all Buxton county. A C.M.S. meeting was held on November 4th at King's Lynn near the Buxton home. But the campaign was late in starting. On November 24 there was a C.M.S. meeting convened in Norwich by a Mr. Gurney (very probably a member of the anti-slavery family) who was C.M.S. Group Secretary for the Norwich district. As far as I can make out it was probably agreed at this meeting that signatures should be collected for parish petitions to the Foreign Office. These were drawn up in copper plate by some enthusiast from a printed draft petition which was also used by six other parishes in other parts of the country. There was a good deal of signature collecting in the Parishes of North and South Heigham, 129 from the latter, 142 from the former including 5 Lacey's from No. 11 and 5 Hines from No. 40 Adelaide Street. But interest flagged. St. Giles Parish Norwich only produced 50 signatories, St. Margarets and St. Swithins 33, St. Marks, Lekenham 21 and Old Catton only 11 - there it had probably been forgotten as it was not sent to the Foreign Office till December 22nd, but this was a month after it was known that the Government had decided to send a Commissioner to Uganda. Even so this was not the measure of Norwich's support for the cause. On Monday December 12th two very large meetings were held in St. Andrews Hall - in the afternoon, for the County, with the Bishop in the Chair, and in the evening, for the Town, presided over by the Mayor. As in Bristol - and in many other towns - the movement reached a climax with large meetings open to the public. Even as in Bristol and Norwich the interest almost entirely was religious. Southampton shows how complex the campaign became. On November 2nd the Annual Meeting of the Southampton Branch S.P.G. (high church) passed a resolution: on the 10th at Gosport the Hampshire Church Missionary Prayer Union (evangelical) passed another: on the 23rd the established Ruridecanal Council added its voice and they had already been joined on the 21st by the Chamber of Commerce.

Swansea was classic: the Town Council passed a Uganda resolution on October 19th, Llandaff Diocesan Conference on the 27th, the Parish of St. Simon's Swansea on November 24th and the Chamber of Commerce on the 25th. Worcester was similar, though there in addition there was a Conservative party element as well: October 27th the Williams Lodge at Kempsey, near Worcester, of the National Conservative League passed a resolution: on November 2nd the Diocesan Conference: on November 9th the City Council: on December 7th the Chamber of Commerce and on December 19th the Worcester "Beaconfield" Lodge of the National Conservative League.

What was true of the south of England, was true of the north. On Tyneside the Newcastle Diocesan Conference passed a resolution on October 25th, the Wearmouth Deanery Conference two days later, and there was a large public meeting of the Sunderland Ratepayers under the Chairmanship of the Mayor on November 24th. On Teeside the Rural Deanery Chapter of Middlesbrough passed a resolution on November 10th, there was a large public meeting at Stockton on the 24th, on the 29th the Stockton Chamber of Commerce held a special meeting, and they were followed by the Middlesbrough Chamber the next day.

Birmingham - Chamberlain's Birmingham - gives as good a picture as any. Chamberlain himself wrote a letter to the Anti-slavery Society on October 27th regretting that he could not take part in meetings, as he was going abroad, but he strongly supported the movement for the retention of Uganda. In Birmingham it opened picturesquely with a meeting on November 1st of the Birmingham Ladies Negro's Friend Society in the Temperance Institute. On the third the Dudley Branch and on the 7th the Birmingham Branch of the C.M.S. met and forwarded resolutions to the Foreign Office. The Chamber of Commerce following on the 16th, and that week they were also joined by the Walsall and District Chamber and by the Dalton Chemical Society meeting in Wolverhampton. The Birmingham Chamber held a special second meeting on December 2nd and that evening there was a "crowded and enthusiastic meeting" in the Town Hall.

On a smaller scale the same pattern was being reproduced north of the border. Two presbyteries, one at each end of Scotland, in Dumfries and Fordyce held meetings, Fordyce in fact held two. The Duns Mutual Improvement Society sent a resolution, and on the 10th of November the Commission of the General Assembly of the Free Church of Scotland passed another one. The diocesan conferences of the two Episcopal dioceses of Edinburgh and Glasgow and Galloway joined their Presbyterian countrymen, but on the whole I think these were isolated cases. The voice of the Churches of Scotland was however quite unmistakably expressed in a Memorial sent to Lord Rosebery by Mr. J. Cown as early as November 3rd. This stated that the facts of the Uganda situation "forbid withdrawal". It was signed by the Moderators, and all the Convenors and Secretaries of the Foreign Missions Committees of the three Presbyterian Churches - the Church of Scotland, the Free Church of Scotland and the United Presbyterian Church of Scotland. It was also signed by the General Secretary of the Alliance of Reformed Churches holding the Presbyterian System, the Chairman and Secretary of the Livingstonia Mission Committee of Glasgow, and by Dr. Robert Laws - Laws of Livingstonia - the senior Scots missionary in British Central Africa who happened to be on furlough. A formidable army with which, three years earlier, Lord Salisbury had successfully frightened the Portuguese when they threatened British claims to Nyasaland. During November these church leaders were joined by four of the most important Chambers of Commerce, Glasgow, Leith, Greenock and Dundee. In Scotland therefore religion and trade had joined hands: there was no need for any further indication of where Scotland's sympathies lay.

Ireland was not stirred. In October Archbishop Lord Plunket presided over the conferences of his three Dioceses of Dublin, Glendalough and Kildare and all three passed resolutions in favour of the retention of Uganda. But besides these the only resolution which reached the Foreign Office from Ireland came from the Protestant Parish of Powerscourt in County Wicklow.

Taking the meetings all in all though they varied from say the "influential and largely attended public meeting" at Stockton-on-Tees, to the small Parish meeting at Trout near Stow on the Wold "representative of a small but vigorous community, intensely interested in foreign missions" as the Vicar put it) resolutions or petitions came from some part or other of 34 out of the 42 English Counties, Oxford, Suffolk, Wiltshire, Northampton and Buckingham of the larger ones not being included, Huntingdon, Westmoreland, and Rutland making up the unrepresented remainder.

It was therefore a countrywide movement, with resolutions reaching the Foreign Office from North and West, from Town and Country, from Market Town and Manufacturing Town and from the Metropolis itself. It was truly nationwide.

There are one or two minor features of the campaign which are worth noting in passing. There was only one meeting on a Sunday, and that was of the Chapter of the Rural Deanery of Luton on 27th October - hardly a breach of the Sabbath. No doubt sermons were preached (it would be valuable to know when and how many - though political sermons were not very common - and on what text). Prayers will certainly have been said, and the pious may be right in avowing their efficacy.

Strangely enough Saturday seems to have been an unusual day for meetings - the favourite was Thursday. It may all be a coincidence, but for the first three of the five weeks there were more meetings on Thursdays than on any other day - indeed almost twice as many as on any other day. Thursday November 3rd and Thursday November 10th - the Thursdays of the weeks with 36 meetings - alone saw 10 or more meetings - Thursday November 3rd holding the record with eleven.

A notable feature of English life was the way in which Mayors and Bishops presided over meetings other than their own Town Councils and Diocesan Conferences. Mayors presided over most of the Public Meetings - to which I shall come in a moment, and on the 23rd November the Mayor of Guilford presided over the parish meeting at the village of Stock-next-Guildford up on the Hogsback in Surrey. The Bishop of Ripon, after presiding over his Diocesan Conference which passed a Uganda resolution on November 5th, took the chair at a great public meeting in Leeds Town Hall on November 14th. The Bishops of St. Asaph and Lichfield presided over other meetings, and so did the Bishop of Norwich as we have seen. The Bishop of Chester, Dr. Jayne, who lies buried half a mile from my home seems to have been as active in the movement as anyone - he presided over the Wallasey and Birkenhead Branch of the S.P.G. on Thursday October 18th - when they passed a resolution. He took the chair at a meeting of the Birkenhead branch of the C.M.S. on Monday 31st when they passed another one. On November 3rd his Diocesan Conference passed a resolution and that evening he seconded Judge Hughes' resolution at the Public Meeting in Chamber convened by the Mayor. Public meetings became respectable if the Mayor could be persuaded to preside and Bishops were local figures of importance who could give prominence to public meetings at which they were in the Chair.

Taking the larger meetings, as presumably being the most influential, the Diocesan Conferences seem to have made up the earliest important series. Carlisle on October 13th, Dublin on October 24th, Newcastle and Glendalough in Ireland on the 25th, Kildare on the 26th, Llandaff and Chichester on the 27th, Truro on the 28th. Worcester on the 2 November, Edinburgh, Chester and Hereford on the 3rd, Ripon on the 5th, Glasgow on the 10th, and finally Rochester on the 15th. I rather suspect that this was the normal time for Diocesan Conferences. They can hardly have been specially summoned: but the opportunity of their meeting seems to have been taken to proclaim the Church's attitude. The Chambers of Commerce however seem in most cases to have been specially called to consider the Uganda question. Blackburn was the first on October 31st. Glasgow, Leith and London met in the first week of November; Greenock and Newport in the second; Manchester, Dundee, Dinsbury, Birmingham, Gloucester and Walsall in the third; by the end of November, the Chambers of Southampton, Dundee (for the second time), Swansea, Stockton, Exeter, Leeds and Middlesborough had met. By 12th December, when the last of this series - Rochdale - passed a resolution, Liverpool and Worcester had also met, and Birmingham for the second time. The Chambers of Commerce therefore mostly followed the Diocesan Conferences and their meetings were spread out during November and early December. The same was true of the Town and City Council meetings and the great Public Meetings in Town Halls.

It was of course still the heyday of the public meeting and in the absence of other forms of mass entertainment and more sophisticated instruments of propaganda, it was still a weapon which could be wielded to considerable effect. Indeed with the extension of the franchise, politicians had found that if they were to be masters of their craft they had to be equally at home in two very different atmospheres, the House, and the Public Meeting, and this

remained true until with the expansion of the electorate the voters to be wooed quite exceeded the seating capacity of the local Town Hall, and until broadcasting enabled an eminent personality to be heard in two places at once. But in 1892 these changes lay in the future, and the weapon that had been forged by extra-parliamentary movements from 1780 onwards was still available to any new extra-parliamentary movement that desired to influence British policy. The 22 large public meetings about Uganda were therefore of the first importance.

So, of course, were some of those Chambers of Commerce, particularly those which Lugard addressed - London, Dundee, Manchester and Liverpool. But these were not open to the public, and though widely reported, they only represented one interest. I think we have to include however among the large public meetings two possibly doubtful cases: one was the meeting at Stockton on Tees under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce, since this was a public meeting in the Public Hall under the Chairmanship of the Mayor, though he happened also to be President of the Chamber; the other was the S.P.G. meeting at Reading since this was also open to the public and presided over by the Mayor.

The Public Meetings then began with a county meeting at Old Hill in Staffordshire on October 31st. On November 2nd it was followed by a meeting at Durham, with the Mayor in the chair and the Dean moving the resolution. On the third of November was the meeting at Chester, convened by the Mayor at which as I have already mentioned the Bishop seconded the motion. On the 7th the Mayor of Wells in Somerset presided over a meeting in the Public Hall. On the 8th was the great meeting at Bristol, on the 10th one at Woking (which seems to have led to the subsequent petition from Woking) and that night the largest of the Public Meetings in London with speeches by the local M.P.'s and an overflow meeting nearby. On the 14th the large meeting presided over by the Bishop of Ripon in Leeds Town Hall: on the 18th a public meeting at Richmond, with the Liberal Mayor in the Chair: two days later another one in London at Woolwich. The following Monday - the 21st - a crowded public meeting (the Mayor presiding) in Tunbridge Wells. Two meetings at Malvern two days later, and one at Sunderland and the one at Stockton on Tees. November 25th saw the Cambridge meeting. The 28th the Reading one. The 31st, one at Leamington in Warwickshire. And finally the "large and enthusiastic" meeting at Birmingham on December 2nd, another at Cheltenham on December 7th, in the same week a county meeting at Dorchester in Dorset, and last of all the two meetings in St. Andrews Hall, Norwich, on December 12th.

It might have been possible to discount the views of the interested parties expressed through Diocesan Conference and Chambers of Commerce. But these crowded, enthusiastic and unanimous meetings could not be ignored. In the absence of more exact calculations, these public meetings provided a guide, of which politicians made use, to the strength of public opinion on a particular issue, so that of all the meetings on Uganda, these public meetings were probably the decisive ones.

Decisive, moreover, because they were widely representative. This point is specially brought out in several of the letters forwarding the resolutions. One vicar wrote of a parish meeting, "The room was quite full, and a large number of working men" were present. To this another vicar could add, "our meeting "was numerously attended by men widely differing in social position and political opinion". The Mayor of Tunbridge Wells wrote that his meeting "was representative of all classes of the inhabitants and of all shades of religious and political opinions" and the Bishop of Ripon reported that the meeting in the Leeds Town Hall "was largely composed of the working classes, and was very enthusiastic. There were representatives of various religious bodies present. The meeting was in no wise political in tone or composition, and it was supported by many influential persons" - which only means that it was a truly national affair.

Critics in the House of Commons subsequently tried to argue that the movement did not have the support of the Liberals in the country. It is true

that only one Liberal organisation - the City of London association - sent a resolution to the Foreign Office, and that that was quite non-committal (the only one I may say in the whole 175). But the whole movement was not really a political affair at all. Only five Conservative organisations - and they were all local branches - sent resolutions, two of them came from Worcester where the movement was active in any case, and, apart from Chamberlain's published letter, the only Conservative politicians, indeed the only politicians to mention the subject during the crucial weeks were Sir Michael Hicks Beach in a speech at Bristol, Balfour at Edinburgh and Salisbury to the Nonconformist Conservative League. All three were strongly ambivalent, and their speeches can scarcely have had any important influence on the campaign - they quite failed to turn it to party advantage, though they tried. The Liberal critics were almost certainly mistaken. The available evidence, as for instance from Woking, is that "both Liberals and Conservatives" were supporters of the movement. The Mayor of Richmond, writing "as a humble supporter of the present Government" forwarded a resolution strongly in favour of the retention of Uganda, while the Chairman of a meeting in Hornsey wrote, "The bulk of the people here are strong Liberals, but at the same time, they feel most deeply that to evacuate Uganda is a mistake". The fact was that the whole movement cut completely across the normal political alignments.

Even so, was it organised? Lugard arranged that he should address Chambers of Commerce, and he spoke to four important ones: he also spoke at a privately arranged meeting in London on November 4th, but so far as I am aware he was the only itinerant lecturer.

On October 25th Swansea Town Council sent its resolution of October 19th to probably every Town Council in England and Wales. Nine of them used the Swansea formula, which leaves only two Town Councils which devised their own. Here was a measure of organisation, but not a very effective one. The Swansea formula was also used by the Newport (Mon.) Chamber of Commerce on November 11th, and their Secretary was instructed to send copies to all the Chambers of Commerce in the country. But the twenty-three other Chambers that sent resolution, with the exception of Leeds, were all independent enough to devise their own. In addition to the Swansea resolution, there was also a draft 'petition' going the rounds, which was used by 12 out of the 14 petitioning parishes, but the only other duplication that I can trace is between the Memorial of the great public meeting in the Guildhall in Bristol and a memorial from the inhabitants of a parish in Leicestershire - a convention that baffles me - unless its vicar had a brother in Bristol. But these prototypes account for less than thirty out of the 175 cases with which I have been dealing. No doubt there were organising committees in places (I think there must have been in Norwich) but there was certainly no central organising campaign committee, or anything like it. The striking fact is that apart from these cases I have mentioned there are hardly any resolutions that are similarly worded. Nonetheless it may be possible to give some idea of what they said from three or four examples.

The Halifax Friends of Missions were brief, Resolved "That this meeting in view of the great and various interests involved, desires to urge upon the Government the importance of maintaining British influence in Uganda". That was on November 6th. A month later, to take another example, the Liverpool Chamber of Commerce resolved (copy to Mr. Gladstone) "That in view of the important geographical position and natural resources of Uganda, the Council of this Chamber urges upon Her Majesty's Government the expediency of placing that country under direct Imperial control-so that peace and order may be maintained and opportunity be afforded for the spread of civilisation and commerce against the inhabitants". Statutory Church organisations were busy and, for instance, the Southampton Ruridecanal Council resolved "That we contemplate with the greatest anxiety the withdrawal of British Authority from Uganda, believing, that the result will be disastrous to the missionary converts in that country; will endanger the lives of British subjects; will greatly hinder the suppression of the Slave Trade; will stop the advance of civilization in Central Africa; will close a promising field for the trade of this country; and will bring dishonour upon England as a Christian nation, in whose power and faithfulness the natives have learned to trust: Your memorialists

therefore pray", etc. And one last example from the Public Meeting at Chester which resolved "That this Meeting of the Citizens of Chester believing that the Slave Trade would be grievously promoted and that the cause of Christ as well as lawful commerce and national honour would be injured by the evacuation of Uganda earnestly request Her Majesty's Government to maintain the just influence of England within that territory in Africa which was assigned to this country by the treaty of 1889". The treaty was in fact signed in 1890, but that was a minor point.

The main point is that these last two resolutions from Southampton and Chester show very clearly how inextricably the religious and commercial aspects were intermingled.

As you will have noticed the same phrases and the same arguments are constantly recurring, and I have tried to analyse how many times each occurs in the total of 175 petitions and resolutions. I think this will give an indication of what that ephemeral figure "the British Public" had in mind. I have decided not to express them, say, as percentages, for that would give them a precision that would be altogether false, but singly as the number of times out of 175 that they occur.

As one might expect, the interests of trade and commerce were mentioned frequently - 74 times in fact - and there are 7 or 8 further reference to the fruitful and promising field whose resources could now be opened to development. This was clearly important. Continental markets were closing and hostile tariffs were being evolved everywhere. It was therefore necessary for the British to look to the future when their existing markets would be more and more restricted and when they would be glad of every available new one. But it was not annexation with a view to immediate exploitation that was in mind: it was merely annexation in case of need.

The appearance of economic arguments however is not the most striking feature. The most striking fact of all is that in 100 cases out of 175, there is some mention of the slave trade - the need for its abolition and the dangers of its resurgence unless the British Government maintained the position in Uganda. The British public knew very little about Africa, but the preachings of Wilberforce, Buxton and Livingstone had sunk deep into the national mind, and any reverse in Africa instantly recalled the horror of slavery which was the one thing that most people knew about Africa. Uganda of course had suffered a great deal less from the ravages of the slave trade than many other areas, but public opinion is not concerned with such fine distinctions as this: it goes for the broad fact. I don't think it would be going to far to say that a fear for the revival of the slave trade was the most important factor in persuading British public opinion to insist on the retention of Uganda.

But fear for the slave trade did not stand alone. The dangers of civil war and massacre, "barbarism" and grave disaster, anarchy and bloodshed were mentioned in the resolutions more than fifty times; and the need for peace and order and good government a further nineteen. This reveals a more accurate assessment, probably garnered from the newspapers, of the real problem.

From the newspapers too, there came no doubt, the fears for the Christian Mission: the plight of the Christian Converts was mentioned 36 times, there were six references to the plight of mission work, 20 to the plight of the native inhabitants, 28 to that of the missionaries.

In addition the call of National Duty also played its part. The fact that the natives had placed their trust in the British occurs four times. There were thirteen references to the distrust in the British that will be engendered if withdrawal takes place. There were eight or nine specific references to Britain's "moral policy" or "moral" or "legitimate influence". There are 30 examples of the feeling that Britain has a responsibility to discharges or that British prestige and the British position in Africa must be upheld. And then 38 of the resolutions and petitions referred to the Honour of England and the iniquity of a breach of faith.

Certain stock phrases of course were liberally used - philanthropy however only four times, but humanity 19 times, civilisation 39 times, and Christianity (or Religion, which at the time was a synonym for Christianity) as many as 50 times.

I am not concerned here with the rarefied thoughts of the political speech makers, but with the groundlings. What these revolutions reveal then is the ubiquity of the Victorian thought-connection between Africa and the Slave Trade, and the fact that people were still ready to make an effort to see that it was suppressed. Then they show that there was a profound concern about the fate of Uganda - its people, its Christian converts and its Christian missionaries. No less important were the interests of trade and commerce - 'peaceful' and 'legitimate' commerce as it was called. And then superimposing everything was the call of national duty, and the proud confidence that Britain having found the means to raise herself above all other civilised nations was well placed to impart the benefits of Christianity and Civilization for which she had striven and to which she was the heir, to others - as Chamberlain put it succinctly from a platform in 1894, "What is wanted for Uganda, is what Birmingham has got - an improvement scheme".

As a guide to the study of public opinion I suggest that this is clear evidence that a spontaneous movement only occurs when some ideas deep-seated in the national character are profoundly stirred - in this case, horror of slavery; fears for the passing of free trade; memories of Gordon and Khartoum, and confidence that the keys to progress had been found and could easily be transferred to Africa. They may be strange bedfellows, and very different from the precise problem in Buganda (which was simply to prevent the collapse of the delicate balance between three hostile parties within a single state); very different also from the Foreign Office's primary concern with gaining control of the headwaters of the Nile to prevent any other power upsetting the delicate British position in Egypt; but clearly enough public opinion is quite capable of having its own - private - reasons, irrespective of what we might call 'real' or 'adequate' or 'well-informed' reasons.

The strength of the movement lay in its assortment of ideas, not of course so strangely mixed for the Victorians as for ourselves. Only a year previously the C.M.S. had campaigned for money for the Company and for a steamer to be shared between the Company and the Mission: but their success had only been partial, because they had worked alone. Early in 1892 Monnteney-Jephson who had been with Stanley on the Emin expedition went the round of the Chambers of Commerce, urging the commercial value of Uganda, and several of the Chambers had sent memorials to the Foreign Office, but with no noticeable effect on Government policy. Two years later in 1894 over the Bechuanaland question, the missionaries and the empire builders were on different sides, with the result that neither got their way, Rhodes got his railway strip (from which he launched the Cameron Raid) but he gained no control over the bulk of the tribal lands. In 1892 in this Uganda campaign the Church, the Chambers of Commerce and the Empire builders for once worked together for the same object and at the same time: for the object they were after was quite straightforward - the retention of Uganda.

Ninety-five percent of the resolutions and petitions were seen and initialed by Lord Rosebery in the Foreign Office, but judging from his initialed dates, by the time he wrote his decisive cabinet memorandum for the Cabinet on November 25th, though he had probably heard of some of the more recent public meetings, he cannot have seen more than 25 of the resolutions and as we know there were 150 still to come. On November 7th before Rosebery had seen any more the Cabinet had decided to send a Commissioner to Uganda. The movement cannot therefore have had much influence on the Cabinet in reversing their decision of September 30th to allow evacuation to proceed.

To some this second decision, which was announced on November 21st, was adequate. It was "cordially" welcomed by a public meeting in the quaint old market town of Alnwick in Northumberland, and by a crowded audience at Godalming "with intense satisfaction". But there were other views.

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A.C.M.S. meeting at Bedford "while expressing its earnest thanks to Almighty God for the evident answer to prayer, which the present concession of the Government respecting Uganda indicates ... would most urgently press upon the Government the necessity of maintaining an active control over that land". St. Simon's Swansea was a little more downright:- "We regret that the decision of the Government so far appears to be somewhat temporizing". A vicar called it "apparently provisional" and he was right. It was a compromise and it left a way out, for the Commissioner could of course still recommend evacuation, and Gladstone and Sir Edward Grey in the debate on the Address in the following January when the question was raised by the Little Englanders promised that no final decision would be taken until the report was received.

But already on the 9th of December in forwarding instructions to Portal - Sir Gerald had been appointed Commissioner on December 1st - Rosebery enclosed a private and confidential letter (which exists only in the Portal Papers, and was confidential presumably from his colleagues) saying that he had little to add "but I may say this "Rosebery wrote", as my confident though nor my official opinion, that public sentiment here will expect and support the maintenance of the British sphere of influence". This was the success of the campaign, that as early as the first week in December it was quite clear that the country would not tolerate anything short of annexation, and that behind the back of the still-hesitant Cabinet, Portal was instructed accordingly. The final decision was not taken till Portal's Report had been received, but for fourteen months it had been almost a foregone conclusion.

Almost but not quite. As The Times wrote on December 8th "What the Government is now doing in the matter of Uganda is satisfactory enough as far as it goes, and if Lord Rosebery had a free hand we have no doubt that it would be made more satisfactory still. But it is still only by a decided expression of public opinion that he has been enabled to do anything, and it must not be forgotten that energetic prosecution of the policy now sanctioned cannot be expected unless the pressure of public opinion can be maintained". But the flood of meetings could not be maintained and public attention turned to Egypt and Gladstone's Home Rule Bill. But during 1893 Lugard's two handsome volumes appeared and so did the Company's apologia "I.B.E.A." compiled by its Secretary M'Dermott. There were articles in Reviews, Lugard and others did some talking, and all this was sufficient to prevent the effect of the 1892 campaign from wearing off. (It is an interesting change of technique.) On December 12, 1893, at a meeting of the Royal Colonial Institute, Lugard said, "I hope we may now assume that East Africa and Uganda are saved from the chaos and anarchy which abandonment would involve, and that the nation will not now have to face the shame which would be ours if we were to withdraw". Two months later, Rosebery in circulating his comments on Portal's Report to the Cabinet said, "I believe the country has made up its mind". There was a delay while Gladstone resigned, and Rosebery succeeded, as Prime Minister. There was one last fracas in Cabinet on April 7th but the decision to retain Uganda was taken and announced in both Houses on April 12th - in the Commons, by Sir William Harcourt, its most formidable opponent at the outset.

Such was the result of that short, spontaneous, countrywide, strangely comprised but truly national movement of public opinion in the late autumn of 1892.

Paper read at Conference held at the East African Institute of Social Research, Makerere College, January, 1954.

APPENDIX I.

1880		Anglo-German Agreement
1888	September	IBEA. Charter
	(July	Anglo-German Agreement
1890	(December	Lugard reaches Uganda
1891	Autumn	IBEA. decision to withdraw: C.M.S. raise £16,000
1892	February	Battle of Mengo
	July	General Election: Gladstone's Liberal Victory
	15 September	Portal's telegram
	29-30 September	Cabinet meetings: first decision
	1 October	First decision published
	October (3rd week)	5 meetings
	October (4th week)	20 meetings
	Nov. (1st week)	36 meetings
	November 5th	Rosebery's first Cabinet memorandum
	November 7th	Cabinet: 2nd decision
	November (2nd week)	36 meetings
	November (3rd week)	20 meetings
	21st November	2nd decision published
	November (4th week)	22 meetings
	December 1st	Portal's appointment as Commissioner in Uganda announced
	w/e December 3rd	10 meetings
	December (2nd week)	6 meetings
1893	January	Debates on the Address
1894	12th February	Rosebery's 2nd Cabinet Memorandum: Portal's report received
	March	Gladstone's resignation: Rosebery P.M.
	7th April	Cabinet: 3rd decision
	11th April	3rd decision announced in Parliament

APPENDIX II.

C.M.S. branches	17	Ruridecanal & Archidiaconal Conferences	6
S.P.G. branches	8	Diocesan conferences	17
Parish meetings	19	Presbyterian Assemblies	2
Parish Petitions	14	Political Organisations	6
Presbyteries	5	Town, City and County Councils	12
W. Methodists	1	Chambers of Commerce	24
R. Deanery Chapters		Large Public Meetings	22
& Clerical Societies	17	Miscellaneous	5
Total: 175			

APPENDIX III.

Slave Trade	100	Anarchy & Bloodshed	52
Christianity: Religion	50	Development of Resources	8
Civilization	39	Inhabitants	20
Honour of England	58	Humanity	19
Converts	36	Peace, Order and Good Government	19
Missionaries	28	Position of Uganda	10
Trade and Commerce	74	Hostile Tariffs	12
British responsibility		Natives placed their trust	4
prestige and position	30	Distrust of England by native races	13
Great & various interests	3	Mission Work	6
Moral policy: moral and		Philanthropy	4
legitimate influence	9		