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Colonial Office Policy and the Origins

of Decolonisation in Uganda, 1940-1956

by

Patrick Ntambi Kakembo

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

at

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FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES


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by ___ Patrick Ntambi Kakembo _____

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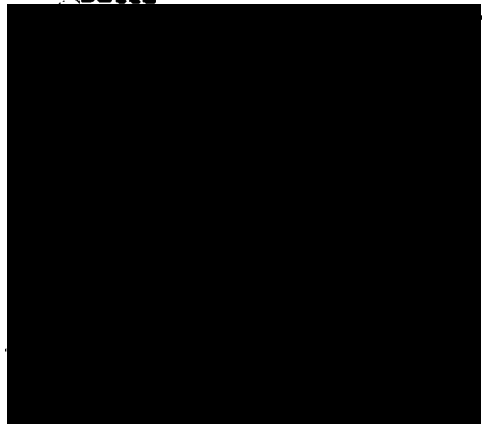
# DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY

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iii

# Table of Contents

## ABSTRACT

The study examines the genesis of decolonisation in Uganda. It begins by analysing the impact of the Second World War and the CDW program on the social, economic and political development of the protectorate. Cohen's attempts to induce Uganda-wide nationalism are discussed within the context of the British efforts to force the pace of colonial development. The Kabaka crisis is considered against the background of the problem of political integration and the struggle between primary nationalism based on precolonial societies and modern African nationalism based on the colonial state. The study analyses the failure of populist nationalism. It then examines the problems which confronted both the imperial power and the Uganda leaders at the approach of self-government and the roots of political instability, chaos and anarchy in post-independence Uganda. The study contends that while the origins of decolonisation lay primarily with the Colonial Office and the British administration, the pace and timing were influenced by both imperial and local factors. It suggests that the Kabaka crisis was the turning point in Anglo-Ugandan relations and profoundly affected Colonial Office policy towards Uganda. Moreover, in trying to direct devolution from the centre, the Colonial Office found itself propelled forward by the governor at a pace faster than London wished.

# Abbreviations

CAB - Cabinet Office

CD&WA - Colonial Development & Welfare Act

CDW - Colonial Development & Welfare

CO - Colonial Office

DP - Democratic Party

E.A.L.B. - East African Literature Bureau

FCB - Fabian Colonial Bureau

HCD - House of Commons Debates

J.A.H. - _Journal of African History_

J.A.S. - _Journal of African Studies_

J.I.C.H. - _Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History_

J.M.A.S. - _Journal of Modern African Studies_

KAR - King's African Rifles

KY - Kabaka Yekka

P.P. - Progressive Party

TANU - Tanganyika African National Union

U.A.F.U. - Uganda African Farmers Union

U.N.C. - Uganda National Congress

U.P.C. - Uganda Peoples Congress

U.P.U. - Uganda Peoples Union

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## Glossary

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Baganda | - | the people of Buganda |
| Eishengyero | - | Ankole District Council |
| Great Lukiiko | - | Buganda native parliament |
| Kabaka | - | King of Buganda |
| Katikiro | - | Prime Minister of Buganda |
| Kiganda | - | culture of the Baganda |
| Luganda | - | language of the Baganda |
| Mugabe of Ankole | - | King of Ankole |
| Mukama of Bunyoro | - | King of Bunyoro |
| Mukama of Toro | - | King of Toro |
| Omulamuzi | - | Buganda Minister of Justice |
| Omuwanika | - | Treasurer of Buganda |
| Rukurato | - | Bunyoro District Council |

# Map of Uganda



ZAIRE

Nile

Madi

Acholi

Karamoja

Lango

*Lake Albert*

Bunyoro

Teso

*Lake Kioga*

Sebei

Bugisu

Busoga

Bukedi

Toro

Buganda

*Lake Edward*

Ankole

*Lake Victoria*

Kigezi

RWANDA

TANZANIA

x
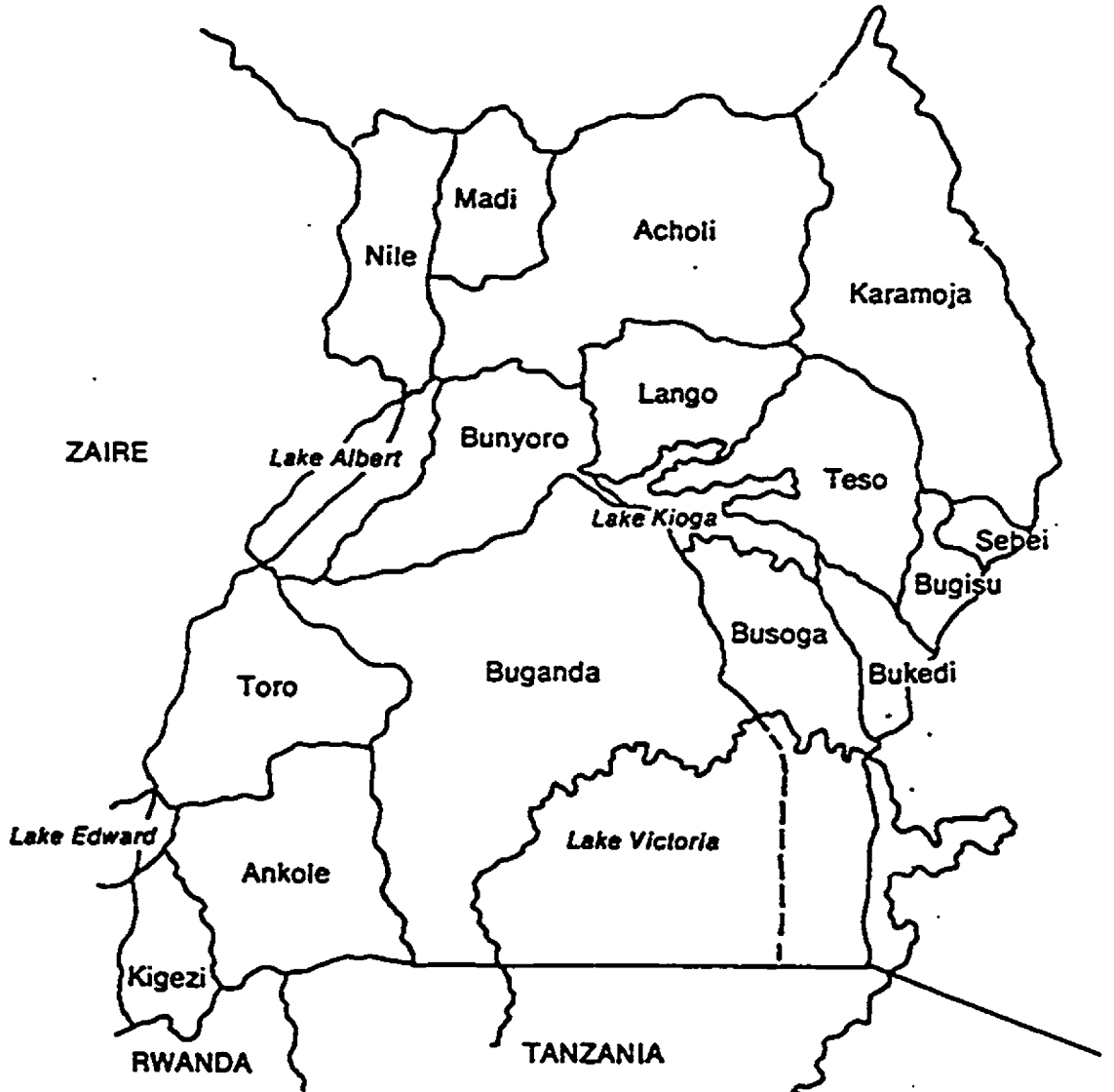
# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

A close scrutiny of the historiography of Uganda reveals that the literature relating to Colonial Office policy towards Uganda in the period of decolonization in Africa is very thin. There are two plausible explanations for this. Since the early 1960s, it has been necessary to rewrite African history from the African point of view in order to balance the obvious Eurocentric bias. This has seen a number of publications of what is popularly known as African "Nationalist History". In this category, Uganda is not lacking.[1] These Africanist scholars tended to focus on themes such as precolonial societies, African resistance to colonialism, nationalism as it was transformed into political parties, nation-building after independence, neocolonialism in Africa and the emergence of one party states. These proved to be popular topics partly because the research material could be obtained in the former colonies themselves and was easily accessible. Undeniably research in these areas was essential to refute some of the

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[1]. For example S.R.Karugire, <u>A Political History of Uganda</u>, Nairobi, 1980; G.S.K.Ibingira, <u>The Forging Of An African Country</u>,New York, 1973; Tarsis, B. Kabwegyere, <u>The Politics of State Formation: The Nature and Effects of Colonialism in Uganda</u>, East African Literature Bureau, 1974; Z.N.Uzoigwe, <u>Uganda: The Dilemma of Nationhood</u>, NOK, 1982; and D.E.Apter, <u>The Political Kingdom in Uganda: A Study in Bureaucratic Nationalism</u>, Princeton University Press, 1961.

Eurocentric views or to justify the status quo. The second possible cause of this omission, rather obvious, is the thirty year restriction imposed on the Colonial Office documents now in the Public Record Office (PRO). Thus without access to those sources, it was impossible to study Colonial Office policy and historians turned to themes where records in the African archives and libraries could be supplemented by Blue Books, White Papers and newspaper sources as a basis for interpretations. Now that the historian has access to most of the PRO documents concerning Uganda in the most critical period of its decolonization, this anomaly can be corrected. This study attempts to fill that gap. It relies heavily on the Colonial Office documents on Uganda which had scarcely been touched for the period from 1945 to 1956.

The present study also derives its inspiration from the current debate among imperial historians dealing with the transfer of political power in British Africa and the causes of decolonization, which asks whether decolonization was planned or not and what role the African "nationalist" or independence movements played in the process.

There is an impression that the study of colonial policy is not relevant to solving the current problems of Uganda. I strongly disagree. Physicians routinely base their diagnosis on both the apparent symptoms and the case history of a patient. It is only after they have correctly diagnosed a case that they are able to make an effective prescription.

Likewise, in order for scholars to comprehend the problems and recommend the right solutions for Uganda and Africa in general, we have to determine where things went wrong. This implies looking at both the long-term and the immediate causes of political instability. Diagnosis based on immediate causes and obvious symptoms is often faulty. Arguably, the decision-making, as far as Uganda's future was concerned, was up to the very end in the hands of the Colonial Office and the British government. While taking important decisions affecting Uganda, other factors beyond the Ugandan borders were usually taken into consideration. It then becomes clear that even if it might be easier to gather evidence of the changes in the colonies themselves it is still important to explore what happened in London.

## Decolonization in the African Perspective

The term "Decolonization" in reference to Africa implies the formal grant of constitutional independence through which African nationalists would hold political power in their own countries. In this study, decolonization and "transfer of power" are used synonymously. The numerous attempts by scholars to explain the phenomenon of decolonization in Africa have resulted in a number of scholarly publications and

theses.[2] Inevitably, controversy has arisen concerning the circumstances in which decolonization came about. Scholars set out to elucidate why it happened, how it happened, and why it took place when it did. In other words, scholars are not only concerned with the motives for the transfer of power, they are also interested in the methods and timing of decolonization in Africa.

Peter Emudong has identified three schools of thought concerning the situation leading to decolonization in Africa.[3] The first he called "the Official School". This school included J.W.Cell, Kenneth Robinson, Keith Hancock, and others whose main argument was that British imperialism stood for "good government" and that decolonization was "a gradual and evolutionary process" which saw the creation of modernized societies ready for independence in the modern world. By implication, at maturity the British empire would liquidate itself. This process, if necessary, could be guided and

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[2]. These include: C.E.Carrington, The Liquidation of the British Empire, Clark, Toronto, 1961; R.Emerson, From Empire to Nation, Harvard University Press, 1962; William Roger Louis, Imperialism at Bay, 1941-1945: The United States and Decolonization of the British Empire, Princeton University Press, 1970; J.D.Hargreaves, The End of Colonial Rule in West Africa, Macmillan Press Ltd., London, 1979; W.H.Morris-Jones & George Fisher (eds.), Decolonisation and After: The British and French Experience, London, 1980; Robert Pearce, The Turning Point in Africa: British Colonial Policy 1938-1948, London, 1982, to mention but a few.

[3]. See Emudong, P., "The Evolution of a New British Colonial Policy in the Gold Coast 1938-48: Origins of "Planned Decolonization" or of 'Neocolonialism?'", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, History, Dalhousie University, 1982, pp.2-21.

facilitated by "intelligent European intervention.[4] This school sought to explain decolonization in moral terms. The second school of thought Emudong called the "Liberation School". This school dismissed the "Official School" as apologists for the Empire. Its leading theorists were Kwame Nkrumah, Tom Mboya and Walter Rodney. Their main contention was that African nationalism, more than anything else, terminated colonialism and European rule. They argued that it was the "winds of change" which had compelled the colonial powers to dismantle their empires.[5] He called the third school "the neutralists". These had concluded that the Second World War was responsible for the demise of the colonial empires. They believed that the war had aroused the political consciousness of the colonial peoples to such a level that they became impatient for political freedom. They contended that British authorities, already demoralized by war, had no alternative when faced by demands for political freedom but to initiate a hasty programme of decolonization. Propounding

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[4]. *Ibid.*. Also see Cell, J.W.," On the Eve of Decolonization: The Colonial Office Plans for the Transfer of Power in Africa, 1947", *J.I.C.H.*, vol.III, no.3, may 1980, pp. 235-257. Robinson, Kenneth,"The Moral Disarmament of African Empire 1919-1945", *J.I.C.H.*, vol.VIII, no.1, Oct. 1979, and Hancock, Keith, *The Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs : Problems Nationality 1918-1936*, Vol.1, London, 1937.

[5]. *Ibid.*. See also Kwame Nkrumah, *Towards Colonial Freedom*, Heinemann, London, 1962; Tom Mboya, "Vision of Africa" in James Duffy and Roberts, A.Manners (eds.), *Africa Speaks*, Van Nostrand, 1961; and Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, London, 1972.

this theory were C.E.Carrington, J.S.Coleman, William Roger Louis, David Goldsworthy and others.[6] While the present author does not necessarily agree with this categorization, it serves to illustrate the diversity of views current among the scholars dealing with the transfer of power in Africa.

The questions as to how and when decolonization was supposed to occur have also generated a heated debate among the scholars. The basis of this debate have been three documents: the Moyne Report which was prepared following the West Indies Riots of 1938, Hailey's African Survey (1940), and a 1947 Colonial Office Report co-authored by S.Caine and Andrew Cohen generally called the Cohen-Caine Report. From these documents, some historians believe they have discerned and can establish a plan in the Colonial Office by imperial reformers to dismantle the British Empire after a long period of tutelage, thus the phrase "planned decolonization". This theory gained considerable credibility after 1977 with the revelation (following the declassification of the 1947 C.O. papers) that in 1947, well in advance of populist nationalism in the Gold Coast and, indeed, elsewhere in British Africa, the Colonial Office under Arthur Creech Jones, had produced what R.Robinson has called a "blueprint" for the

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[6]. Ibid.. See too C.Carrington, op. cit., J.S. Coleman, Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, William R.Louis, op. cit., and David Goldsworthy, Colonial Issues in British Politics 1945-1951, Oxford, 1971.

decolonization of the British African Empire.[7] The Cohen-Caine
plan involved first, the overhauling of the local colonial
administrative system along the Westminster lines. Secondly,
it outlined a four-stage process for the transfer of power to
African leaders. Robert Pearce has argued that 1947 represents
"the turning point".[8] Those who downplay the significance of
the Cohen-Caine plan contend that the Colonial Office did not
intend to follow through with the plan. John Hargreaves
referred to it as "something less than a blueprint for
something less than universal independence".[9] He asserted that
from the report it was clear that Caine "envisaged
decolonization as a progressive 'substitution of counsel for
control' within a commonwealth community where only the larger
colonies could expect to achieve full dominion status".[10]
Hargreaves, however, concedes that the British had intentions,
and sometimes even plans to make the retention of formal
empire obsolete, but:

> During the post war years both the British and French
> governments were faced with the growing contradictions
> between their intentions to substitute counsel for

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[7]. See Ronald Robinson, "Andrew Cohen and the Transfer
of Power in Tropical Africa, 1940-1951", in W.H.Morris-Jones
and G.Fischer (eds.), Decolonization and After, The British
and French Experience, London, 1980, pp.50-72. Also see
J.W.Cell, op. cit., p.250.

[8]  See Robert Pearce, The Turning Point in Africa:
British Colonial Policy 1938-1948, London, 1982.

[9]. Hargreaves, J.D., Decolonization in Africa, London,
1988, p.99.

[10]. Ibid..

control in relationships with their African dependencies and more urgent incentives to use the economic and military resources of those dependencies to strengthen their international influence."[11]

Emudong too argues that the conditions attached to the full implementation of the Cohen-Caine plan:

"cast doubts to the genuineness of the plan since they afforded the imperial authorities a wide scope to find rationalization for deferring the implementation of the plan indefinitely".[12]

The debate is complicated further by the studies which have so far been conducted on the relative importance of economic considerations in the decision of the metropolitan powers to decolonize. These studies suggest that the collapse of the British colonial empire in the Far East Asia during the early years of the Second World War increased the importance of the African empire to the British. Allister Hinds has concluded that:

During the period 1945-1951 the colonial development policy of the Labour Party was determined by three factors: the state of the British and world economies at the end of the war, the experiences of the Labour Party in the wartime Coalition Government, and the need to reward colonial peoples for their loyalty during the war. Between September 1945 and July 1947 the British Government did not openly advocate colonial development as a panacea for Britain's weakened economy. However, as the dollar crisis approached, increasing emphasis was placed on the indispensability of the restoration of the British economy to the successful development of colonial Dependencies. Consequently, colonial development was geared towards the production of "dollar earning" and "dollar saving" commodities. The links between colonial

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11. *Ibid.*, p.113.

12. Emudong, *op. cit.*, p.13.

and metropolitan economies was strengthened.[13]

This argument is supported by a cabinet memorandum explaining the ministerial preoccupation with economic development of Africa:

> It was primarily their study of the future course of the U.K. economy which had led them to the view that, when the period of Marshall Aid was over, this country would have to rely far more than ever before on the dollar earning capacity of the Commonwealth and Empire. Another strand in this thought was the idea of a political union of Western Europe - for Ministers believed that a Western European block could not stand on terms of equality unless it included the African colonial possessions of the Western European powers....It was important, therefore, that the Colonial Office should do (a) everything possible to press forward with promising schemes of economic development, and make such improvements as were necessary for this purpose; and (b) make sure that the Colonial Empire got its fair share of the total resources for capital development which were at the disposal of the U.K. Government.[14]

In a paper circulated shortly afterwards, the Secretary of State for the colonies, in reference to the development of the African colonies, wrote:

> This is essential not only to this country but to Western Europe as a whole; it is necessary not only on strategic, but also on economic and political grounds. The effective development of the African Territories is needed both to secure their smooth progress in the social and political fields, and also to help in the supply to this country and the rest of the world of food and raw materials. Our

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[13]. See Allister Hinds, "British Imperial Policy and the Development of the Nigerian Economy, 1939-1951", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, History, Dalhousie University, 1985, p.225.

[14]. CAB 21/1690 Minute, "Colonial Development", 19 January, 1948.

departure from India and the reduction in our
overseas investments generally still further
increase the economic importance of the African
Territories.[15]

The paradox of an imperial power planning the transfer of

power to colonial dependencies while simultaneously pushing

policies aimed at strengthening its control over their

economies is one of the puzzles of decolonization yet to be

solved. Hargreaves' thesis that the Cohen-Caine plan simply

aimed at modifying relations between Britain and its colonies

is supported by R.Robinson. While explaining the working of

the minds of the imperial reformers, he stated:

> If you look at the arguments put forth for the
> transfer of power, half the argument was that this
> will prolong the Empire. The other half was that it
> will lead to constructive rebuilding. All the steps
> towards granting African independence were in fact
> all steps argued for in private and taken on the
> ground that it was essential to do this to prolong
> colonial rule.[16]

Robinson correctly observed that the differences between the

proponents of the theory of planned decolonization and those

who dispute it might have originated from the failure of

scholars to distinguish between what the Colonial Office was

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[15]. CAB 21/1690 Memorandum by Arthur Creech Jones,
Secretary of State for colonies, "Need for vigorous
development. The Development of Africa", January 1948.

[16]. See Ronald Robinson, "Conclusion I", in A.H.M. Kirk-
Green, Africa in the Colonial Period. The Transfer of Power:
The Colonial Administrator in the Age of Decolonization,
Oxford, 1979, pp.178-81.

doing and the problems it was trying to solve, and "the story" it put out "to explain and justify it by sound public relations".[17] Finally, he delivered his verdict. "So the main thing about decolonization of the British Empire", he declared, "is that it was never intended in economic and diplomatic terms".[18] This rather authoritative pronouncement did not satisfy the historians' inventiveness and love for controversy. While Flint advanced the theory of "Planned Decolonization and Its Failure in British Africa",[19] Emudong charged the British with planning "Neocolonialism".[20]

This case study of Colonial Office policy and the origins of decolonization in Uganda makes a contribution to the understanding of the above paradox. Uganda makes an interesting case for two reasons. First, the absence of a substantial settled European community made its political development unique in East and Central Africa. It meant that from an early period it was developed as an African country. But at the same time, Uganda's political progress and economic future appeared to be tied with that of European dominated neighbours and became increasingly so during and after the

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[17]. _Ibid._..

[18]. _Ibid._..

[19]. See J.E.Flint, "Planned Decolonization and Its Failure in British Africa", in _African Affairs_, London, 82, 328, (July 1983), pp.389-411.

[20]. Emudong, _op. cit._..

Second World War. Secondly, the political development of Uganda does not seem to conform to the general pattern. The general consensus among the nationalist historians, which is being challenged only recently, was that the transfer of power was the outcome of a successful struggle against the colonial powers by the "nationalist forces". It was widely perceived that the initiative for decolonization came from the nationalists, that the colonial powers were forced to concede to African demands and international pressure and that as the "struggle" for independence intensified and became spontaneous, Colonial Office policies were mere responses to pressure from the periphery.[21] Evidence presented here suggests that this was not true in all cases, and particularly not in Uganda. It is proposed that the initiative for the transfer of power in Uganda lay not with the Ugandan patriots but elsewhere, with the protectorate administration and the Colonial Office.

Scholars dealing with Uganda have so far agreed that the Colonial Office "almost literally frogmarched Uganda into independence".[22] If this was true, then the much famed African

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[21]. This view has been propounded for example by: S.M.Kiwanuka, From Colonialism to Independence; R.I.Rotberg, The rise of Nationalism in Central Africa, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1965; S.N.Bongoka, Kenya 1945-1963: A Study of Africa National Movements, Nairobi, 1980; George Shepherd, The Politics of African Nationalism, 1962.

[22]. Karugire, S.R., A Political History of Uganda, Nairobi, 1980, p.142.

struggle for independence in Uganda hardly makes sense. Furthermore, some scholars (of the neocolonial school), have suggested that the British handed over power to selected classes (mostly western educated) who would be willing to collaborate with their former masters in perpetuating the exploitation of Africa, thus creating neocolonies.[23] Although their findings are inconclusive for lack of detailed documentary studies relating to the decolonization of different areas of Africa, the implication is that the Colonial Office retained control of the process in the colonies up to independence.

In 1952, Sir Andrew Cohen was appointed the new Governor of Uganda. A former head of the African department in the Colonial Office, Andrew Cohen was the brain behind the efforts to democratize the local and "Native" administrations in Africa.[24] More significantly, he was close to Labour Party thinking on colonial policy, and can be seen as the leading Colonial Office bureaucrat of the 1945-51 period of reform.

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[23]. For literature on this theory see, A.Y.Yansane, _Decolonization and Dependency: Problems of Development of African Societies_, Westport,Conn., 1980; Dan W.Nabudere, _Neo-colonialism in East Africa_; Y.R.Barongo, _Neo-colonialism and African Politics_, Vantage Press, New York, 1980; A.Tarabrin (ed.), _Neo-colonialism and Africa in the 1970s_, Moscow, 1978; P.Emudong, "The Evolution of a New British Colonial Policy in the Gold Coast 1938-48: Origins of "Planned Decolonization" or of 'Neocolonialism?'" Ph.D Thesis in History, Dalhousie University, 1982; and Walter Rodney, _How Europe Underdeveloped Africa_, London, 1972.

[24]. R.Robinson, _op. cit._. and D.Goldsworthy, _op. cit._.

In 1953, a constitutional crisis erupted in Uganda. This followed a remark in London by the Colonial Secretary, Mr Oliver Lyttleton which implied that a federation of the East African territories was being contemplated by the British government. This was in the wake of the formation of the controversial Central African Federation, which was bitterly opposed by Africans in those territories as a device to ensure white settlers control of a new "Dominion". The events which followed this remark resulted in Cohen exiling the Kabaka of Buganda to London. The Kabaka crisis, as it came to be known, was only brought to an end by the signing of a new agreement between Buganda and Britain by which the Kabaka was allowed to return to Uganda as a constitutional monarch. It should be noted that the crisis coincided with the "Mau Mau" uprising in Kenya, 1952-55. The Colonial Office was shaken by the Kabaka crisis of 1953. This study contends that the crisis was the turning point in Anglo-Uganda relations and affected Colonial Office policy and the timing of the transfer of power in Uganda. The Kabaka crisis, in addition to the 1945 and 1949 protests, were taken as a warning of the acute need for political and constitutional change by the Colonial Office. This study is not about nationalism in Uganda; this has

already been well documented.[25] It is mainly concerned with high policy, trying to trace the origins of decolonization in Uganda in the Colonial Office, analyzing the decisions taken by the various officials and ministers and assessing what factors, nationalism included, influenced their course of action.

Undeniably, of all the countries once part of the British empire in Africa, Uganda has experienced the worst hardships, political instability and horrors of dictatorships and civil war, which only now seem to be passing away into a time of hope. Yet upon decolonization, Uganda was praised as one of the most promising of the new African nations, politically stable and developing economically. It is clear, therefore, that there were fundamental problems which were not addressed in the arrangements under which the British transferred power to Ugandan politicians. This study helps to illuminate these problems,[26] and contends that despite the warnings by colonial officials on the spot and Ugandan leaders, imperial politicians and bureaucrats in London did little to ensure

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[25]. In addition to Karugire, Ibingira, Mamdani, Apter, above see also Low, D.A., The Formation of Political Parties in Uganda; Jorgensen, J.J., UGANDA: A Modern History, New York, 1981; Low, D.A., & Pratt, Buganda and British Overrule, London, 1960.

[26]. See also Tarsis Kabwegyere, The Politics of State Formation: The Nature and Effects of Colonialism in Uganda, East African Literature Bureau, 1974 and Jimmy K. Tindigarukayo, "Obstacles to Establishing Political Order in Uganda", Ph.D. Thesis, Political Science, Dalhousie University, 1986.

that the outstanding problems were resolved before independence; neither was much account taken of the criticisms of the decolonization scheme and constitutional arrangements.

This study inevitably touches on the relationship between the Colonial Office and the colonial service, in this case the Colonial Office dealing with one of its former senior officials - Andrew Cohen. Did the Colonial Office, in trying to direct the devolution of power from the centre, find itself pushed or pulled by the Governor? In other words, did the colonial service have a considerable say in the decolonization process. This is dealt with in chapter four.

In any study of policy formulation, it is difficult to determine a precise starting point. In this case, the year 1940 was chosen for two reasons. In that year, the British Government enacted the Colonial Development and Welfare Act which enabled the Colonial Office to obtain a substantial amount of money from the Treasury to spend in the colonies.[27] This was significant in that it marked a shift in British policy towards the Empire. In practice, the Colonial Office began to intervene in and then to rule, its African Empire. It could be said that hitherto the African Empire had suffered from neglect by the policy that colonies must be self-sufficient. The implementation of the Development and Welfare

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[27] See D.J.Morgan, _The Official History of Colonial Development_, vol.1, Macmillan Press, London, 1980, and M.Petter & J.M.Lee, _The Colonial Office, War and Development Policy_, London, 1982.

Act of 1940 also emphasized a new aspect of central planning in the running of the empire.[28] Secondly, 1940 was the year the Sterling Area was transformed by war conditions into an authoritative body of currency control.[29] These two events signalling an important change in policy provided a convenient starting point for this study. The PRO documents were only available for the period up to 1956, but I found it tempting to make an evaluation of the political and constitutional reforms which had been implemented since the end of the war. Moreover, it was only fitting to make a brief examination of the outstanding problems that faced Uganda as she approached self-government. Thus the extension of the study to 1962 when Uganda attained independence.

Because the study is concerned with high policy, most of the research was conducted at the PRO in London where I obtained most of the documents essential to the topic. In addition, the late Sir Keith Hancock, the commissioner who inquired into the Kabaka's removal and recommended his restoration accompanied by major constitutional changes, gave me permission to see his papers relating to the affair, which are in the Institute of Commonwealth Studies at the University of London. I also visited Rhodes House, Oxford where I

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[28] Petter and Lee op. cit., passim.

[29]. See R.G.Gardner, Sterling Dollar Diplomacy in Current Perspective, (new edition), Columbia University Press, New York, 1980; and Allister Hinds, op. cit., pp. 1-23.

examined private papers of the Fabian Colonial Bureau, and colonial service personnel who were in Uganda at the time collected under the Oxford Colonial Records Project. I also had a chance to visit the Labour Party Headquarters in London where a few documents relating to the Labour Party involvement in Uganda were available.

# CHAPTER TWO

## WAR MOBILIZATION, DEVELOPMENT, CRISIS AND REFORM: THE UGANDA PROTECTORATE 1940-1950.

The war and post-war period witnessed a significant transformation of British colonial policy in Africa. The landmark in this shift was the passing of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 which enabled the Colonial Office to secure substantial funds from the British treasury for colonial development. The motives and objectives of the Acts have been discussed elsewhere,[1] but for this chapter it will suffice to note that it marked the Colonial Office's departure from the earlier policy of neglect of the colonies or "self-sufficiency" to a new policy of central control and intervention in the affairs of their African territories. Likewise, British policy towards Uganda underwent major changes. From mobilisation for war and organizing the war effort, the British embarked on programs of social and economic reforms. Then, realising at the end of the war that self-government might come earlier than expected or had been thought possible before the war, they abandoned the expediency

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[1] See my introduction pp.8-10; M.Petter and J.M.Lee, _The Colonial Office, War and Development Policy_, London, 1982; J.D.Hargreaves, _Decolonization in Africa_, London, 1988, pp. 96-102; D.J.Morgan, _The Official History of Colonial Development_, vol.1, London, 1980; and Allister Hinds, "British Imperial Policy and the Development of the Nigerian Economy 1939-1951", Ph.D. Thesis, History, Dalhousie University, 1985.

of indirect rule and introduced the local government system upon which, it was hoped, parliamentary democracy could be based. Furthermore, in the absence of a strong nationalist political movement, the British tried to promote national loyalties and institutions in the hope of creating a national consciousness or "Uganda nationalism." However, because many of development programs and reforms were being managed or initiated by non-Africans and imposed from above, in some cases without discussion with the Africans, fears, suspicions, and misunderstandings developed resulting in loss of confidence in British rule by the Ugandan Africans. This chapter attempts first to analyze how the war effort and post-war reconstruction and development programs influenced colonial policy towards Uganda. Secondly, it examines how the colonial administration and the Colonial Office tried to cope with the complex issues and the new forces which emerged during this period.

When the Second World War broke out, the British Empire was mobilised in an extraordinary effort to raise both manpower and material resources to support Britain in the war. Consequently, Uganda became part of the giant British war machine whose task included defence of the British empire around the globe. The first task of the Uganda government was mobilisation of manpower to defend East Africa from potential Italian invasion. Many Ugandan Africans responded to the British appeal, and over 77,000 volunteers were recruited in

the King's African Rifles (K.A.R) for the Ethiopian campaign.
Ugandan troops were later deployed in Egypt and South-East
Asia for the Burma campaign.[2] The second major effort was the
provision of war supplies such as food, money and export crops
which would earn or save dollars and conserve sterling to
finance the war. This meant increasing economic production
with limited agricultural inputs and supervisory staff, many
of whom had been called up for military service. The task of
increasing economic production led to greater co-operation
with the other East African territorial governments and co-
ordination with the Colonial Office. Inevitably, during the
early years of the 1940s emphasis was on "economic
development." Although the Colonial Office had realised that
economic production could not be significantly increased
without improving the social welfare of the Africans, focus
on the war effort led to postponing most of the schemes for
social improvement. Equally, political and constitutional
reforms were not considered a priority for Uganda before the
end of the war. As Sir Charles Dundas put it, this was "not
the time for embarking on political ventures."[3]

However, in 1943, when the war tide turned in favour of
the Allied powers and the prospects for victory became bright,

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[2]. Omara-Otunu; _Politics and The Military in Uganda,
1890-1985._ Macmillan Press, Oxford, 1987. p.36

[3]. Quoted in Z.N.Uzoigwe (ed.) _Uganda: The Dilemma of
Nationhood_, NOK, 1982, p.161.

the Colonial Office initiated serious planning for the post-war reconstruction. This would include the resettlement of demobilised soldiers and the rehabilitation of the economy. Later in the year, the Colonial Office issued instructions to the governments of British dependencies to prepare their post-war reconstruction and development proposals. As a reaffirmation that British policy towards its colonies was undergoing changes, the Secretary of State for the colonies, Oliver Stanley announced in parliament that the British government was pledged to "guide colonial peoples along the road to self-government within the framework of the British Empire".[4]

Meanwhile the Governor of Uganda, Sir Charles Dundas,[5] took his own initiative to reform the administrative organisation of the protectorate, starting with Buganda in 1944. The link between the protectorate government and the Kabaka and Buganda government was the Resident, Buganda, who had his office in Kampala. Prior to October 1944, the resident had under him district commissioners and assistant district commissioners in the three administrative districts of Buganda. Under the new system, the resident became mainly "an

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[4]. House of Commons Debates (HCD) vol.391, col.48; 13 July 1943.

[5]. Sir Charles Dundas (b.1884); Senior Commissioner Tanganyika,1920-4; Assistant Chief Secretary Tanganyika, 1926-29; Colonial Secretary, Bahamas, 1929-34; Chief Secretary, Rhodesia, 1934-7; Governor, Bahamas, 1937-40; Governor, Uganda, 1940-4.

adviser" to the Buganda government. The posts of district commissioner and assistant district commissioner were abolished. Instead, two assistant residents were appointed. The resident and the two assistant residents remained in charge of matters related to "Native Administration", while three protectorate agents at Kampala, Masaka, and Mubende dealt with protectorate affairs. In essence, the Dundas reforms created a two-tier administration. One was the residency and its continued supervision and association with the Buganda government and the other was the district administration in Kampala, Masaka and Mubende. The protectorate agents were to have nothing further to do with the chiefs and were separated from the resident.[6] Unfortunately, during the war years the districts were seriously understaffed and touring by administration officers had to be restricted. Hence supervision was relaxed and contacts reduced. In addition, the Buganda government was allowed greater financial responsibility. Finally, the governor in his speech to the Lukiiko announcing the changes advised the Kabaka to utilise the skills of his educated people for the benefit of the country. This comment generated great expectations as the educated elite saw this as a further opportunity to the corridors of power. As a result, a period of intense political activity followed as factions formed,

[6]. CO 1018/83 See minutes of discussion between Lord Hailey and Mr Boyd at Entebbe, 17 August 1947.

schemed and manoeuvred for power, a process which culminated in the 1945 disturbances.[7]

Despite the governor's good intentions, a number of factors made it difficult to implement the reforms. The large numbers of Ugandans who served in the war, returned with a spirit of nationalism and greater ambitions; they were men no longer convinced of the superiority of their white masters whom they had always looked upon as super-human. A few of these men obtained paid employment in technical trades and as government drivers. Some were successfully reabsorbed within the rural communities, but a large number, especially in Buganda, Lango, and Teso, used their comparatively large war gratuities to set up small shops and to establish themselves in the transport business, buying second-hand buses and lorries. Thus the return of the soldiers saw a dramatic increase of African traders, but their lack of business knowledge, insufficient capital, and the effect of competition with the Asian traders, often led to bankruptcy and failures. Those who failed become dissatisfied, frustrated and bitter, more so because they had hoped and had been expected by their people to provide leadership, given their wider knowledge of the modern world.[8] From the growing number of frustrated

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[7]. This point is emphasized by E.M.K.Mulira; Troubled Uganda. 1949. Fabian Colonial Bureau. p.24

[8]. See Cmd.9475 "East Africa Royal Commission, 1953-1955 Report", pp.26-27.

groups, which also included a swelling number of unemployed educated people, there coalesced a force which made Buganda politics volatile.

Moreover, the Baganda leaders had not been trained adequately to exercise the new responsibilities which Dundas was devolving on them. The situation was further complicated by suspicion of the British motives and hostility and jealousy towards the chiefs who had power under the British. This distrust, discontent and unpreparedness inevitably led to the failure of the "Dundas reforms" in Buganda.[9]

The effect of the reforms was a very marked relaxation of supervision hitherto exercised by the British administration. The view of Sir Charles Dundas apparently had been that British supervision was being given in a way which prevented the Buganda government from developing self-sufficiency. By diminishing control it was apparently hoped that a sense of pride would speed the Baganda to move on their own initiative towards more progressive and liberal ways of

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[9]. Sir Charles Dundas himself expressed doubts about the timing of the reforms and left the door open for a review: "If, for causes beyond your control, it is shown that I have expected too much of you, that close and direct control by British officers is still required, then the system heretofore obtaining must be restored. I am, however, confident that it will be the aim of all in office under Your Highness to prove that my trust was not misplaced". Speech to the Lukiiko on 2 October, 1944. See A.Low, The Mind of Buganda, London, 1971, p.127

government.[10] In the light of after events, it was clear that the reforms were premature. The main result was that administrative officers completely lost touch with the people, whilst the people lost guidance. Government through Saza and Gombolola chiefs in no sense filled the gap. As a result, when trouble was brewing in 1945, the governments were completely unaware."[11] The Dundas reforms had accentuated the difficulties caused by the shortage of staff during the war years.

The opportunity to review the "Dundas reforms" arose shortly after the arrival of Sir John Hall as the new governor.[12] A combination of discontented chiefs and educated politicians lacking avenues of political expression exploited the economic grievances of the peasants and urban workers to protest against the status quo and demand reforms.

In January 1945, strikes by urban workers and rioting by peasants quickly spread throughout Uganda. Commencing at Masaka township on 5 January 1945, trouble spread to Entebbe, Kampala, Mubende, Jinja, and Mbarara by 21 January 1945. Strikes also occurred at Lugazi, Iganga, Mbale and many other

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[10]. Sir Donald Kingdon Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Civil Disturbances in Uganda during April 1949, Entebbe, 1949, (henceforth the "Kingdon Report") paragraphs 14 - 16.

[11]. Ibid., paragraph 75.

[12]. Sir John Hall (b.1894)
Assistant Principal, Colonial Office 1921-7; Principal 1927-32; seconded to Foreign Office 1932; Colonial Secretary, Palestine 1933-7; Resident, Zanzibar, 1937-40; Governor, Aden, 1940-4; Governor, Uganda, 1944-51.

places.[13] Their geographical spread around the country
indicated widespread discontent. The situation was considered
serious enough to bring in military reinforcements from Kenya.
This had the immediate effect of focusing the Colonial
Office's attention upon the colony and subsequently influenced
British policy towards Uganda.

Sir Norman Whitley, commissioned to inquire into the
disturbances concluded that the causes were "political rather
than economic." First, he questioned the wisdom of the Dundas
reforms of 1944 which had relaxed British control over Buganda
affairs. He found that the devolution of responsibility had
been perceived by the Baganda intelligentsia as tantamount to
the withdrawal of British control and the establishment of
complete self-government for Buganda.[14] The reforms had also
stimulated intrigue for power and money among the chiefs,
hence the clamour for the removal of S.W.Kulubya - the
efficient and strict treasurer. The "plotters" had launched
a mass campaign to discredit Kulubya whom they accused of
allowing the British too large a say in Buganda affairs.[15]

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[13]. Sir Norman H.P.Whitley; Report of the Commission of
Inquiry into the Disturbances in Uganda,January 1945. (1945)
(henceforth : Whitley Report).

[14]. Ibid. p.3

[15]. Mulira has characterised him as: "the most outstanding
man in public life in Uganda.... well educated, cultured,
highly intelligent, dignified, wealthy, progressive, respected
by all communities but envied by many of his own people,
especially his contemporaries. See E.M.K. Mulira, Troubled
Uganda, Fabian Colonial Bureau, 1949, p.25.

Through misrepresentations, rumours, and pamphlets such as Buganda Nyaffe [Buganda our Mother], a publication circulated in 1944, which Whitley regarded as "bitterly anti-British", they sought to "bring the British administration into disrepute" and stir up anti-government feelings."[16] He concluded that the strikers had been instigated to demand high wages and were infuriated by rumours about some L8,000,000.00 misappropriated by, among others, the ex-governor, from the Colonial Development Fund which was said to have been sent to Uganda to raise wages. This was of course false. Whatever the motives of the leaders of the disturbances, there is little doubt that economic discontent was widespread. War-time economic hardships, artificially depressed producer prices, high inflation, coupled with unemployment among the growing African educated elite all combined to make living more difficult than before the war. Clearly, the agitators had capitalised on the widespread economic dissatisfaction.

Whitley also found that lack of communication with the protectorate officials, because of the withdrawal of European staff during the war, had increased misunderstandings and confusion as a result of ignorance of government activities and policy. There was a breakdown in communication between the rulers and their subjects. However, he also recognised rising political consciousness or nascent nationalism as a

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[16]. Whitley Report, op. cit., p.7.

contributing factor to the disturbances:

> Buganda seems to be the only part of the
> protectorate which is badly infected with the
> political virus and it may be hoped that these
> disturbances may prove to be a blessing in
> disguise, as having in good time brought to
> light some of the troubles which require to be
> remedied."

He rightly saw the disturbances as a warning , "a rude jolt"
to the protectorate government and the Colonial Office that
Uganda's "long untroubled existence" was over. Reforms were
overdue. He therefore recommended that stronger measures be
taken against agitators and as an immediate step, political
activities be banned.

The report recommended the review of the method of
selecting chiefs in Buganda to enable the appointment of the
best people available.[18] Whitley wanted representation to the
Lukiiko reformed to give direct representation to the "non-
chief educated class" and to the peasants.

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[17]. _Ibid._, p.32.

[18]. As used in Buganda the term "chief" connotes something
quite different from its usual meaning in other tropical
African societies. Ordinarily one thinks of a "chief" as a
hereditary ruler of his people, but in Buganda, with two
exceptions,the term really meant nothing more than an African
Administrative officer and therefore a civil servant. The
various Saza (county) and Gombolola (sub-county)
chieftainships were of varying importance and stipendiary
value. Men were selected to fill them regardless of whether
or not they had any previous connection with the area, and
were promoted from one to another accordingly on merit. The
people therefore, owed no special loyalty to, and had no
natural affection for, the individual who happened, for the
moment, to be their ruler.

Convinced that the disturbances were "politically engineered", his recommendations for economic reform were less comprehensive. Apart from better prices for the growers and increased wages, he proposed a strong labour department to be set up "to guide the development of Trade Unions, on proper, practical lines calculated to promote the welfare and best interests of the workers...".[19] The Colonial Office and the protectorate government concurred with him.

The lack of proper representation for the peasants and the intelligentsia in the Great Lukiiko was an important grievance. Neither the peasants nor the increasing number of educated people had a direct voice in the political process. Power was monopolised by some of the Kabaka's ministers ruling through an entirely nominated Lukiiko. Consequently, these classes demanded representation through the right to elect their representatives to the Lukiiko.

Furthermore, there was increasing dissatisfaction with the chiefs. They were seen as "very good at passing on orders from above" but unconcerned with the issues which mattered to their people. The chiefs were accused of being unable to provide leadership and "out of touch with the common man".[20] As a result, the dissident leaders demanded that people be granted the right "to elect their own chiefs". However, the

[19]. Whitley Report, _ibid._ p.29

[20]. E.M.K.Mulira, _Troubled Uganda_, Fabian Colonial Bureau, London, 1949, p.31

demand for elected chiefs was based on misconceptions of the British system. The Baganda peasants and their spokesmen had heard that the British elect their "leaders". This certainly referred to the members of Parliament, city and municipal councillors and not the civil servants. On the other hand, the Baganda chiefs were really civil servants, and therefore could not be elected.

The governor, Sir John Hall, responded with a two pronged policy. First, he reasserted British power over Buganda to the full. Prominent Baganda, including the Katikiro, Samwiri Wamala, and Prince Yusufu Suna were arrested and deported. Martin Luther Nsibirwa, a retired pro-British chief, was recalled as Katikiro. Many chiefs who had displayed some "disloyalty" were replaced and those considered loyal were promoted. When Nsibirwa was assassinated within a few months, the governor replaced him with a loyal appointee, Michael Kawalya Kagwa, a son of Sir Apollo Kagwa. But Hall realised that reassertion of British power was not enough. Reforms were needed in the system of local rule to make it more acceptable. He therefore persuaded the young Kabaka to accept the election of unofficial members to the Lukiiko. Thus in 1946, for the first time, thirty-one of the eighty-nine members of the Lukiiko were elected. Outside Buganda, Hall embarked on reforms of the local governments. The leaders of the disturbances could refer to this as one of their achievements. In an attempt to put the

government's point of view more effectively, the protectorate government appointed a public relations officer in March 1945.

The governor then turned his attention to the centre. The influence of the 1945 riots on his decision to appoint three Africans to the Legislative Council was clearly evident in his statement:

> Ignorance of the motives and intentions of government is, I think, largely responsible for those misunderstandings and suspicions upon which the subversive activities, such as those which found expression in the January disturbances, are fed and fostered. Unless suspicion of government's motives and actions is dissipated, and mutual confidence restored- I hope that the introduction of African members into our councils, and a greatly improved information service between government and the people will do much to that end -- there can be no orderly development in Uganda, either political or economic.[21]

It was clear that the appointed African members were expected to play two vital roles. First to explain to the Africans the administration's policies. Secondly, to make known to the government the Africans' point of view on issues of importance. Nevertheless, Hall's initiatives did not differ significantly from general British policy in Africa. Emphasis was still on social and economic development. Constitutional change at the centre was to be gradual, pari-pasu with economic development.

The war and the immediate post-war years witnessed an evolution in the objectives of local government. As B.K.Lucas

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[21]. Quoted in Uzoigwe, op. cit., p.167.

observed, before the war the aim of local government was "to give the people good government in the present and not necessarily to prepare them for self-government in the future; to give them security to develop their own ideas and not so much to impose the European model".[22] But after the Second World War, the whole situation changed. The rise of nationalism in the Gold Coast and Southern Nigeria made the granting of self-government within a generation a possibility. It was also recognised that much more could be done by government to accelerate social and economic development. The Colonial Office came to recognise the important role urban and local governments could play in the changes that were taking place. Low and Pratt have rightly argued that after the war it gradually became accepted that though self-government was the ultimate goal, it must be self-government based on parliamentary democracy. The development of local government offered the possibility of building on foundations of local democracy. This policy was communicated to all colonial governors by the Secretary of State, Arthur Creech Jones, in the colonial dispatch of 27 February 1947:

> I believe the key to success lies in the development of an efficient and democratic system of local government. I wish to emphasize the words efficient, democratic and local. I do so not because they import any new conception into African administration,... I use these

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[22]. Bryan K.Lucas, "The Dilemma of Local Government in Africa" in K.Robinson & F.Madden (eds.), Essays in Imperial Government.

words because they seem to me to contain the kernel of the whole matter; local because the system must be close to the people and their problems, efficient because it must be capable of managing the local services in a way that will help to raise the standard of living; and democratic because it must not only find a place for the growing class of educated men, but at the same time command the respect and support of the people.[23]

He emphasized two main reasons for the need to develop an "efficient and democratic system of local government" rapidly. First, local goverments could play a significant part in economic development. Secondly, they were crucial to the political education of the people. Fear of communism was also a factor: the local government reforms and devolution of responsibilities could serve to preserve the "friendly relations with the African peoples" as a bulwark against the rise of anti-British movements in Africa.[24] It might be argued that the local government reforms were as much about increasing efficiency as dealing with rising political consciousness of the colonial peoples.

In the same year, the Colonial Office appointed an advisory panel on local government in Africa to make personnel with English local government experience available for consultation on the problems of Africa. A number of commissions and advisers prepared reports on the problems of

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[23]. Quoted in Low and Pratt; Buganda and British Overrule 1900-1955. Oxford Univ. Press, 1960. p.270

[24]. CAB 21/1690 Office minute by Secretary of State, 19 January 1948.

local government; its finances, elections and administrations in the various countries.[25] As a result, the local government system in Uganda closely resembled the English one.

The protectorate government was half-hearted in responding to the 1947 dispatch, which argued for increased responsibilities for the local governments. In his reaction to the dispatch, Sir John Hall pointed out the dilemma for the political development of the country. First, in considering the form which the political institutions might ultimately take, there was the problem of lack of a "common sentiment of unity" among the diverse units in the protectorate. Secondly, the development of the indigenous political institutions had been uneven, with the state of Buganda taking the lead. He felt that it was "a matter of prime importance to devise some unifying process" which over a period of years, would tend to produce a sense of "common purpose" and later a "common nationality."[26] It was clear that the need to unite the country and to create common loyalties was appreciated. However the British failed to appreciate that increased responsibility, and therefore power to local governments, might instead promote local particularism or nationalism.

A prominent feature of the local government reforms was

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[25]. See Brigadier E.J.Gibbons, East African Local Government Reform, Uganda, Kenya, and East Nigeria. (1949).

[26]. CO 1018/78 Governor to Secretary of State, August 1947.

the system of councils. These councils would have both official and elected members, at the provincial, district, county, parish and village levels, each council acting as an electoral "college" for the council above it. These councils would become "effective instruments of local government in its broadest sense." The governor argued that the development of a local government system would need devolution of financial and executive powers to enhance their value as "an educative factor and outlets for political aspirations".[27] But there were some contradictions. While the governor hoped to create a national sentiment or identity, he also hoped that the system of councils wold "encourage and not impede" the growth and development of indigenous political institutions. Looking at the Buganda government as one of the indigenous political institutions, it is clear that loyalty could not be equally divided between the old and the new institutions. For example the devolution of financial and executive responsibility to the Buganda government made it less attractive for the Baganda elite to aspire to the central institutions. Instead, Buganda felt and acted more like a nation and wished for a diplomatic relationship with the protectorate government. And it was Buganda nationalism, a classic example of "precolonial state nationalism", which presented one of the greatest obstacles to reaching a formula

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[27]. Ibid..

for Uganda's unity. Admittedly, the attitude of the Ugandan educated elite toward the local governments was peculiar. Unlike their counterparts in West Africa who shunned the local governments as too small a stage for their talents, and insisted on central government careers, the Ugandan elite was content to serve in the local governments. The government embarked on central government reforms even more cautiously. In October 1945 it was announced that three Africans, one each from Buganda, the western and the eastern provinces, would be appointed to the Legislative Council. But this innovation had little impact on political developments because until 1950 not only were few Africans on the council, but those who were there were already closely associated with the British in the eyes of the public. Thus these changes failed to dispel the Africans' belief that the Legislative Council was a British affair. This again was in sharp contrast with West Africans (Nigerians), who saw from the first (i.e. 1860s) that even a totally white Legislative Council was the "embryo" of a parliament.

## The Establishment of the East African High Commission.

During the war, collaboration between the governments of the East African territories had increased dramatically and had demonstrated its administrative and economic value. As one author stated: "The war had welded the area into a single economic unit". The period from 1940 to 1943 also witnessed

the rise of settler power in East Africa.[28] As a result, influential groups of Kenya settler opinion revived the question of federation. These demands were rejected by the British. Instead the Colonial Office offered inter-territorial co-operation in the form of the Common Services Organization. Consequently, at the end of 1945, in "Colonial Paper 191" (henceforth "Colonial 191"), the Colonial Office made its first post-war proposals to that effect. The proposals, published for information and as a basis for discussion, were designed to sooth the settlers' outrage at being refused both responsible government in Kenya and federation of East Africa. The proposals were to establish a constitutional and judicial framework for the inter-territorial services and to replace the Governors' Conference. To satisfy the opponents of federation, it was stated that the proposals in "Colonial 191" were not a step towards closer political union or fusion of the East African governments. The proposals thus provided for the continuation of His Majesty's Government's responsibility to parliament for the administration of the three territories.[29] The new

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[28]. In his draft paper _Last Chance for the White Man's Country: Constitutional plans for Kenya and East Africa, 1938-1943_, Prof. John Flint has convincingly argued that the Kenya settlers, taking advantage of the war time conditions were able, in effect to seize power informally in Kenya, and extend some form of their control over the whole of East Africa

[29]. CO 537/40006/56 See Office minute, "Inter-territorial Services Organization", 1945.

scheme was therefore presented as a consolidation of the existing structures.

The proposals provided for an East African High Commission; with a central executive consisting of a secretariat and departments; inter-territorial advisory boards; and an East African Legislative Assembly to legislate for common services. According to Throup's thesis, the Colonial Office had hoped to achieve four objectives with its plan in "Colonial 191"; closer union would strengthen inter-territorial co-operation, dilute settler influence in Kenya, and enhance metropolitan power and clear the way towards evolution of a multi-racial political system in East Africa. In addition, closer union in East Africa would create a bulwark against South African expansionism.[30] In East Africa reaction to the proposals was divided along racial lines. To the Asians and Africans, they were acceptable provided the suggestion of equal representation on the Central Assembly for the three major communities was maintained and the integrity of the Legislative Councils in each colony were preserved. The European settlers in Kenya and Northern Tanganyika strongly opposed the proposals and refused even to consider them, holding that equal representation between Europeans and Asians was unacceptable.[31]

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[30]. Throup, David, Economic and Social Origins of Mau Mau 1945-53, London, 1987, p.48.

[31]. CO 537/40006/56 Office minute, op. cit..

Clearly the settlers did not consider the proposals enough of a sop to their ambitions.

After full consideration of the different views put forward, the Secretary of State authorised the governors in September 1946 to hold discussions with the unofficial members of the legislative councils to try to reach an agreed position. These consultations resulted in the publication of modified proposals in February 1947 popularly known as "Colonial Paper 210". The integrity of the legislative councils was preserved. As far as the Colonial Office and the East African governments were concerned, the principle of equal racial representation on the central assembly was also maintained. However, as Throup has pointed out, "Colonial 210" tried to present the central assembly "in a more attractive way to Kenyan settlers by restricting the power of the High Commission and subordinating its revenue to the control of territorial Legislative Councils".[2] By seemingly attempting to appease the settlers, the proposals drew African and Asian opposition.

The revised proposals provided that four unofficial members were to be elected from each territory. Since the Africans and Asians knew that they were to be allocated only one seat each, they concluded that the other two members would be settlers. Their opposition was ignored.

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[2]. Throup, op. cit., p.50.

Consequently, the three legislative councils approved the proposals. In all the three cases, the European unofficials voted in favour with the officials. In the case of Kenya and Uganda, the Asian, Arab and African members voted against. In short, therefore, the non-European vote was solidly against Colonial Paper 210. The non-Europeans argued that the Colonial Office had departed from the principle of equal representation. Colonial 210 also drew sharp criticism from the government of India which took keen interest in the welfare of the Asian population in East Africa.[33] India was especially concerned with the composition of the Central Legislative Assembly which seemed to favour Europeans over the other races. Although the Colonial Office went to great length to explain the changes to the Indian government, nothing was done to meet its objections.[34] In January 1948, on the basis of Colonial Paper 210, the East African High Commission was set up.

The High Commission administered a series of inter-territorial services in which obvious economic advantages could be secured. These included services such as ports, telegraphs, customs, post offices, railways and harbours, research and civil aviation. However, the High Commission had

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[33]. CO 537/40006/56 See note on "Inter-territorial Scheme for East Africa: For communication to the Government of India."

[34]. Ibid..

limited legislative powers relevant to these services and authority over the appropriations providing for its expenditures. It could not overrule territorial legislation from the colonial legislatures. It had no taxing powers. But to debate and also serve as a forum of public discussion of the commission's affairs, the East African Legislative Assembly was established.

Although the Colonial Office and the three East African governments publicly stressed that the high commission did not in any way imply a political federation, privately many officials argued that political federation was essential for the success of the idea.[35] And despite all the assurances, most Ugandan Africans remained suspicious that the High Commission was the first step towards such a federation.

Moreover, the government's handling of the issue seemed to confirm African fears. Whereas the European settler groups in Kenya were given a chance to criticise and make representations to the Secretary of State and the Colonial Office on Colonial Paper 191, the resident, Buganda, prevailed upon the Katikiro not to permit any Lukiiko debate on both papers. Furthermore when Arthur Creech Jones, the Colonial Secretary visited Uganda in 1947, Baganda leaders

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[35]. CO 537/7210   See letter by Secretary of State to Governor of Tanganyika, January 1951. While accepting that it was not practical at the time to work towards closer ties, he made it clear that nothing should be done that could prejudice such a development in the future.

were denied the opportunity to discuss the High Commission question with him. Between 1945 and 1947, the government contended that the proposed High Commission was a national, not a local issue and therefore, it should be referred to the Legislative Council. Since the council was predominantly European with only three "pro-British" African members, the Africans felt excluded from the debate. In 1947, the Legislative Council approved Colonial Paper 210, with all Africans and Asians voting against. Low and Pratt have argued quite rightly that whereas the necessary formal sanction was thus secured for the High Commission, it carried "little political significance" since the Legislative Council which approved the proposals was not accepted as "a genuine representative body." By using it "to secure the appearance of popular approval" to the establishment of the High Commission, the government simply intensified African suspicion of the council without in any way increasing their acceptance of the commission.[36]

The closer union crisis, which lasted from 1945 to 1948 was, as one historian noted, the first of a series of cases of the Colonial Office attempting to appeal to both Africans and settlers, but "merely succeeding in arousing the suspicion of both communities and alienating the authorities

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[36]. See Low and Pratt, op. cit., p.286.

further from the Africans".[37] Suspicion of both the Legislative Council and the High Commission by Ugandans, especially by the Baganda leaders, was to spill over into the 1950s and precipitate a political crisis.

## The 1949 Disturbances

The reforms carried out in the wake of the 1945 disturbances did not preclude further strikes and riots in 1949. The government had increased wages and the cotton and coffee prices; had embarked on administrative and organisational reforms of the Buganda government and plans for local government reforms throughout the country were under way. The governor had in 1946 appointed three Africans to the Legislative Council, despite Baganda opposition to such appointments. Yet further disturbances broke out in Buganda in June of 1949. Other scholars have already attempted to explain the underlying causes of these disturbances.[38] Therefore here the emphasis will be on the impact of the disturbances on the policies of both the protectorate government and the Colonial Office. The mere recurrence of the disturbances within a period of four years indicated either that something was fundamentally wrong or

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[37]. Throup, op. cit., p.50.

[38]. For further explanation of the origins of the 1945 and 1949 disturbances see: Mahmood Mamdani; Politics and Class Formation in Uganda, Heinemann, (1976) esp. chap.6; also Low and Pratt, op. cit., chap.11

that the British had not gone far enough with the social, economic and political reforms and thus were losing the initiative to new forces in Uganda. The governor appointed Sir Donald Kingdon as commissioner to inquire into the disturbances and make recommendations. Kingdon concluded that the disturbances were organised by the leaders of the Bataka party and the Uganda African Farmers Union (U.A.F.U.) with Semakula Mulumba and Ignatius Musazi respectively as the main instigators.[39]

The Bataka Party was formed in 1946 under the leadership of James Mitti, a leading Mutaka (singular), in whose compound its meetings were held.[40] However, in 1947 Cesario Semakula Mulumba took-over as their main spokesman.[41] The so

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[39]. See the Kingdon Report op. cit., para. 311

[40]. The term "Bataka" has a somewhat loose meaning. In the first place all the clan heads are Bataka and there are forty-five of them, the term is sometimes used in this restricted sense, referring to the clan heads only. But in addition the sub-heads of clans are Bataka, and so are the sub-sub-heads. And the again the term was used to describe any well established land owner. (See John Roscoe, The Baganda, p.134). He states: "The Kings were also called Bataka, because they owned the country". The Kabaka was known as Ssabataka i.e. the head of the Bataka, and as such was the supreme arbiter of Kiganda custom.

[41]. Semakula Mulumba, b.1913. He was well educated, having studied at St. Mary's College, Kisubi, where he subsequently became a teaching brother. He was a man of "considerable intelligence and ability". He was chosen in 1944 by the White Fathers' mission to go to England for further training in Bantu languages at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. He returned to Africa at the end of 1946 but did not proceed to Kampala as arranged. On the voyage he had "shared a cabin with a Kikuyu named Jomo Kenyatta", and on his arrival in East Africa he went into "the Kikuyu Reserve where he stayed for some weeks". (Kingdon Report, 1949, para.

called "Bataka Party" meant something quite different from the usual connotations of the term. It was adopted by a number of persons who banded themselves together to pursue a political program. They took the name obviously with the hope of obtaining adherents and sympathy through the erroneous belief that they were the true representatives of the real Bataka. The Bataka party thus projected itself as the paladin of Kiganda customs. In fact, only four of the forty-five clan heads joined the party. As clan heads, the real Bataka were both hereditary and the cultural leaders of the Baganda. As every Muganda belongs to a clan, they command widespread loyalty. The Bataka party leaders' hopes were fully realised. They succeeded in getting themselves habitually and quite wrongly referred to as "the Bataka", not only by the peasants but even by highly placed government officials. During 1946 and 1947 the Bataka Party gained supporters by attacking the Katikiro, by "misrepresenting" Colonial Papers 191 and 210, and by opposing the acquisition of land for the expansion of Makerere college. The party severely criticized and made capital out of the accumulation of funds in the cotton and coffee Funds.[42]

The Uganda African Farmers Union was registered on 2 April 1948 under the Business Names Ordinance as a

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376-7).

[42]. **Ibid.**, paragraph 318.

partnership of twenty persons, with Ignatius Musazi as its President.[43] Its professed aims were to act as commission agents for the sale of Cotton, Coffee and other produce. The union's growth was rapid because many growers believed that the realization of its aims would bring them greater prosperity, and in particular, that the union might be able to secure higher prices for agricultural produce, especially cotton.[44]

By using different methods and championing various causes, the Bataka party and the U.A.F.U. were able to mobilise considerable support among the urban workers, cotton and coffee growers, the urban unemployed, and the politically discontented. Vicious verbal and press attacks against the Buganda government and the protectorate officials, carried out with apparent immunity, made the Bataka Party and the U.A.F.U. leaders seem extremely powerful in the eyes of the masses.[45] Finally, by appealing directly to the Colonial Office and the British government above both the Buganda and protectorate governments, the Bataka Party and the U.A.F.U. pitched themselves against the Baganda chiefs and the protectorate government thus making confrontation inevitable. Consequently, the two organisations were banned in the

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[43]. Ibid..

[44]. Ibid., paragraph 234.

[45]. CO 537/3594 See office note Semakula Mulumba [undated] doc.138.

aftermath of the disturbances.

Although the British tended to disparage their leaders, the reforms the B.P and the U.A.F.U sought were popular. They demanded better wages for the urban workers. Despite the increases in 1946, the workers' purchasing power had declined with high inflation, which hit the urban workers hardest. They demanded that Africans be allowed "to gin their own cotton and to sell it on the world markets". The Africans' demand to be allowed to gin their cotton arose mainly from the suspicion that the ginners (mainly Asians) were cheating them when they bought their cotton seed, and thus made large profits at their expense. The British administration had maintained that this cheating was very much less than was suspected but did introduce some measures after the presentation of the Report of the Whitley Commission on the Cotton Industry in Uganda. However, it was the suspicion of being cheated which was the cause of the trouble rather than the real facts of the case. Indeed the publication of that report itself helped to bring this agitation to a head.

Since ginning was a large scale operation, the request "to gin their own cotton" could not be met directly. The organisers of the disturbances had realised this. What was required was a seed cotton marketing Board which would purchase the seed cotton from the growers and have it ginned under contract by the existing ginneries. Such a marketing board, largely composed and run by Africans, would be

satisfactory to the growers. It was in fact the sort of arrangement the U.A.F.U. leaders were moving towards in setting up U.A.F.U. which tried to collect together all the peasants' cotton, gin it and sell it directly to overseas buyers. The Uganda government, however, refused this arrangement and instead set up a Lint Marketing Board which bought the crop from the ginners and sold it on the world markets.

The demand to be allowed to sell their cotton directly to overseas buyers arose from the disparity between the world prices for cotton lint and the prices paid to the grower fixed by the government.[46] For a number of years, the government had depressed the cotton and coffee prices and built up substantial reserves in the Price Stabilisation Funds, partly intended to insulate the growers against world price fluctuations so as to ensure continued production and partly to contain inflation.[47] These funds had become a source of friction between the Africans and the protectorate government which fixed the prices. Indeed, on the 6 May 1948, Musazi had petitioned the Secretary of State on behalf of the U.A.F.U. in regard to the Cotton Profits Fund, proposing that the fund should be used in some way to benefit the produce growers and suggesting that L1,500,000 be utilised to set up

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[46]. CO 537/5863, Office minute, 24 January 1950.

[47]. CO 537/5863 See Governor's memorandum to the Secretary of State, 21 December 1949.

an Agricultural Bank. The Colonial Office agreed that the Uganda cotton producers were actually being paid less than they deserved and could get fifty percent more for cotton on open world markets. One official noted that there was "every indication that economic problems connected with cotton were the causes of disturbances," or at least partly so by enabling the political agitators to obtain "strong peasant support for their demands by appealing to the peasant's pockets."[44]

The Bataka Party also sought reform of the system of chieftainship. They demanded that the method of appointing chiefs be changed to allow the appointment of more capable people and that people be allowed to elect their chiefs. The method used in appointing chiefs had failed to give power to the new elite who felt educationally superior to the old chiefs and therefore better suited to leadership. Furthermore, the new policy which the protectorate had introduced after the war of appointing educated people as chiefs was too slow and therefore failed to accommodate the rapid progress brought about by the spread of modern education. But the British wanted the shift of power from the old chiefs to the educated class to be gradual, hence the policy of replacing a retiring chief with a better educated young man, and appointments on merit rather than promotion of

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[44]. CO 537/5863 See office minute, 24 January 1950.

junior chiefs to higher offices.[48] However, the appointment of court clerks, teachers, ex-soldiers as chiefs proved too slow for the young, better educated and politically ambitious to appreciate.

However, chiefs as paid officials of the government were actually civil servants implementing government policy. The chiefs could not be elected. They were not people's representatives and were not accountable to them. The demand by the Bataka leaders for people to choose their own chiefs was therefore as a result of misunderstanding the role of the chiefs. Furthermore, there was a demand by the politically conscious to elect the Lukiiko members. Therefore, the Bataka party was exploiting the apparent desire for democratic reforms. They wanted the government to be accountable and responsive to people's needs.

The British had already persuaded the Buganda government and the Kabaka of the need for democratization of the Lukiiko. Through the Kabaka, they had embarked on reforming the Lukiiko in 1946. The governor had negotiated with the Kabaka for the election to the Lukiiko of some thirty-one members out of a total of eighty-nine and the number had risen to thirty-six by 1948. Equally the British had began reforming the Legislative Council to allow African

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[48]. CO 1018/83 See record of discussion between Lord Hailey and the Secretary for African Affairs, Entebbe, 16 August 1947.

participation despite the opposition of Baganda leaders. But these reforms did not satisfy the growing ambitions of the emergent educated class.

There was also a growing number of able people either underemployed or unemployed. These became a focus of political or economic discontent and played no small part in the 1949 disturbances: "Society in Uganda is harbouring within itself a core of people with education, influence, grievances and jealousies but without work."[30] Apart from the educated young men who could not secure jobs in the civil service, the group also included those who had tried to become traders and failed, including a number of ex-servicemen who had invested all their earnings in companies which soon collapsed, and those who had lost their positions in the Buganda government after the 1945 disturbances or because of the reforms since then.

Moreover, the educated Africans were becoming concerned about press reports of South Africa's apartheid racial policy and the British lack of a clear racial policy in Central and East Africa. They were passing on these reports and their fears, sometimes distorted to suit their purpose, to the masses. The manner in which the British handled the East African High Commission affair fuelled the fear that the British would support white supremacy in East Africa:

It is not clear how Great Britain can fulfil her pledge

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[30]. Mulira, op. cit., p.39

that she is training us for the eventual self-
government, when, at the same time, a strong white
public opinion in East Africa is definitely aimed not
only at our domination, but also at our suppression."
Such fears and confusion no doubt increased mistrust and
tensions between the British and their African subjects.

The governor accepted the conclusion of the Kingdon
Report that the disturbances were "a planned rebellion"
against the Kabaka and the Buganda government organized by
the Bataka Party and the U.A.F.U. The grievances alleged by
Mulumba and his supporters were dismissed – but for one, the
level of prices paid to the producers – as lacking in
substance.[52] Hall, who had initiated reforms in 1945 and 1946
was losing the initiative to the emergent African leadership.
Though reformist in their demands, Hall viewed and treated
the Bataka party and the U.A.F.U. as communist-influenced
organizations. As a result, he was blinded to the real
issues. But the Colonial Office was of the opinion that the
root cause of the problems was economic and therefore the
answer lay in social and economic development, tempered with
moderate political reforms. Thus following the publication of
the Kingdon Report, the British proceeded with further
reforms.

In late 1950, the protectorate government announced
increases in producer prices. It was hoped that this would

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[51]. _Ibid_., p.41.

[52]. CO 537/5863  Governor to Secretary of State, letter,
21 December 1949.

satisfy the growers and encourage them to produce more. The Colonial Office had made it clear that it did not wish to see the cotton industry jeopardised. In 1949 the Imports Division Committee had also suggested that in order to stimulate production in the colonies, the growers should receive more, and less funds be paid into the price stabilisation fund.[53] Whereas the growers were pleased with the cotton prices announced,it was not the same with the coffee prices, which many still considered too low. Intelligence reports also indicated that there was "considerable dissatisfaction " with wages and this made it easy for the "dissident political leaders" to organise and general strikes in the future could not be ruled out. It is clear that by 1950, the emergent African educated class was able to mobilise economic and political discontent to demand reforms. It is also evident that the British were beginning to appreciate the changing situation, which called for new strategies and policies.

The government further pledged to facilitate the acquisition of suitable cotton ginneries by African co-operative societies whenever an opportunity arose.[54] It was also receptive to Musazi's idea to establish a land and credit bank using some of the money from the Cotton and Coffee Price Assistance Funds. In September 1950, the Buganda

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[53]. CO 537/5863 See Office minute, 24 January 1950.

[54]. CO 537/5863 Governor to Secretary of State, letter, 21 December 1949.

Lukiiko passed an amendment to the law for the selection of unofficial members. The number of unofficials was raised from thirty-six to forty. This increase was intended to open up politics to the new educated and other prominent persons hitherto excluded. It was hoped that this would reduce criticism of the government by associating these groups with government policies through membership of the committees related to the Lukiiko.[35] But as in all revolutionary situations, the more concessions the government granted, the more was demanded.

The Lukiiko also passed the council laws establishing and defining the county, sub-county and parish councils in Buganda. All these lower councils would have small non-official majorities. The government was undoubtedly trying to seek reconciliation and increase loyalty by opening up politics to the new classes while gradually easing out the old chiefs whom the Colonial Office considered ill-fitted to manage the social and economic development programs being introduced. This gradual shift of alliances was considered by the British as essential for their continued rule in Uganda and for the smooth devolution of power when the time came.

In addition, the Kabaka agreed to limit the ministers' term of office to three years, which was the life of the Lukiiko. This measure was obviously meant to reduce the

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[35]. CO 537/7191  Governor to Secretary of State, letter, 27 November 1950.

monopoly of power in the Buganda government and to make it easier for the new aspirants to gain power without resorting to intrigue and popular agitation as they had done in 1945 and 1949. By increasing the representative element of the Lukiiko and limiting the term of office of the ministers, the British hoped to make the Buganda government and the Lukiiko more responsive to the needs of the people.

The British persuaded the Kabaka to make reforms in an effort to check the growth of extremist nationalism. Although the disturbances on both occasion had been easily quashed, the point had been registered. To avoid further trouble, gradual democratization and devolution of responsibility were seen as the best solution. However, the governor was unwilling to go as far as Sir Donald Kingdon had suggested. He rejected the proposal that the Lukiiko be invited to submit names from which the Kabaka would select his ministers. He argued that it was premature to impose " a restriction on the initiative of the ruler," and would be a disadvantage to surrender power to the Lukiiko which was not accountable.[56] There was another principle involved here. To concede what amounted to responsible government to Buganda would have been very dangerous to Ugandan unity. Once conceded, it would have made Buganda, in effect, a sovereign state and any subsequent responsible government at the centre

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[56]. Ibid..

very difficult if not impossible. Thus the British were cautious even in the democratization of the local government system.

The British were still suspicious of elected representatives. A confrontation between an elected nationalistic Lukiiko and a British controlled Kabaka and chiefs was to be avoided as long as possible. The reforms could therefore be seen as a balancing act between the old and the new. In essence, the Kabaka and the chiefs had to retain sufficient power to implement British-initiated policies which might prove unpopular. British dependency on the Kabaka and the chiefs had become increasingly clear from the early 1940s. Accepting Kingdon's recommendations in respect of the appointment of ministers would have made them prisoners of the Kabaka, especially if he were backed by elected ministers!

In order to ensure that law and order would be maintained the British strengthened the Uganda police force and the K.A.R. battalion stationed at Jinja. The police special branch dealing with security intelligence was also modernised.[57] The British had realised that the situation in Uganda had changed dramatically in the post-war period and military forces might be needed as a last resort to sustain their rule. In a top secret memo to the Headquarters East

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[57]. CO 537/5863 See Sir Donald Kingdon to Governor, letter, 7 December 1949.

African Command, the governor expressed anxiety about the political situation:

> I know well how desperately thin your forces are on the ground and the manifold calls that are made, or may be made, on them, and also the continuing military embarrassment of the situation in Somalia; but the situation in Uganda for the immediate future is, I suggest, at least as critical as that of Kenya, if not more critical, and here we have not got fifteen thousand European settlers to call on in case of need nor the potential reserve of the British troops at Mackinnon Road. I greatly hope that you will be able to find some way of meeting my request and of meeting it soon.[56]

It was clear that British rule could no longer rely solely on the co-operation of African collaborators. Finally, the government set up a broadcasting service to help counter or neutralise anti-British and anti-government propaganda put out by Mulumba and his supporters.

## Consequences of the Social and Economic Development Programs.

The social and economic development programs which the British embarked on in Uganda in the 1940s had some unforeseen and rather "undesirable" political results. The efforts to increase economic production during the war brought many more Africans within the money economy as producers of cotton, coffee and maize, and as factory workers or motor drivers. The increased commodity production resulted

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[56]. CO 537/4681 Sir John Hall to Lt. General Sir Arthur Bowler, Headquarters, East African Command, Nairobi, 13 June 1949.

in greater money supply at a time when consumer goods were scarce thus causing high inflation, which in turn hurt the peasants and the urban workers for the first time uniting them against the government and its agents.[50]

Finally, to produce semi-skilled manpower and maintain a healthier work-force, the government sought a rapid expansion of education and medical services. More schools were built and those run by missions received bigger grants from the government. Medical services were improved by building more dispensaries and health community centres around the country. This expansion, especially in education resulted in the formation of or rather the great enlargement of - the educated elite - which was to play a major role, first in the reformist movements of the 1940s and then in the nationalist movements of the 1950s. Significantly, the high inflation coupled with unemployment, created fertile ground upon which the educated elite could mobilize support in its bid for power. They were able to identify closely with the urban workers and the peasants as victims of the system. The educated elite helped to articulate the grievances of the other classes and to provide the organisational skills needed by the reformist movements during this period.

At the conclusion of the war, the Colonial Office and

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[50]. This point argued by R.F.Holland in respect of West Africa is equally applicable to Uganda. R.F.Holland; _European Decolonization 1918-1981: An Introductory Survey_. St. Martins Press, N.Y. (1985). p.49

the protectorate government emphasized social and economic development as the major objectives of British rule. In the Development Plan for Uganda, the government sought by economic planning to increase agricultural output through increased acreage and improved farming methods, including mechanical cultivation. Intensive campaigns were launched to stimulate cotton, tea, coffee and tobacco production and to increase marketable surpluses of maize and groundnuts.[60]

Furthermore, the government intensified the search for mineral deposits especially those which could help in development of import substitution industries such as the manufacture of cement. Efforts to improve the infrastructure included construction of houses for staff and workers, construction and upgrading of roads, expansion of the Entebbe airport and the building of the hydro-electric power station at the Owen Falls in Jinja.[61] The boom enjoyed by Ugandan agricultural produce ensured relative prosperity and, it was thought, it could well afford the development program, costed at over L62,000,000 for the period 1946-1956, with minimal borrowing.[62]

But one of the immediate results of economic expansion was that Africans began to enter trade in large numbers,

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[60]. CO ⅃018/78 See Governor's address to the Legislative Council; Progress in Uganda 1948, 28 December, 1948.

[61]. Ibid..

[62]. ibid..

although most of their trade was small-scale and concentrated in rural areas. The increase in trade and spread of African petty traders was of major political importance. Far from feeling prosperous, the new African traders were concerned with their inability to compete with both Europeans and Asians. They rightly felt that little was being done to assist them with loans and training programs which would enable them to compete. This sort of ill-feeling, directed mainly against the Asians who were more numerous and with whom the African had almost daily contact, turned into open hostility as increasing numbers of Africans came to experience commercial failure.[63]

Yet the protectorate government aware of the situation, did nothing to alleviate it, and certainly failed to appreciate its long-term political implications. In a note to Lord Hailey in 1947, the Uganda Secretary for African Affairs noted that the Africans' participation beyond the "level of petty trading" would be "slow and regulated by their ability to acquire the qualities required in the fields of commerce and industry." He added, with racial overtones, that the Africans' lack of progress was not only due to lack of sufficient capital but also some "well known defects of

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[63]. Hostility towards the Asians had many aspects. Africans saw them as cheats, competitors in trade and commerce, and rivals for clerical and supervisory jobs. See G.R.Kizza's letter to Gambuze, 26 April 1946. Quoted in Low, op. cit., p.131.

character." There were no suggestions as to how they were being or would be helped to acquire "the qualities required" or overcome their character defects to enable them to participate fully in the economy. His conclusion, apart from being pessimistic, revealed the government's perception of the role of the Africans in Uganda's economy:

> The conclusion to be drawn from the past and present circumstances is that the African is still far from the stage of participating appreciably, except as the primary producer, in the two main forces controlling the development of the country which are the initiative and the driving power of the Europeans and the commercial and industrial activities of the Indians.[64]

It was with such attitudes that the government planned the economic development of Uganda without making an effort to inform the Africans or to involve them in the formulation of the plans. It was merely assumed that Africans in general would be enthusiastic about the government initiatives, grateful that roads, industries and mines were being opened. On the contrary, in the absence of participation and consultation, the Africans feared that the development plan would ignore their interests as they perceived them to be, for the sake of national development. In other words, the Africans were concerned that the development plan had been formulated on top of them and that, as Mergery Perham put it precisely, "a new empire was being constructed above their

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[64]. CO 1018/78 Background notes to Lord Hailey, "Effects of non-Africans on Africans", undated.

reach and beyond their understanding."[65] Furthermore, the Africans feared that rapid economic development would lead to an influx of immigrant races and foreign capital which might subsequently lead to their loss of control over future developments both political and economic. In short, the Africans feared being economically swamped in Uganda or even worse in an East African federation by non-Africans. At the bottom of these fears, especially in Buganda, was the fear of losing their land. With such suspicions, they preferred slower economic development which they could control and in which they could participate. Consequently, as the government recruited more European experts and projects moved ahead, suspicion and misunderstandings between Africans and non-Africans increased.

As the number of Africans in trade grew, so did their grievances. Business premises became the focal points of political discussion and organisation. What complicated matters was that most traders had been farmers and still remained farmers. This link between the rural and urban economy proved to be significant as it helped diffuse rural and urban grievances and then provided the communication channels to the urban workers. It is worthy of note that it was the increased rural economic activity which led to the formation of the Uganda African Farmers Union, which played

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[65]. Mergery Perham, "Difficulties in Buganda", a letter to The Times of London, 10 February 1954.

a major role in the 1949 disturbances. Ironically, faster economic expansion increased economic grievances and led to the growth of economic nationalism.

## Conclusion.

British colonial policy was neither static nor unresponsive. It evolved, adjusting to the needs of the metropolitan economy while at the same time seeking to accommodate the changes taking place in the protectorate and empire as a whole. During the war, Britain's military and economic imperatives integrated Uganda into the imperial war machine. Co-ordination of the war effort took priority over political and constitutional development, hence the emphasis on increasing economic production.

By 1943, it was clearly recognised that the reconstruction of the British economy would benefit from increased economic production of the African dependencies such as Uganda in terms of raw materials, dollar saving and earning capacity of its industries and later, consumption of British manufactured goods. Thus the Uganda colonial administration adopted policies which led to the expansion of agricultural production and strengthened the economic links between the British and the Ugandan economies. But it was hoped that the economic development would be mutual; by producing more, the colonies could become self-sufficient, more prosperous, thus providing markets for British

manufactured goods. The arguments and optimism of the days of partition were resurrected by British imperialists. Uganda fitted into the plan perfectly. With its good soils and favourable climate, it had become self-supporting as early as 1925 through the successful cultivation of cotton. It was now in position to produce a wide range of cash crops: cotton, coffee, tea, tobacco, maize and groundnuts. Hence prospects for agricultural based secondary industries were considered good.

But Uganda's economic potential could not be tapped without first developing the social and economic infrastructure. Social development was imperative for a healthier and more stable and skilled workforce. The social and economic development programs when implemented, in turn produced new classes. Most significant were the educated elite and the urban workers. These classes had no place in the old political structures and now had to be accommodated in the political system of the protectorate. Furthermore, new organizational structures were needed to guide and manage the rapid social and economic changes. The old disjointed administrative units were considered unsuited to handle the enormous task of development. Thus, partly for administrative efficiency but largely for economic reasons, larger, national structures - economic, social and political, such as the Lint and Coffee Marketing Boards, Uganda Development Corporation, Uganda Electricity Board, East

African Railways & Harbours, Makerere University College, were urgently needed and had to be built.

The construction of the "new economic empire" was not enthusiastically received by the Africans who become suspicious of the British intentions. Repeatedly the British tried to assure the Africans that they were the main beneficiaries of the economic developments in their midst. Clearly the British hoped to benefit, and in the short run did benefit from the economic development of their colonies, but as the case of Uganda shows, there was no guarantee that after independence, Uganda would be obliged to import or to export exclusively to and from British markets. Evidently, British efforts to develop the Ugandan economy were based on the hope that a "prosperous" nation would benefit Britain by consuming British manufactured goods. The emphasis on maximization of Uganda's agricultural and mineral potential was probably inevitable given the state of its technological development. Significantly, the British also recognized that without a Ugandan nationalism, it would be almost impossible to grant self-government, for this would mean breaking up the protectorate into a number of economically unviable states. It was this realisation which led the British to embark on the creation of a national consciousness and national institutions with African participation by the end of the decade.

CHAPTER THREE

COHEN AND THE CONSTITUTION: THE DRIVE FOR A UNITARY STATE,
1952-1956.


As late as the beginning of the 1950s, the Colonial
Office lacked a definite policy towards the political
development of East and Central Africa, more so towards
Uganda. Uganda represented a " half-way house" between East
and West Africa. It resembled the West African colonies in
being almost a purely African country with few white settlers
though with an increasing Asian (Indian) population. But
geographically and economically, Uganda was part of East
Africa. In East Africa, unlike in West Africa where the route
to self-government was clearly by devolution of power to the
African leadership, the presence of white settlers had
confounded the situation, and meant a more cautious approach.
Here the British still harboured hopes of establishing
"multi-racial societies", in East and Central Africa. This
partly explained the absence of a specific policy towards
Uganda until the early 1950s. It was feared that rapid
political developments in Uganda involving devolution of power
to the Africans, could radically affect the developments in
the whole region.' However, during Sir Andrew Cohen's

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'. CO 822/935A  See Secretary of State to Sir A.Cohen,
letter 17 November 1955. This is perhaps the clearest evidence
as regards the official thinking on this issue. The Secretary
of State wrote:
        But, even if that were not so, I still would not

governorship, Uganda's route to self-government was defined.
A combination of factors, including, in particular, Cohen's
personal initiative and the political developments resulting
from the Kabaka's deportation, made it necessary to spell out
colonial policy towards Uganda. Henceforth the British
embarked on the search for a constitutional and administrative
machinery for a smooth transfer of political power. A review
of the political developments in this period and Cohen's role
in defining policy throws some light on the broad question of
how much influence governors wielded in the process of
transfer of power.

In assessing Cohen's impact on policy, a number of
questions need to be asked. What were his objectives? What
forces did he confront internally and externally? To what
extent did the Colonial Office agree with him about the pace
and need for reforms? Was the Governor responding to a general
demand for reforms in the protectorate? Were there any special
elements in Uganda that made it necessary to adapt a different
approach from that in the neighbouring states?

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think it right to introduce universal adult suffrage
in Uganda for many years to come. Once it were
introduced in Uganda, it would be impossible to
resist in other territories of East Africa and
probably in the end in Central Africa; and this
would completely wreck the prospects of developing
the kind of Multi-racial societies (I prefer the
phrase "non-racial societies") which we are trying
to develop there.

In 1952, Andrew Cohen was appointed the new governor of Uganda. When he arrived in January of that year, it was his first African appointment. In fact, he was inexperienced as far as actual administration was concerned. Born in 1909, he was related on his father's side to the Wesley-Cohens, a conservative-minded Anglo-Jewish family, who had risen to prominence with the fortunes of the Shell Oil Company which they helped to build. His non-Jewish mother, Mattie Cobb, had "made a deep mark on women education" as a headmistress of Roedean and later, principal of Newham College, Cambridge. Cohen was extremely intelligent. He was an idealist. Cohen was accentric. He had passed through Malverin and Trinity College Cambridge, with "effortless superiority".[2] At Cambridge, he belonged to that highly exclusive society whose members, known as "Apostles", had included intellectual leaders from Tennyson to Keynes to E.M.Forster. Their dedication to "the mission to enlighten the world on things intellectual and spiritual" had "perhaps remained Cohen's deepest religion".[3] Cohen began his civil service career in the Inland Revenue office where he found the work boring. In 1933, he was transferred to the Colonial Office, then just coming under the influence of "another practical idealist", Malcolm Macdonald. Cohen, like his Secretary of State, was passionately interested in

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[2]. See The Observer, London, Sunday, 21 November 1954.

[3]. Ibid..

improving the political and material welfare of the subject peoples under British rule.[4] During the war, he was sent to Malta where he was charged with ensuring that the Island was fed. Here he became a legend to the Maltese because of his eccentricities and for his courageous and apparent enjoyment of the continuous raids.[5]

Sir Andrew Cohen was not a typical governor. He had worked his way up in Whitehall from 1933 until 1947, when he was promoted to Assistant Under Secretary in charge of the African Department of the Colonial Office, a capacity in which he was soon dubbed by his colleagues as the "King of Africa".[6] As head of the African department, Cohen has been credited with shaping colonial policy towards Africa in the post-war years. He was recognised as having been influential in the policy of rapid political advance in West Africa. In addition, he has been acknowledged as the brain behind Creech Jones' local government reforms of 1947 and a good deal of the Labour

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[4]. Ibid..

[5]. Ibid.. The story was told that one day a delegation called to complain about the rations, bringing as evidence a maggoty loaf of bread. Cohen hardly listened to their complaint because he was so anxious to tell them of the problems facing the island and to infect them with enthusiasm for his solutions. As he talked he absent-mindedly munched away at the bread. His audience was amazed.

[6]. David Goldsworthy, Colonial Issues in British Politics 1945 - 1961, Oxford, 1971, p.52

Government's development planning.[7] Often referred to as the "Fabian of Whitehall", Cohen's progressive views, particularly on colonial policy, were notable: " More than any other official he incarnated the brand of paternalist liberalism characteristic of the government and the period".[8]

That "paternalist liberalism" distinguished his administration in the Uganda protectorate, where he had arrived with immense prestige as "the friend of Africa and Africans".[9] His predecessor, Sir John Hall, had already laid the foundation of a "new economic empire" based on a comprehensive economic development program.[10] But unlike his predecessors, Sir Andrew Cohen realised the need to expedite constitutional and political reforms, for it was apparent to him that Africans were experiencing a political awakening. Although he disliked speculating on the pace of decolonization, he conceded the fact that no colonial government, that of Uganda included, fully controlled the rate of political development and thus the British might be forced to devolve power much sooner than it had been thought possible before the Second World War. He also appreciated the

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[7]. Ronald Robinson, " Sir Andrew Cohen and the Transfer of Power in Tropical Africa" in Decolonization and After by W.H.Morris-Jones and George Fischer (eds.), p.62 - 63

[8]. Ibid..

[9]. See the London Observer, 21 November 1954.

[10]. See preceding chapter on economic development.

importance of building up strong and stable economies in the African territories before they were incorporated into the expanded commonwealth. If these new self-governing states were to be of any use strategically, politically and economically to the mother country, they must be provided with firm foundations. It was this task, the mission of creating a stable, prosperous and self-governing state in Uganda, that Sir Andrew Cohen set out to accomplish.

But his brilliant career was nearly ruined by the Kabaka crisis which rocked his governorship at the end of 1953. The crisis will be discussed in detail in the next chapter. Here it suffices to note that when Cohen arrived in Uganda the rising political consciousness of the Africans was already manifesting itself in increasing suspicion and distrust of British control and policies.

Whereas no nationalist political party existed in Uganda until 1952 when the Uganda National Congress was formed, four months after Cohen's arrival, political protest with a nationalistic stance, especially in Buganda, was not new. It had been partly in response to this political awakening and partly to increase administrative efficiency that the British had embarked on the reform of the "Native" administrations and local governments and the reorganization of the protectorate government in 1950." Sir Andrew Cohen vigorously pursued these

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". See Kabaka of Buganda, _Desecration of My Kingdom_, London, 1967, p.111

reforms, at times spurred on by the Uganda National Congress and distracted by Buganda nationalism. However, few doubted his commitment to build a new united and prosperous Uganda, self-governing within the British Empire. Andrew Cohen was devoted to the advance of the Africans but impatient with those who differed from his views or questioned his methods. This impatience, combined with a passionate certainty that he was always right, irritated both his supporters and his opponents. To his antagonists, he appeared conceited.[12] Having reached an agreement with the Kabaka in March 1953, he sought to proceed with the reforms of the protectorate government through the expansion of the Legislative Council and by the introduction of unofficial members in the Executive Council. However, his efforts to reform the Protectorate gover--

soon raised new and important problems. There were heated debates with the African leaders as to the role of the non-African minorities and whether the constitutional framework should be federal or unitary. Rather reluctantly, the Colonial Office and the Protectorate government were drawn into a debate about the political development of Uganda. Despite the generally accepted view that self-government for Uganda was still a long way off, crash programs were devised to prepare Uganda for the inevitable. Social services, especially education and health, had to be provided, the economy had to

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[12]. Ibid., p.114.

be strengthened and a national middle-class to provide African leadership had to be created. This class was seen to provide stability.

Historical investigations further reveal that the British appreciated the need to encourage Ugandan unity, beginning in the late 1940s, through building national institutions and there were efforts to identify and groom modern political leadership.[13] This often meant modernizing the traditional elite and institutions or shifting alliances or striking a balance between the two. There was also a realization that whereas the African economic contribution was significant, the Asian commercial and industrial position was dominant. The problem of how to reconcile these two forces, the Africans poised to inherit political power and the Asians entrenched in commerce and trade, persisted throughout the colonial period. Nevertheless, the minority issue was never as serious a threat to the unity of Uganda as was precolonial (traditional) nationalism.

## Constitutional Reforms in Buganda, 1953

Cohen's primary goal was to transform the Buganda government into a functional local government. As a modern and efficient local government, it would be part of the unitary government for the whole protectorate. His first major

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[13]. This idea is developed in the following two chapters.

initiative was therefore to enter into secret negotiations with the Kabaka and his key advisors. In March 1953, he announced that agreement had been reached with the Kabaka on certain decisions regarding constitutional and local government development in Buganda. The protectorate government would transfer the responsibility for certain services to the Buganda government as soon as possible,

including education (primary and junior secondary schools), medical services, and the field services in agriculture. The Buganda government was to carry on these services in accordance with the general policy laid down by the protectorate government and in conformity with the laws governing these services. The protectorate government through the departments concerned was entitled to inspect these services to ensure efficiency." In order to fulfil these obligations, the Buganda government would receive extra funding and there would be an increase in the number of senior officials of the Buganda government. It was further agreed to increase the number of elected members of the Lukiiko to sixty of the total number of eighty-nine. The Kabaka also accepted to consult the members of the Lukiiko before appointing his ministers. Buganda was to a large extent still "feudal". The British aim was to transform the feudal structure into a

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". See W.K. Hancock's Buganda papers (at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London), "Memorandum on Constitutional Development in Buganda", 17 March 1953.

constitutional system. The Lukiiko having a say in the choice of ministers was a step in that direction. Both the Kabaka and the British hoped to benefit from these changes because they were in fact concessions to long-standing demands by the peasants and the middle class for democratic reforms. Local government in Buganda was now to be based on the ssaza. Thus the democratization of the Buganda government under British supervision  was to continue. It was hoped that the reforms would alleviate the political pressure on the Buganda government and slacken the development of political discontent and agitation.


Reforms at the Centre: Expansion of the Legislative Council.

Having reached a consensus with the Kabaka on the Buganda reforms, Cohen turned his attention to the centre. In March 1953, Cohen wrote to the Colonial Office about his plans for changes in the composition of the Uganda Legislative Council. By then the council consisted of sixteen officials and sixteen unofficials (8 Africans, 4 Europeans and 4 Asians), a total of thirty-two. This number had been settled in 1950 by Sir John Hall. The governor contended that although the arrangement was working very well, political development could not take place without experimentation in new ideas. He advocated an immediate and substantial increase in the size of the Legislative Council.  However, its character, the balance between the government and unofficial sides, and the

balance between the different racial communities on the unofficial side were to be preserved.[15] Cohen argued that there was a weakness in the composition of the Legislative Council; it was "not sufficiently widely representative." Almost all the European and Asian members were from Kampala and Jinja. The African representation, as a result of the attitude of the Great Lukiiko, lacked the element of popular choice in the selection of names forwarded. The two members nominated by the Kabaka were therefore not associated in any way with particular areas of Buganda. Outside Buganda, he noted, the provincial basis of representation was "completely unreal".[16] Apart from the existence of provincial council and provincial technical officers, there were no special ties between the different countries e.g. between Bunyoro and Kigezi in western Province or between Busoga and Teso in Eastern. In fact, Busoga had refused to take part in the Eastern provincial council and therefore remained unrepresented on the Legislative Council. To tackle this problem, Cohen proposed an alternative system of representation. Outside Buganda, African representatives would be based on districts, because the district was "the natural unit of public life" and here "tribal loyalty and cohesion" was strong and district councils were already a source of local pride. The district councils

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[15] Despatch no.434, Governor to secretary of State, 15 March 1953.

[16]. Ibid..

would then be linked to the Legislative Council."[17] Cohen also favoured district representation because he hoped it would serve as a bulwark against federalism which provincial administration would encourage. He firmly believed that the future of the protectorate must lie in a unitary government on parliamentary lines.[18] He argued that since Uganda was to develop as a unitary state, the government must take every opportunity to encourage the people of Uganda to realise that the protectorate Government and the Legislative Council were part of their national life. He emphasized that advances in local governments had to be accompanied by the development of central political institutions because, just as central institutions could not operate efficiently without a sound system of local government, so local governments could not flourish and progress unless the people of a country participated in the central political institutions.[19] African members of the Legislative Council were to be indirectly elected through the district councils which themselves were largely elected. He proposed the period of membership to be extended from two to three years so that members could have sufficient time to master the intricacies of the council's business. The governor rejected the demand by the nationalist

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[17]. ibid..

[18] Ibid..

[19]. Despatch No.434; Governor to Secretary of State, 15 March 1953.

Uganda National Congress for an unofficial majority as one coming from a radical minority and argued that Uganda was not ready for responsible government.

In June 1953, the Secretary of State approved the governor's proposals for reforms at the centre. The Legislative Council was enlarged to fifty-six members of whom twenty were to be Africans. The unofficials became the representative members. The members were equally divided between those who were, in general, government supporters and those who were not pledged to support government. On the government side were seventeen officials and eleven "cross-bench" members, drawn from the general public of whom six were Africans. Under the Royal Instructions, the governor was required, when nominating persons from outside government service to the government side of the council, to select those he was satisfied would be prepared to support government policy when called upon to do so. These "cross - bench" members were pledged to support government on all major issues or to resign if they felt unable conscientiously to do so, otherwise they could vote as they liked.[20] The governor remained  president of the council and to preserve the government majority, he would have both an original and a casting vote.[21] However, these reforms were short-lived for

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[20]. CO 822/935A  See "Draft Formal Minute", undated.

[21]. Despatch No. 570; Secretary of State to Governor of Uganda, 30 June 1953.

Cohen was soon compelled to make further changes. Within a year he was arguing that time had come to redress the imbalance in the racial composition of the council and give the African majority better representation.[22]

## Executive Council Reforms

In June of 1954, Cohen informed the Colonial Office that the appointment of ministers (members of the Executive Council) from the unofficial members on Legislative Council was the next political development. He conceded that the pace was being influenced by developments in Kenya. He favoured African participation in the executive council as members or ministers but the problem was timing. He sought to introduce Africans into the Executive Council as part of the settlement with Buganda and hoped this would help to show the Baganda that they had some power and influence to gain by coming into the protectorate institutions.[23]

The Colonial Office was unenthusiastic about the inauguration of a ministerial system. The Secretary of State considered the appointment of ministers from the unofficial ranks premature.[24] There was concern that the introduction of

[22]. CO 822/894 Cohen to Gorrell Barnes, letter, 24 June 1954.

[23]. CO 822/894 See Office minute by W.S.Bates, 1 July 1954.

[24]. CO 822/894 Gorell Barnes to Sir A.Cohen, letter, 3 June 1954. The Secretary of State's reservations were once again expressed to the Governor in a subsequent letter, 16 July 1954.

unofficials in the Executive Council would essentially mean appointment of European and Asian members and this would give the impression that this was the first step towards multi-racial government in Uganda on Kenya lines and thus spark off trouble in Uganda. The Colonial Office would have preferred the initiative to come from the Baganda who would then have to accept a European and an Asian among the unofficial ministers.[25] However, it was also recognised that constitutional developments might come about a good deal more quickly than had been thought possible two or three years before. There was a feeling that things would be "moving fast during the next five years," and even if Cohen was persuaded to drop the scheme, the step would have to be taken "within two to three years."[26] Therefore it would be much better to make a generous gesture, giving voluntarily something more than the "most politically conscious" Ugandans dared hoped for. Such a gesture would do more than anything else to convince those who were suspicious that the British were sincere in the policy of moving toward self-government, and thus regain their confidence. The Baganda, who would be offered at least one of the posts, would find it difficult to resist, and therefore would be a means of bringing them into the central government. Equally important was the fear of

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[25]. CO 822/894 Gorell Barnes to Sir A.Cohen, letter, 16 July 1954.

[26] Ibid..

Baganda apathy towards central reforms unless they were convinced of advantage by co-operating with the Protectorate government and thus throwing their weight on the side of a unitary state.[27] The overriding concern behind these reforms therefore, was to retain the trust and willing cooperation of the politically conscious Africans. However, as the Colonial Office had feared, the proposal to introduce members from unofficial sources into the Executive Council raised new issues and opened up debate on two questions, the minority issue and the constitutional framework.

Of immediate concern was the inclusion of both European and Asian unofficials in the Executive Council. Although the Secretary of State had earlier in February 1954 proclaimed that Uganda was to be primarily an African state, the emergent African leadership were not sure what this really meant, nor was the Colonial Office but it preferred to leave things alone and was opposed to any further definition or clarification of the Secretary of State's statement.

In November 1954 two sets of constitutional proposals were published. The first concerned the reconstruction of the central government and an increase in the proportion of African members in the Legislative Council. The second, put forward by the Namirembe Conference presided over by Professor Hancock, concerned Buganda and the relationship between the

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[27]. CO 822/894 See Office minute by W.S.Bates, 1 July 1954.

Buganda government and the protectorate government. If implemented, the proposals would not only constitute a major political advance for Uganda, but also help resolve the problem of integrating Buganda into Uganda of which the Kabaka crisis was only a symptom.

The governor wanted to raise the number of the Legislative Council members from twenty-eight to thirty a side, a total of sixty. On the government side, there would be ten officials and twenty unofficials of whom twelve would be Africans. The total number of Africans on the council would be thirty, eighteen on the representative side and twelve on the government side. This was significant in that for the first time the African members made up half the council. In terms of policy discussion, this implied that the Africans would have a significant say on how the affairs of the protectorate were managed. In fact the Colonial Office worried that Cohen had gone very near, if not right up to, the limit of what was possible without seriously endangering British authority. It was true that twelve of the African members would be under obligation to vote for the government on a motion of confidence; but in the case of a real African "revolt" a government majority would depend on the Asians and Europeans voting with the officials and the governor using his casting vote. The implications were that in certain circumstances it would only be possible to maintain authority at the cost of a crisis. The governor would have to require

the resignation of the Africans on the government side who voted against the Government on a motion of confidence. The Colonial Office was therefore nervous about the whole scheme.

The balance between the Africans and the non-Africans which Cohen proposed was clearly designed to win back and ensure African confidence and trust in British rule. It was meant to secure British interests and at the same time demonstrate to the Africans and British public opinion that the Colonial Ofice was serious about preparing the protectorate for self-government. Still, the Colonial Office feared that the governor was moving too fast.[28] Undeterred, the governor insisted on establishing a ministerial system. The constitutional changes which were contemplated were significant and radical as far as the Colonial Office was concerned. Sir Andrew Cohen considered them essential and positive but in Uganda they were overshadowed by the minority issue inflamed by the plan to appoint an Asian minister.[29] Thus for the moment Cohen had failed to enhance African confidence

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[28]. CO 822/894 See Office minute by W.S.Bates, 1 July 1954.

[29]. CO 822/1072   See Acting Governor to Secretary of State, letter, 4 July 1955. The Uganda National Congress campaign opposing multi-racial government and, in particular, opposing the appointment of Asian and unofficial European Ministers, was one of its most successful. It succeeded in raising a considerable amount of opposition to the proposals in Buganda, in the Eastern Province and in Bunyoro, which resulted in the passing of formal resolutions in the Lukiiko, the Eastern Province District Councils and in the Rukurato (Bunyoro Parliament) against what they regarded as the introduction of a multi-racial form of government.

and trust in British policies.

## The Minority issue

Indians in Uganda constituted one of the less obvious but nonetheless important problems in the political development of the country. By 1955, they represented about 1.3 per cent of the population. Both Africans and Europeans tended to regard them as complicating and unwanted intruders. They were seen as exploiters who were parasites in the country and kept Africans out of business.[30] For their part, the Asians had historically refrained from openly engaging in political activities. But with the rise of nationalist politics, the Africans were not only challenging Asian economic dominance but also their right to representation in the national institutions. Could the Asians defend their wealth without political influence or power? How could their political and economic rights be preserved in the long run in a self-governing Uganda? These were issues which preoccupied the British in this era of rapid constitutional changes.

Until the end of the Second World War, almost all the retail trade of the country was in the hands of Indian merchants, who were, as a result of administrative action,

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[30]. CO 822/1192 See note by a faculty member of Makerere, "Indians in Uganda", 30 May 1955.

confined to a limited number of gazetted townships.[31] Thus collected in townships, the Indians stood out conspicuously against the general African background of scattered homesteads and relative poverty. This factor, more than anything else, generated envy and hostility in the minds of Africans, who over the years had also grown richer and commercially more sophisticated. During the period from 1920 onwards, Africans, especially in Buganda, including well-to-do landowners and aristocrats attempted on many occasions to enter the cotton business and other aspects of commercial life. Their failure was often attributed to dishonesty or conspiracy on the part of established Indian traders.[32] This was only partially true for in many instances the African failure was caused by lack of sufficient capital, commercial education and experience. But the emerging African businessman usually belonged to or had very close connections with the ruling political groups, and was in a position to make his views on Indians, financiers and wholesalers heard by a sympathetic public. Africans and Europeans frequently expressed a sense of dissatisfaction with and dislike of Indians by saying that they had an economic stranglehold on the country. The struggle for entry into commerce and trade by the Africans and the resentment against the Asian minority increased in the period after the Second

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[31]. Ibid..

[32]. Ibid..

World War. But the Colonial Office felt that in Uganda Africans had more to gain and less to fear from the Indians than in Kenya or Tanganyika. Since there was no immediate solution to the economic disparity, both the British and the Indians had to devise a way of dealing with the delicate relationship which had developed between the Asian community and the Africans.

In the 1955 constitutional crisis, African leaders were nervous of a multi-racial state modelled on either Kenya or Tanganyika because such a state would appear to give foreigners a permanent foothold in the country. Equally, most Africans were also unwilling to consider other forms of "composite society", or to define a status of citizenship which would allow useful and necessary immigrants, such as Indians or African labourers from the neighbouring states, to settle permanently. As a result, it was for the Colonial Office to grapple with the responsibility of finding a lasting solution to the question of the Asian minority. However in July 1955 the Secretary of State approved Cohen's constitutional proposals. He concurred with the governor that although the ministers and parliamentary secretaries were to be drawn from different sections of the community, they were in no sense to be appointed as representatives of those sections of the community. They were to be appointed as men qualified to promote the welfare and progress of the protectorate as a whole. Reacting to the African opposition

to an Asian minister, the Secretary of State explained that the governor as chief executive was responsible in his discretion for choosing the ministers and allocating portfolios. If members of any particular tribe or race were to be regarded as barred from appointment, that would amount to tribal or racial discrimination, and would be contrary to the whole policy of the British government. He pointed out that the Asian community in Uganda, by its pioneering work in the economic field, had laid the foundation of economic progress throughout the country. They were performing an essential service in the economic field and leading Asians had given valuable public service. He also noted that the majority of the Asians in Uganda were established as residents of the country, many of them having no other home and entirely identified with Uganda. It was therefore imperative that those Asians who were genuine residents of the country should have proper political rights. He emphasized the fact that the African people of Uganda had a secure political future, and in their attitude to the political rights of the minority communities in Uganda they could give an example and set a pattern which could help to solve similar problems in other parts of the world.[33]

The governor had suggested that when the final stages of self-government came, the constitution which would then be

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[33] CO 822/892   Secretary of State to Sir Andrew Cohen, July 1954.

granted would contain "safeguards for minorities" which would
be written in such a way that they would be "extremely
difficult" to alter.[34] In this respect Cohen sounded naive for
in reality once the African majority was in full control of
the government, there would be nothing whatsoever to prevent
them from altering the constitution in any way they pleased.
Constitutional safeguards were unenforceable. The Colonial
Office reckoned that one of the ways the rights of minorities
could be secured was through educating public opinion to the
concept that all the inhabitants of the protectorate should
have equal rights irrespective of race.[35] Certainly there were
others who thought that the racial problem was neither
paramount nor could it be solved by constitutional safeguards.
They saw the problem in terms of a privileged minority versus
a dissatisfied majority:

> In my view the central problem of Uganda
> is not how to protect the racial minorities
> but how to bring the peripheral regions
> forward quickly enough to prevent them
> being hopelessly exploited by the Baganda
> when we   withdraw, and that in pursuing
> the "primarily African state with proper
> safeguards for minorities" we are on a
> false trail. In the   long run the only
> thing that will protect the   minorities
> is their own good behaviour coupled with
> the satisfaction of the majority.[36]

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[34]. CO 822/892 Letter, Sir A. Cohen to Sir T. Lloyd, 12
December 1954.

[35]. CO 822/892  Letter, Sir A.Cohen to Sir Thomas Lloyd,
12 December 1954.

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British policy was to try and persuade the Africans that their advancement, and the economic development, on which that advancement depended, could not go forward without the participation of non-Africans and foreign capital. The Africans thus must view the Asians and other races as an essential element in the progress of the country who had therefore to be granted political rights. Thus the protests by Africans against the appointment of an Asian minister were carefully but strongly resisted. To reassure the Africans that their concerns were appreciated, the government unveiled plans to advance the Africans in trade, industry and the civil service by providing education and loans. This partly satisfied the African leaders. Luckily enough for the British, the majority of the Africans were for the moment preoccupied with the Kabaka's return and consequently the issue was shelved, though not for long.

## A Federal or Unified State?

Before the deportation of the Kabaka in 1953, the issue of federalism in Uganda had not received much public attention. Now it was thrust into prominence. Was Uganda to develop as a unitary state or as a federation of "native states"? The debate was conducted in the local press, at political rallies, and featured prominently in the

presentations to the Hancock Committee.[37] Cohen and the Colonial Office favoured a unitary state with a strong central government, the Uganda National Congress and the Baganda leaders advocated a federal system. The arguments put forward for each case are both interesting and revealing and worth examining in greater detail.

The Colonial Office contended quite rightly that the demand for the development of Uganda as a federal state, which had the most support from the African traditional and educated elite, was symptomatic of the continued strength of local and ethnic feelings and the absence of any strong loyalties towards the protectorate as a whole. The demand was particularly strong in Buganda because it was identified with Mutesa II and his cause and because in a federation, the Baganda were bound to dominate the protectorate.[38] However the greatest objections to a federal Uganda were administrative and economic.

The Colonial Office argued that historically the protectorate had been developed with a strong central government which, subject to the Agreements, had held the residual powers of legislation, although occasionally greater autonomy had been given to local governments as they later

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[37]. See W.K.Hancock, Buganda Papers, at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London. Also CO 822/894 Sir A.Cohen to Gorell Barnes, letter, 8 July 1954.

[38]. CO 822/892 See "Development of a federation in Uganda", office minute, 10 February 1954.

became more responsible. The relaxation of central authority in the 1950's and the development of local institutions had been based on the Wallis report on the future of local governments in the protectorate.[39] But even in that report Wallis had specifically argued against a federal constitution as not only "unworkable but quite inappropriate" for a country as small and as compact as Uganda.[40] There was also fear that creating federal states would undermine the efficiency of the public service. Moreover, there was the problem of grouping the units in the federation. If the grouping was dependant on ethnic loyalties, the Baganda by virtue of their numbers, would have a preponderant influence politically and that would almost certainly work to the disadvantage of the "weaker brethren like the Karamojong".[41] It might be surmised that the Colonial Office was also concerned about the welfare of the minority groups among the Africans. In addition, if the grouping were provincial there was still some difficulty about developing popular enthusiasm for the provincial state governments. Already, the provincial councils had been left out of the local government structure because they attracted no support.

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[39]. See C.A.Wallis, Report on African Local Government in Uganda, Entebbe, 1953.

[40]. ibid..

[41]. CO 822/892 See "Development of a federation in Uganda". an office minute, 10 February 1954.

The Colonial Office further argued that the protectorate as a whole was bound to suffer economically from a federal system. Fiscally, the state governments would depend on their own resources and "the poor and backward" would not benefit from the revenues of the wealthier members of the federation.[42] They could therefore only be aided by grants from the central government, and unless the latter had wide powers of taxation, it would be at the mercy of local state governments. Moreover, even the wealthier state governments would be more at the mercy of world commercial trends than Uganda as a whole. For instance Buganda would rely almost entirely on cotton and coffee whose prices notoriously fluctuated. While it was felt that a federal system was not in the interest of Uganda as a whole, it was recognised that there were some major obstacles to the development of a unitary state. These were both historical and political.[43]

The obstacles to a unitary state were rooted in the history of the area and had been strengthened by the policies which the British had adopted throughout their administration of Uganda. The primary factor was that the protectorate was itself gradually created out of a number of separate units each of which had a clear territorial basis. The separateness and identity of these states were accentuated by the

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[42] Ibid..

[43]. ibid..

immediate precolonial history when each state had sought hegemony over the area, e.g Bunyoro in the 17th century and then Buganda in the 19th century, and the very subjection of one to another and their antagonism tended to keep alive their sense of separateness. Furthermore, early Bri sh policy in the creation of the protectorate was somew ad hoc and in fact had recognised, from necessity, :2 "national" units and divisions of the protectorate."

The manner in which the protectorate had originated was another factor in the matter. When it was first declared in 1894, it consisted territorially only of the "Kingdom of Uganda", meaning Buganda. For various reasons, mainly British official policy of limiting imperial responsibilities, but also the determination of the Baganda to assert a domination over other areas, the British government had deliberately refrained from assuming responsibility for the rest of the protectorate which was then merely geographical parts of the "British sphere and influence" recognised by the 1890 Anglo-German and other agreements. However, the protectorate was eventually created by piecemeal additions until the ultimate area was declared by 1900. The extension of British control to these areas certainly did not blur their identity or necessarily imply diminution thereof, and the same was

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". CO 822/892 See "Historical and political aspects of a federal' organization of the Uganda protectorate", an office minute, 20 February 1954.

evident in the fact that the agreements made from 1900 to 1902 with Buganda, Toro and Ankole were made with each separately as a "native" government. The piecemeal nature of acquisition was not followed by any serious efforts at institutional unity.[45]

Furthermore, though British policy was not clearly formed at the outset, it was not that of unitary state. From the earliest days, the policy was to build up the administration of the protectorate "on the basis of the native governments". This fitted in very well with the policy of indirect rule adopted later in the 1920s in the African territories generally. The existing organizations in Uganda of semi-autonomous "native states" with established administrations of their own, though they did not cover the whole protectorate, was peculiarly well suited to this policy.

The indirect rule policy tended to confirm the position of the semi-autonomous native governments which then interpreted the policy as a recognition of their indigenous authority. It certainly reinforced their traditional position as semi-autonomous units under the Crown's protection rather than their membership of the formal single institution of the protectorate.[46] Without doubt, indirect rule encouraged a sense

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[45]. ibid..

[46]. Ibid..

of local autonomy.

The British accepted some responsibility for the constitutional problems which the protectorate was experiencing. The development in the late 1930's and onwards of a policy of political and economic advance which required a greater degree of central control and co-ordination of the economic and financial resources of the territory as a whole did not fit in with existing systems of semi-autonomous native governments. This separate and divided power and responsibility was viewed as an obstacle to such policies, and from 1939 onwards, political policy tended increasingly to reverse this tradition. The Colonial Office and the colonial administration became more interested in a unitary system with a strong central government as opposed to a federal structure. Not surprisingly, the government's insistence on a unitary form of government appeared to the Africans as inconsistent with the previous method of indirect rule, and to the kings as inconsistent with the agreements. Nevertheless, the Colonial Office continued to recognise the strength of local feelings. In addition, it recognized that these feelings had been reinforced by the way Uganda had been brought under British control, the way it had been administered and the uneven social, political and economic development which had resulted giving Buganda advantage over

the other provinces." This was to emphasize the force and effect which a long history and well established past policy had in producing the situation. The situation was no doubt most unfavourable to the execution of the political and economic reforms which the British then envisaged. Consequently, the issue was whether the Colonial Office and the colonial administration would maintain their new emphasis on the future of Uganda as a unitary state. The Colonial Office considered a federal system not only inappropriate but also "a retrograde step"." Why were the British suddenly, after decades of practising a "divide and rule" policy, so insistent on unification? Sir Leslie Monson has provided an official insight." He stated that:

> ...the closer one came to independence, the more was one brought face to face with apprehension on the part of Africans who had come to realise that in practical terms independence would mean the political dominance of parties or tribes to whom they were, as groups or parties, opposed and this greatly complicated the task of constitution-making ... Some of those who had such

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47. **Ibid..**

48. CO 822/892  See "Federal constitution in Uganda", an office minute, 11 February 1954.

49. Sir Leslie Monson, was Assistant Under Secretary of State, in charge of the East and Central Africa Departments of the Colonial Office, 1959 - 1964. His responsibility for Central Africa ceased in 1962 with the creation of a separate office. In 1961, his department had taken over the affairs of Basutoland, Bechuanaland and Swaziland. Earlier on, 1947 - 1951, he had served as Chief Secretary to the West African Council stationed in Accra. This had given him first hand knowledge of the events which started the transfer of power in West Africa.

apprehensions sought other means of protection than those provided by the usual "entrenched" constitutional provisions. This in turn led to British Government being faced with disputes within the nationalist ranks, e.g. as between the kings and politicians in Uganda,... The Colonial Office reaction to these situations took the form of responses to the individual circumstances of each case but it is possible to trace a coherent policy, even if it was never drawn up as a general strategy. It comprised a refusal to consider separate independence for areas within existing boundaries and encourage the arguing parties to settle their differences in direct negotiations, giving them help from outside if required.[50]

First, federalism was thought to encourage local nationalism rather than a Uganda-wide based nationalism. Secondly, the British feared that paying attention to ethnic or local particularism would lead to state disintegration. These suspicions were strengthened by Buganda's bid to secede in 1953 and its subsequent strong preference for a federal structure. Therefore, in an attempt to deflate the controversy over the terms "unitary" and "federal", it was decided to avoid those terms and henceforth, talk in terms of devolution of functions and responsibilities to whatever bodies were capable of taking them over, but dealing at the centre with only those functions concerned with the running of a modern state which could only be performed at the centre.[51] The

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[50]. A.H.M.Kirk-Green (ed.), The Transfer of Power, University of Oxford, 1979, p.31

[51]. CO 822/892 Gorrell Barnes to Secretary of State. Office minute, 12 February 1954.

British hoped that the people of Uganda would eventually come to appreciate the advantages of a strong central government especially in promoting economic development. Thus yet another major issue was neither resolved nor exhaustively discussed but simply shelved until the eve of independence.

## Franchise and Introduction of Direct Elections to the Legislative Council

There was a general view in the Colonial Office that the pace of African advance in politics in East Africa would inevitably be set by developments in Uganda. As a result of this belief, the officials always had in mind the possible repercussions upon the rest of East Africa (and even Central Africa) of any proposals for political advance contemplated by the governor of Uganda.[52]

When the African membership of the Legislative Council was enlarged and the ministerial system introduced in 1955, the intention had been that there should be no major changes until 1961. But at the end of the negotiations which led to the signing of the new Buganda Agreement, the Buganda delegation extracted from the Secretary of State an undertaking subsequently incorporated in Article 7(4) of the Buganda Agreement of 1955, that the British government would, during 1957, arrange for a review by representatives of the

[52]. CO 822/935A See Office minute, Gorell Barnes to W.Mathieson, 19 September 1955.

Protectorate and Buganda governments of the system of
election of Baganda representative members to the Legislative
Council. This undertaking was in such terms as virtually to
commit the British to direct elections for the Buganda
members of the Legislative Council at the general election of
1957, provided that agreement could be reached on the
details.

The undertaking was also crucial in two other ways. It
had been a mistake to promise to introduce direct elections
for the Buganda members in isolation. The issue ought to have
been considered for the whole protectorate at one and the
same time. Secondly, it was likely that direct elections
would provoke demands for universal franchise once it came
down to details and procedure. The significance of the
undertaking is that at the time the Colonial Office was
anxious to avoid prejudicing developments in the rest of East
and Central Africa:

> I would regard it as most unfortunate if
> we had to concede universal suffrage for
> those Buganda members - most unfortunate
> not only for the rest of East and Central
> Africa but also for Uganda itself; for
> once it had been conceded in Buganda, it
> could not be withdrawn; and it would be
> impossible to refuse it to other areas of
> Uganda and increasingly difficult to
> refuse it in the rest of at any rate East
> Africa.[53]

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[53]. CO 822/935A See letter, Gorrell Barnes to Sir A.Cohen,
10 October 1955. Some of the Colonial Office officials were
aware that it was illusionary to suppose that over any
significant period of years it would be possible to treat
Tanganyika or even Kenya in a way radically different from

The primary reason for delaying the introduction of direct elections in Uganda was therefore the fear that it might involve acceptance of universal suffrage. Once introduced in Uganda, it would be impossible to deny it to the other territories in East and Central Africa. This would completely wreck the prospects of developing multi-racial societies which the British still hoped to develop there.[54] What perturbed the officials was Cohen's attitude:

> I myself believe that if we were to decide at a fairly early date that our objective was some other system, and were to use all possible methods of subtle (not blatant and open) propaganda for persuading public opinion here and sensible public opinion in Uganda both that our proposed system was a sensible one and that we had no intention of agreeing to universal suffrage, we should have every chance of getting away with it. But it would be necessary for everyone concerned really to have their heart in the operation; and it does not look as though Sir A.Cohen would.[55]

Indeed Cohen had already indicated his disagreement with the Colonial Office proposals for a qualitative franchise. He had made his views known to the Secretary of State. Cohen argued that a qualitative franchise would be difficult to introduce in Uganda where the equivalent of a universal suffrage, for men only, already existed for the indirect elections to the

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Uganda.

[54]. CO 822/935A See letter, Secretary of State to A.Cohen, 17 November 1955.

[55]. CO 822/935A See Office minute, Gorrell Barnes to Sir T. Lloyd, 29 October 1955.

Legislative Council. He even went further to question the very basis of qualitative franchise:

> Finally I become more doubtful whether a qualitative franchise would in fact achieve the objects which you have in mind. One of the advantages of direct elections over indirect elections is, as you say, that on the whole electorates under a system of direct elections are probably more difficult to intimidate or to bribe, and I would add to cajole, than electoral colleges. Your argument is based on the assumption that qualitative electorates are likely to be able to withstand attempts on a basis of universal franchise. I am very doubtful whether this view is correct. I know it is the generally held view. But is it really the case that a larger body of people, including large numbers of peasants, is going to be easier to lead astray than a smaller number of propertied and educated people? I doubt it. I think that the propertied and educated people might well find themselves more vulnerable than the masses. If this were the case - .... - then of course the whole of the argument for a qualitative franchise falls to the ground. But, ..., my present belief is that whatever the merits it would be impossible to get away with a qualitative franchise in this country.[56]

The _raison d'etre_ of a qualitative franchise was actually to make it possible to introduce a common roll without swamping the non-Africans.[57] This was one of the British tactics for putting brakes on the nationalist element. Secondly, it was meant to prevent the masses from swamping the African middle class - "the chosen instrument for the transfer of power". But in Uganda, the limitation of the franchise was unlikely

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[56]. CO 822/9365A See letter, Sir A.Cohen to Gorell Barnes, 22 October 1955.

[57]. Co 822/935A See Office minute, "Safeguards for Minorities and Franchise" undated, probably November 1955.

to prevent African domination of the legislature, even with reserved seats, unless the idea of a common roll was abandoned. This was because of the very small number of non-Africans and the relatively high prosperity of the Africans. Nonetheless, great pressure was applied on the governor to persuade him from making a firm commitment on the introduction of either direct elections or universal suffrage in 1961.[58] On the 9 November 1955, the Colonial Policy Committee decided in favour of a qualitative franchise throughout East and Central Africa. This was communicated to the governor by the Secretary of state.[59] The Colonial Secretary's instructions to the governor were very precise:

> I am afraid, therefore, that my present conclusion is that universal adult suffrage should not be introduced in Uganda for many years to come, and consequently that when direct elections are introduced for the whole or any part of Uganda they should be on a qualitative basis. ... In the meantime I must ask you to do nothing which would be likely to make the task of resisting demands for universal adult suffrage in the foreseeable future more difficult than it will in any case be. Indeed, should any opportunity occur at any time to take action which might make that task easier, I hope that you would feel able to take it.[60]

[58]. CO 822/935A See letter, Secretary of State to Sir Andrew Cohen, 17 November 1955.

[59] CO 822/935A See minute by Gorrell Barnes, 10 November 1955.

[60]. CO 822/935A See letter, Secretary of State to Sir A. Cohen, 17 November 1955.

Cohen's term of office was set to end on 16 January 1957. By making a policy statement in April 1956 which laid down the main thrust of constitutional development up to and including the reconstitution of the Legislative Council in 1962, his successor would find the stage already set and would have little flexibility.

Early in 1956, on the representations of the governor, who wanted to keep the initiative from the Lukiiko, the Colonial Office agreed to the early institution of the joint review with the Buganda government of the electoral arrangements, which the Buganda Agreement had stated should take place in 1957. Meanwhile the Uganda National Congress had been agitating for direct elections throughout the protectorate. Once again, Cohen wrote to the Colonial Office asserting that in order to keep the initiative from the Uganda National Congress, it was necessary for him to announce "at a very early date" a positive plan and objective with regard to elections for the Legislative Council. The plan had to cover the whole protectorate. This had been made more urgent by the activities of the UNC in trying to stimulate a demand outside Buganda for direct elections in 1957 and by the plans which had been or were about to be announced for direct elections for Africans in Kenya and Tanganyika. This made it imperative that Uganda should come forward publicly with its

plan.[61] He argued that there was a distinction between those territories, for example Kenya, where the problem was to persuade local European opinion to accept Africans as partners on a common roll, and those territories, such as Uganda, where the problem was to convince Africans that the political rights of non-Africans should be protected.[62]

Officials in the Colonial Office questioned the wisdom of Cohen's intention to make an early statement of government policy about changes which were not to be implemented for another five years! There were misgivings that the statement would maintain the government initiative for a couple of years but would prove incapable of retaining it over the rest of the period. Another fear was that the statement would give away in advance most of what the colonial power was prepared to concede: "...and I cannot help wondering whether, with all our cards on the table for so long, we should be able to maintain the status quo in the Legislative Council in 1961".[63] Clearly, the fear was that the politicians would build on the government statement and demand even more.

Cohen was not won over to a qualitative franchise. He

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[61]. CO 822/935A See letter, Sir A.Cohen to Sir T.Lloyd, 22 February 1956. The Uganda National Congress was arguing that Kenya now had direct elections and therefore there was no reason why Uganda should not have them.

[62]. Ibid..

[63]. CO 822/935A See office minute, J.E.Rednall to W.Mathieson, 7 March 1956.

still favoured adult suffrage based on the poll tax register,
that was, virtually the adult male population. But under
pressure from the Secretary of State, the governor reluctantly
agreed to work for a slightly qualitative system.[64] As a
result, the Secretary of State laid the proposals to introduce
a common roll in Uganda in 1961 before the cabinet.[65]

In the statement made to the Legislative Council in April
1956, Cohen announced that the aim was to introduce direct
elections on a common roll for all districts which desired it
in 1961, but that in 1957, for all provinces outside Buganda,
there would be no change.[66] Although not definite on the point,
the governor at the time was of the opinion that there was no
general desire for direct elections outside Buganda and no
serious complications would arise from a desire by the other
districts to emulate Buganda. This was an error of judgement
on the part of the governor.

The forecast proved incorrect. The Uganda National
Congress seized on the discrepancy between the treatment of
Buganda and the other provinces to demand direct elections
throughout Uganda in 1957. The Congress had been handed a
campaign issue. It set out to create the desire for direct

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[64]. CO 822/935A See letter, Sir A.Cohen to Sir T. Lloyd,
22 February 1956.

[65]. CO 822/935A See telegram, Sir Thomas Lloyd to A.Cohen,
4 April 1956.

[66]. CO 822/935A See Governor's Statement on Elections
in a speech to Legislative Council, 24 April 1956.

elections which had hitherto been generally lacking.[67]

The governor then entered into informal discussions of the proposals with the representative members. In these discussions, contrary to his original expectations, the African members from outside Buganda, supported by some of the non-African representative members, pressed strongly that if there were to be direct elections for the Buganda members in 1957, then there should also be direct elections for the members from the other provinces at the same time. Attempts to persuade them otherwise proved fruitless.[68] Cohen then proposed that before detailed proposals for legislation covering the election of African members to be held in all provinces at the end of 1957 were put by government before Legislative Council, the substance of the legislation should be discussed by government with a committee consisting of government, representative and back-bench members.[69] This was rather curious since Cohen already knew their views on the matter.

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[67]. CO 822/935B See letter, Sir A.Cohen to W.A.C.Mathieson, 31 July 1956

[68]. CO 822/935B See letter, A.Cohen to W.A.C.Mathieson, 31 July 1956.

[69]. Cohen argued that the Government proposals were more likely to be accepted by Legislative Council if a representative committee had first been conditioned to accept them than if they were put directly to a full meeting of the Council.

The setting up of the committee carried certain risks. The committee was unlikely to recommend what the Colonial Office wanted to hear, on the contrary, it was quite likely to come out in favour of direct elections and universal suffrage. The governor surely knew this. The representative members had already expressed their views to him. Yet he proposed to form those same members into a committee to propose changes which would be contrary to London's imposed restrictions. It is then very clear that the governor was trying to use the Uganda "representative" members to create a _fait accompli_ which would override a decision made at the highest level in London – by the cabinet! The Colonial Office had recognised the danger that it might be compelled to accept the committee's findings. If these included universal suffrage, they were bound to have profound effects on the other East African territories. The Colonial Office was obviously concerned that it was being dragooned by the governor into positions beyond those thought to be established by his agreed statement in April 1956. One senior official lamented: "At every stage of the history of this subject one has the impression that one is, so to speak, trying to walk sideways on a slippery slope".[70] How was it possible for Cohen to pursue policies which were contrary to the Colonial Office's liking? The answer was expressed in an apt remark by

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[70]. CO 822/935B See Office minute, Gorell Barnes to Sir H. Poynton and Sir T.Lloyd, 11 August 1956.

an official in the Colonial Office:

> I am afraid that in practically every Colonial Office problem today there is no good choice either way. On the whole I think you will have to let Cohen have his way, although I think it is a very great pity.[71]

In otherwords, the officials were beginning to realise that this was a trend they could not stop. The Colonial Office was losing the initiative.

Ministers (Colonial Policy Committee) felt uneasy about these proposals because they appeared in most respects to amount to advancing to 1956/57 the review of electoral procedure which under the arrangements in the April statement by the governor were to be held in 1958/59. They also feared that it would enable the representative members to manoeuvre the British government into a position where it would be difficult to resist pressure for direct elections in 1957 and for adult male suffrage, whereas it had been agreed with the governor, following a cabinet decision, to work for a qualitative franchise for Uganda in 1961. Qualitative franchise was crucial. In a stiff telegram, the Secretary of State made it absolutely clear that qualitative franchise was "a cardinal point of policy" on which the Colonial Office was unwilling to compromise.[72] As a result of

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[71]. CO 822/935B Office minute, Sir H.Poynton to Secretary of State, 13 August 1956.

[72]. CO 822/935B See telegram, Secretary of State to Sir A.Cohen, 16 August 1956.

the exchange of telegrams which followed, the governor
reaffirmed his complete adherence to the agreed policy and
in particular that the government was not prepared to agree
to direct elections for Africans in 1957 except in Buganda.
He also made it clear that the only variations of the
existing system to be discussed in the districts and
considered by the proposed committee were to be based on the
existing institutions and would not raise the question of
franchise. Wishing to avoid a premature debate on the
election issue in the Legislative Council, the Colonial
Office approved the committee device. The committee
commenced discussions on the 19 November 1956.[73] For a while,
it seemed as if Cohen had accepted London's control.

However, during the committee discussions, the
representative members came out strongly in favour of direct
elections in 1957 in Buganda and during 1958 in the rest of
the country.[74] On 2 December 1956, Cohen telegraphed the
Secretary of State with the "bad news". The representative
members had rejected indirect elections outside Buganda in
1957, and he was therefore recommending that the British
government concede direct elections in the other provinces
in the event of the Lukiiko accepting direct elections for
Buganda in 1957. The members had insisted that as a

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[73]. CO 822/935B See letter, Cohen to Mathieson, 22
November 1956.

[74]. Ibid..

principle there must be uniformity in the protectorate. Cohen argued that it would be unwise to ignore the strong feelings which had developed against differentiation between Buganda and the rest of the country.[73] Cohen was apparently once again trying to go round the cabinet decision.

Subsequently, the problem resolved itself when on 7 December 1956 the Lukiiko rejected the agreed proposals of the joint review on the basis of qualitative franchise. The Lukiiko considered a qualitative franchise a device for limiting the Africans' voting power _vis-a-vis_ the other races. This of course had been the British objective.Cohen was disappointed, judging from his farewell speech to the Lukiiko, but was afforded a graceful exit out of a very difficult situation. In the Colonial Office, the news was received with a sigh of relief. It was God sent. From these events, it is abundantly clear that Cohen's views on the techniques of government which were most likely to ensure gradual transfer of power were completely different from those of the Colonial Office.

## Conclusion

Cohen wished to introduce political reforms which would enable the central administration to have greater control over the political development of the country. By

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[73]. CO 822/935B See telegram, Cohen to Secretary of State, 2 December 1956.

democratizing the local governments, the colonial state sought to widen alliances to include the new elite (the modern politicians). By directing the energies of the African elite into local government, the colonial state hoped to delay the politicians' entry into central institutions. The constitutional reforms would give them a sense of power. They were also told that they were being given a chance of exercising responsibility and learning the process of "democratic" institutions. By using the local governments to select people to the central institutions, the British hoped that only those with proven loyalty ("moderates") and administrative experience would be able to come to the centre. The "extremists and agitators" would lose their appeal to the general public. Through indirect elections, these Africans could claim legitimacy and support of the African masses and therefore their views could be regarded as expressions of popular opinion. The colonial state would thus achieve two goals: competent administrators who were needed to implement development programs and loyal lieutenants who could claim legitimacy to speak for the Africans. By insisting on indirect elections, the British indicated the type of "democracy" they were willing to grant. It was certainly not mass democracy. It was qualitative democracy. It was middle class democracy. A qualitative franchise based on property and education would ensure that "the chosen instrument" of decolonization was

not overwhelmed by the masses. Not everyone would be allowed
to enter the central institutions. It might be argued that
by working for a limited democracy, the British were setting
a precedent for the African leaders to deny democratic
government to the masses.

The question of a unitary versus a federal state was
very intriguing. This was not merely a constitutional issue.
It was intimately related to the whole question of "forcing
the pace" and also to the relationship of nationalism and
imperial policy. Why were Cohen and the Colonial Office so
insistent about unification? Clearly the British attitude
was that a federation in Uganda, because of the strength of
primary nationalism based on language and culture,
threatened the very essence and purpose of the original
imperial acquisition and policy, that is, the creation of a
single unified market and state structure overriding smaller
precolonial nations. After decades of fostering separatism
in Uganda, the British were now anxious to destroy local
loyalty and strengthen central control. The absence of
strong Uganda-wide nationalism meant that it was up to the
imperial power to force the pace of integration hence
Cohen's insistence on a unified state. It might be argued
that Cohen underestimated the effort and time required to
establish a unified state overcoming the long history of
separateness and rivalry among the Ugandan communities.
Earlier efforts at integration were needed, much earlier

than Cohen's, and much longer than the few years which were left before independence.

Unfortunately, Cohen's program ran into trouble even before it was inaugurated when he collided head-on with the Kabaka. Henceforth the reforms at the centre were negotiated partly to placate Buganda nationalism which had been inflamed by the deportation of Mutesa II and partly to anticipate nationalist demands. Throughout the colonial period, the British had used Buganda as the testing ground for their ideas in Uganda. This had resulted in Buganda setting the pace for the protectorate. Now the success of Cohen's political program depended on his relationship with a hostile and suspicious Buganda. Uganda nationalism was impossible without Buganda, the protectorate's heartland. His task was made even more difficult by the reluctance of the Colonial Office to accept the pace of his reforms. In the circumstances, Andrew Cohen went to the very limit to appease the Baganda. In turn, Cohen propelled the Colonial Office along with him in such a way that by 1956 no further concessions could be given without endangering British control over the protectorate.

Lastly, in trying to anticipate the demands of the nationalists ("keeping the initiative" as it was known in the official circles) Cohen inevitably exposed the positions of the Colonial Office. By repeatedly stating that the aim of the colonial administration in Uganda was the creation of

a primarily African self-governing state, Cohen motivated the nationalists to achieve it as fast as they could. Consequently, what was required of the politicians was to organize themselves into political parties which could mobilize the people for elections. The mushrooming of political parties during Cohen's governorship was evidence of the results of what has been termed "constitution - mongering". While the other factors cannot be ignored, there can be little doubt that Sir Andrew Cohen contributed substantially to hastening the transfer of power in Uganda. Although he had managed to preserve Uganda as a single state, he had failed in laying the foundation of a unitary system.

# CHAPTER FOUR

## THE COLONIAL OFFICE, POLITICAL INTEGRATION AND THE KABAKA CRISIS, 1953-1955.

The question of the political integration of Uganda has been a fundamental problem for both politicians and scholars alike since the establishment of British rule. The effects of lack of unity or a common sentiment among Ugandans have been more pronounced in the post-independence years, as evidenced by the political upheavals since 1966, but the problem was identified long before independence. Colonial governors and the Colonial Office discussed the issue and tried, though perhaps not early enough, to find a formula which could lead to a united Uganda. The early colonial administrators had paid little attention to the question of unity but from the late 1940s onwards the issue came to be addressed more seriously. The goal became a united Uganda, preferably a unitary Uganda with central institutions to which Africans could be attracted and later would take-over. It was in pursuance of this goal that Sir Andrew Cohen eventually clashed with the Kabaka of Buganda in what came to be known as the Kabaka crisis of 1953 – 1955. Foremost, this chapter seeks to demonstrate the importance the Colonial Office attached to the creation of a united Uganda after the Second World War, for whatever motives, and the failure to create this unity before granting

self-government. Secondly, it is suggested that the Kabaka crisis was the direct result of the envisaged shift of the focus of power away from the precolonial states and the traditional rulers to the colonial state institutions and the new elite; and that the governor's efforts to induce Uganda nationalism, based on the colonial unit, only succeeded in intensifying Buganda nationalism making it harder to achieve his goal. Last but not least, the Kabaka crisis could be seen as the turning point in the history of British rule in Uganda.

## Background to the Crisis

When Sir Andrew Cohen arrived in Uganda in 1952, the protectorate presented a picture of steady and stable progress.[1] The economic development program initiated by Sir John Hall was beginning to show results. Following the 1945 and 1949 disturbances, administrative and organisational reforms had been undertaken to cater for the growing African political awareness.[2] Despite all the reforms of the late 1940s and early 1950s, Uganda was still politically less advanced than the West African British territories. The country was still governed by an almost entirely bureaucratic form of administration. Africans had a very subordinate

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[1] See HCD, vol. 521, cols. 780 - 788, 30 November, 1953.

[2]. See preceding chapter.

position in the central government and very little say in the formation or discussion of policy. On the other hand, African politics took place at the local level in Buganda, and in district councils of eastern, western and northern provinces. Precolonial state nationalism was strong and there was little sense of a united Uganda. The Africans looked at their local authorities as their governments; the central government was regarded as an outside "protecting" body. While it was clear that the policy of social and economic development which the British emphasized could not be implemented by a collection of small states without a strong central government, the colonial state had made little effort to undermine ethnic-based nationalism. The "Native Governments" and African local authorities were strengthened and developed to assume responsibilities for local services in their areas, and at the same time they were made more representative of the people in each area. A policy of neglecting these authorities and starving them of finance might in theory have made it easier to build up the central institutions, but the British tried to duplicate the local government system at home. Furthermore, the disparity in size and importance between Buganda and the other districts of the protectorate was always a complicating factor. Under the 1900 Agreement Buganda had become a province, subject to the protectorate's laws and merged with the protectorate financially; but most of the Baganda had never recognised this position emotionally. Among other

reasons, the direct bilateral relationship enshrined in that document affected both the development of Uganda and its relationship with the rest of East Africa. Thus Buganda not only dominated the political scene of Uganda, but actually dictated the pace of political development of the protectorate until independence.

The process of political awakening had began and, particularly in Buganda, there was considerable dissatisfaction among the people with the system of government. Despite the fact that no nationalist political party was formed in Uganda until 1952, there was evidence that political developments throughout Africa and parts of Asia were being closely monitored by Uganda's growing elite and were affecting the way they thought and reacted to events within Uganda. By 1950, colonial policy on the administration of Uganda was clear. The ultimate goal was an efficient system of local governments and a strong central government. These were viewed as necessary to co-ordinate social and economic developments.

One of Cohen's professed objectives was to build a united Uganda.[3] He came out to make Uganda a model of peaceful

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[3]. Sir Andrew Cohen, formerly head of the African department in the Colonial Office, has been credited with drafting the liberal Constitution of the Gold Coast in 1951 and with being the architect of the Labour Party's colonial policy in the post war years. Alport outlined Cohen's mission in Uganda in a speech on 4 June 1954. See HCD, vol.528, col.1688.

decolonization and African democracy. Possibly Uganda would be a showpiece of British paternalism, a state that would be economically viable. The major difference between Cohen and his predecessors was that he realised the need to move faster. The former governors had believed that they had plenty of time and therefore lacked a sense of urgency. Cohen realised that self-government might have to be granted sooner than expected, premature though this might be.[4] It was with this belief that he set out to work.

Sir Andrew Cohen believed in strengthening and expanding the central institutions by increasing African participation. But his scheme did not indicate the role which the traditional rulers were to play in a unitary Uganda. Although Kabaka Mutesa II supported the creation of a united Uganda, Buganda was not ready to surrender its quasi-autonomy and privileged position. Perhaps Cohen's greatest misfortune lay in underestimating Buganda's resilient nationalism. As far as the Baganda were concerned, "they were a distinct, superior nation, tied to the rest of the protectorate only by British overrule".[5] A federal structure might be acceptable, but a unitary state with a supreme parliament, an African head of state other than the Kabaka, and one who might not even be a

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[4]. Low & Pratt, _Buganda and British Overrule, 1900 - 1955_, Oxford University Press, 1960, p.318

[5]. See Grace Ibingira, _The Forging of an African Nation_, New York, 1971, p.119

Muganda, was frightening to the Baganda.

Governor John Hall had argued that integration would be easy given that Buganda, the Eastern and Western provinces were already represented on the Legislative Council.[6] Next would be the Northern province and that would complete the process. What Hall did not realise was that simple representation on the Legislative Council, whether by nomination or popular election, was not enough to create a common sentiment. Ancient cultures and entrenched loyalties, ignorance of other peoples' cultures, different stages of social and economic development aggravated throughout the colonial period, all combined to sustain rivalry, suspicions and fears which made the task of political integration not only more complex, but in the long run very costly.

The Kabaka crisis which broke out in 1953 was the first major crisis in post-war Uganda to test the will of the colonial power to control political evolution. The crisis was clearly the result of the Africans' uncertainty about their future. It also reflected their growing distrust of the British. As an aspect of the problem of political integration, it revealed how insurmountable the task of achieving a united and unitary Uganda could be.

## Beginning of the crisis

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[6]. CO 1018/78  Sir John Hall to Lord Hailey, 1948.

Cohen's initial smooth sailing in Uganda, calm even with Buganda, suddenly came to an end. The crisis was sparked off by a remark in London by the Secretary of State for the colonies at the dinner of the East African Club on the 30 June 1953. In his speech, which was widely reported by the East African Standard of Nairobi, the minister referred to the possibility "as time goes on of still larger measures of unification and possibly still larger measures of federation of the whole East Africa territories."[7] The colonists' initiative towards the creation of an East African federation which dated back to 1922 had been a constant concern to Baganda leaders, who feared subjection to the settlers in Kenya. They believed there was and should continue to be a large difference between Kenya and Uganda. One of the basic differences was landownership. Uganda was unique in British East Africa in its near conformity with the West African model of landownership. Spokesmen for Buganda had led the opposition to East African federation. The Baganda feared that settler dominance of an East African federation would replace their own dominance of Uganda. Arguably both forms of dominance were unrealistic. It was the Baganda's assertion of their kingdom's separate political identity which brought them into conflict with Sir Andrew Cohen. It might therefore be surmised that the speech sparked off the crisis, but the causes were long-term

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[7]. See East African Standard, Nairobi, 2 July 1953.

and complex.[8] The confrontation between Buganda and the protectorate government would have occurred sooner or later. Andrew Cohen's earlier reforms had gone a long way to tackle the burning issues which had led to the 1949 riots. He had reorganised the cotton and coffee industries through the cooperative societies. He had embarked on the democratization of the great Lukiiko and given further reassurances against the fear of an East African federation which the creation of the East African High Commission had renewed. Andrew Cohen had also reformed the Legislative Council so as to make it much more African.[9] But some Baganda sensed a threat to Buganda's quasi-autonomy in some of these reforms and feared the submergence of their ancient kingdom in a larger Uganda. The Colonial Secretary's speech aroused this fear and the possibility of an even worse change.

Buganda's reaction was swift. On the 6 July 1953 the Buganda ministers wrote to the governor expressing concern over the East African Standard report. They remarked that the Colonial Secretary's statement could not be taken lightly and was bound not only "to shake the foundations of trust" among the people but also to damage the good relations which

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[8]. For the long term causes of the crisis,see Henry Hopkinson [Minister of State for Colonial Affairs] speech on the deportation of Mutesa II; HCD. vol.521 d.2 December 1953.

[9]. See preceding chapter.

hitherto obtained between Baganda and the British.[10] The governor replied that the Secretary of State's speech did not indicate any change of policy on the part of the British government; the future development of Uganda and other East African territories must be largely guided by local public opinion and the governor's assurances to the Lukiiko in April 1952 still held good.[11] The Kabaka was not satisfied with the governor's reply and reassurances. On the 6 August 1953, he wrote to the governor going beyond the earlier reasoned arguments to make certain claims. He pointed out that whereas all the past assurances left no doubt as to the intentions of Her Majesty's Government, those now given by the Governor did.[12] The Kabaka and most Baganda had always shuddered at any possibility of being integrated in a larger unit where Buganda might not only lose its identity but also its privileged position. The Baganda were not comforted by events taking place elsewhere in British Africa, particularly in Central Africa where the British were imposing a federation despite fierce opposition from the Africans there.[13] In his letter, the Kabaka expressed doubt about the governor's assurances that local public opinion would be consulted before any closer

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[10]. A.D.Low, The Mind of Buganda, London, 1971, Ministers of Buganda to Sir Andrew Cohen, p.161

[11] Ibid., p.162, Andrew Cohen to Mutesa II, 27 July 1953.

[12]. Ibid., p.164, Mutesa II to Andrew Cohen, 6 August 1953.

[13] Ibid..

union of East Africa went ahead citing the case of Nyasaland, which he compared to Buganda in its relationship with the British.[14] He then demanded that Buganda affairs be transferred back to the Foreign Office from the Colonial Office. He hoped the separation of Buganda from Uganda and its transfer to the Foreign Office would provide some security against "a political union with the adjoining colony and territory." He also demanded that Buganda should be set on the road to independence, in conformity with the policy of Her Majesty's Government to lead countries under its protection "to ultimate political independence within the Commonwealth" and that a timetable be put forth for that purpose: "... we ask Her Majesty Government to prepare and put into effect a plan designed to achieve our independence and if possible within a short stated space of time".[15] The idea to put Buganda under the Foreign Office was interesting in that it was both original and unique. It larked back to the 1884 - 1902 situation. It presupposed Buganda as a sovereign state. By asking for decolonization to the precolonial state, the Kabaka was challenging the very basic concept of imperialism which envisaged the creation of new states. Secondly, the idea of timetables for independence was anathema to the Colonial Office. It reminded them of the earlier American pressure. It

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[14]. Ibid., p. 165

[15]. Ibid., p. 166

was not surprising therefore that Cohen viewed the Kabaka's demands with suspicion.

Responding, the governor informed the Kabaka that the Secretary of State wished to allay Buganda suspicion and fears and that these fears were groundless. As far as the federation of East Africa was concerned, the Secretary of State pointed out that no statement in the past had been made "ruling out the possibility of federation for all time". However, Her Majesty's government had "no intentions whatsoever of raising the issue of East African federation" either then or while local public opinion remained opposed to it. As for the more distant future, Her Majesty's Government clearly could not state that the issue of the East African federation would never be raised, since public opinion in the protectorate, including that of the Baganda might change. The statement did not contradict the Secretary of State. The Colonial Office wanted to avoid a clear commitment to "no federation in East Africa" and left the door open to its future possibility.

The Secretary of State also rejected Buganda's request to be separated from the rest of Uganda and granted self-government. He pointed out that Uganda could only go forward as a single unit. Separation of Buganda was neither possible nor desirable. The governor wrote:

> The Secretary of State has instructed me strongly to advise your Highness that the proper course is not to suggest breaking up the protectorate into separate parts, but to strengthen its unity and to work for its future political, economic and social development. ... A strong and united protectorate

rather than weak separate units must therefore be the aim of all efforts in the interest of both present and future of the people of the Protectorate.[16]

The Kabaka accepted the reassurances about the federation but insisted on Buganda's separation from the rest of the Protectorate. He also stuck to the demand for a timetable leading to Buganda's independence. Thus whereas the fear of East African federation contributed to the onset of the conflict, it played a less significant role in the intense negotiations immediately preceding the deportation of
Mutesa II.

The Baganda's major concern had always been to preserve their autonomy and resist outside domination from whatever source. British overrule was tolerated because the Baganda considered the British "visitors", and "teachers" who were around to help Buganda to a higher level of modernization, civilization and greatness. The British had never been viewed as a serious threat to Buganda's autonomy or institutions. It was this threat which Buganda sensed, as Sir Andrew Cohen moved towards greater centralization in Uganda and the Colonial Office towards decolonization, which provoked Buganda's reaction. The separation of Buganda from the Protectorate, on which the Kabaka insisted, meant a defeat of the governor's efforts to build the central institutions

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[16] _Ibid._, p. 169

required for a united self-governing Uganda. It involved a retraction of the March 1953 statement signed by the governor and the Kabaka that Uganda would be developed as a unitary state.[17]

On the 27 October, the Lukiiko passed a resolution requesting the Kabaka not to nominate any Baganda to the Legislative Council.[18] This strengthened the Kabaka's position. He now argued that he was expressing his people's wishes and views which he was constitutionally obligated to do. Buganda's suspicion of the Legislative Council had been long standing. The Baganda did not see the value of joining a council dominated by foreigners and non-Africans and whose decisions they might not influence. The Legislative Council was also seen as a rival to the Great Lukiiko. Thus the Lukiiko's resolution was not radical but a reaffirmation of an established policy.

In a bid to outmanoeuvre the governor, the Kabaka secured the cooperation of the three kings of Ankole, Toro and Bunyoro in western Uganda in a joint request for "an entire and effective revision of the relationships" between the British

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[17]. See W.K.Hancock's Buganda Papers at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London for copies of the "Memorandum on Constitutional Development and Reform in Buganda" 7 March 1953 and the Governor's dispatch no.434 to Secretary of State dated 15 March 1953 on the composition of the Lukiiko.

[18]. Op. cit., p.120_

government and their respective states.[19] In other words, Mutesa was asking the governor to open discussion along lines which envisaged the future of Uganda as some kind of federation of precolonial states. Low and Pratt have correctly observed that the governor was promoting reforms aimed at a unitary Uganda ruled along parliamentary lines which, if they succeeded would undermine traditional power and authority and yet Andrew Cohen was asking traditional rulers to support them.[20] Cohen was faced with two choices: to take a firm stand in the hope that Mutesa would withdraw his demands or to embark on negotiations about Uganda's future with a group of traditional rulers. Low and Pratt were again right when they argued that such negotiations would have meant an end to Cohen's earlier reforms. They would also have enhanced the position of these rulers and have ended the efforts to build a unitary Uganda. In the absence of a strong nationalist movement to counter their weight, Cohen feared that the Kabaka, backed by the Lukiiko and joined by his fellow traditional rulers, would jeopardise the final objective of "a unitary Uganda ruled by an executive responsible to an elected legislature".[21] Mutesa later wrote:

> From now on I had many complicated meetings with the Governor. He would still have backed down, but at the

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[19]. The Kabaka of Buganda, Desecration of My Kingdom, London, 1967, p. 119

[20].Low and Pratt, Ibid., p.332

[21] Ibid., p. 328

cost of the unitary state of Uganda, the _idee fixe_ he
had brought from England and nursed still, though it had
found no support in the country.[22]

Indeed Buganda's demands threatened Uganda with
disintegration. Given the very nature and purpose of British
colonial rule which now saw decolonization as its culmination,
it is not surprising that Cohen chose to challenge the Kabaka
and reject his demands.

After numerous long discussions in which the governor
tried to win the Kabaka's cooperation, he finally attempted
to secure three undertakings from the Kabaka: that he would
accept the assurances of the Secretary of State; would submit
names of Baganda candidates to the Legislative Council; and
not publicly oppose the decisions of the Secretary of State
before the Lukiiko.[23] The governor was concerned that if the
Kabaka put himself at the head of Buganda "separatism" any
hope of a united Uganda would be destroyed. He was not going
to take any risks.

The situation was considered so serious that the governor
made a flying visit to London for consultation with the
Colonial Office. On the 19 November 1953, the issue was put
before the cabinet which subsequently authorised the Colonial
Secretary to proceed as per his recommendations. Cohen
returned to Uganda with three written undertakings to which

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[22] The Kabaka of Buganda, _op. cit._, p.120.

[23]. See Cmd. 9028, 1953. Also the Kabaka's own account in
his Autobiography, _Ibid._, chap.7

the Kabaka was required to agree and sign.[24] When the Kabaka refused to budge, the governor offered him a final compromise to remain silent when the issue came up before the Lukiiko. The Kabaka rejected this too, insisting that he could not agree to the undertakings without consulting the Lukiiko.[25] A deadlock was approaching.

On the 30th of November 1953, after a brief and tense meeting at Government House, Entebbe, the Governor withdrew British recognition from Mutesa II as the native ruler of Buganda and swiftly deported him to England.[26] A state of emergency was declared. The news of Mutesa's deportation came as a great shock to the Baganda. Ugandans in general were stunned. The Baganda were enraged. They felt humiliated. Because the negotiations had been confidential between the governor and the Kabaka and their senior ministers, the Baganda had not been aware of any serious conflict between their Kabaka and the British. Even the Kabaka himself was shocked by the swiftness of Cohen's action. He had not anticipated that things could go that far. He later wrote:

> Alone, in the suit I was wearing, but without luggage, I climbed aboard an R.A.F. airplane which

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[24]. CO 822/768 See "Top Secret" minute d.29 Oct.1954. Minutes of the Cabinet meeting which authorised the deportation are still closed.

[25]. HCD, vol.521, cols.780 - 788. See Lyttelton's speech on 30 November& 2 December 1953 in which he outlined the events leading to the crisis.

[26]. The Kabaka of Buganda, The Desecration of My Kingdom, London, 1967. p.121

had been specially diverted the day before. Robert [Robert Ntambi was his Asst.A.D.C.] was fetched and allowed to come with me at my request. There were just the two of us and the two policemen as passengers, suspended over the world. Numb with shock, unable to feel, let alone think, I find it funny now to remember the policeman's reaction when I drew my pistol from under my arm by the barrel and handed it to him. He was very startled and asked,"what was this for?" I did not smile at the time. We did not talk much.[27]

Despite the swift and dramatic nature of the Kabaka's deportation, the British made no immediate moves to solve the crisis. The governor could deport but could not depose the Kabaka. Constitutionally, only the Lukiiko could do this therefore the Baganda still recognised Mutesa in London as their Kabaka and defiantly refused to elect a new one.

The British limited the pressure for the election of a new Kabaka for fear of appearing to be imposing one on Buganda. British public opinion was hostile to such a move. The opposition in Parliament had capitalised on the Kabaka's deportation and the declaration of a state of emergency in Uganda to whip the Government.[28] In the circumstances, Cohen opted for a 'wait and see' approach.

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[27]. ibid., pp.123 - 124

[28]. HCD, Vol.521, Cols.1229 to 1286 (Dec 2, 1953) Fenner Brockway [Lab.] led a scathing attack on the Secretary of State for mishandling the Kabaka crisis and repeated the opposition's call on him to resign. There was a certain irony in the Socialists defending a "feudal monarch" whom the Conservatives had deposed.

The governor defended his action by reference to Article 6 of the 1900 Uganda Agreement and the wish to maintain that legal basis. Forcing the Lukiiko to elect a new Kabaka would have required more powers than the Agreement provided and therefore would have meant abrogation of the Agreement under Article 20. Efforts to convince Mutesa II to renounce his rights to the Kabakaship in exchange for early retirement in Europe with generous financial rewards failed.[29] Many Baganda felt betrayed and insulted by the seemingly arbitrary and abrupt fashion in which Britain had dealt with Mutesa and refused to cooperate. Constructive relations between Buganda and Protectorate officers became almost impossible. The deportation was decried by most of the Ugandans. The kings of the treaty states in western Uganda were alarmed by the way their fellow ruler had been treated and feared for their own positions. When the newly elected Lukiiko met in an emergency session on 2 December 1953 the members agreed to a proposal to send a small delegation to London to appeal to the Colonial Secretary for the Kabaka's return. The cool manner in which the Baganda had so far handled the crisis had impressed the British public, informed opinion in particular. Thus on arrival, the Lukiiko delegation found considerable support in "Africanist circles". This was to be of great importance. Many of them had been shocked by Cohen's seemingly draconian

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[29]. HCD, vol. 521, cols. 780 - 8 See Lyttelton's speech on 30 Nov.1953

action, particularly since he had been highly regarded as one of the ablest and most liberal of Britain's colonial Governors.[30]

In mid-December the Lukiiko and Mutesa agreed that he would give the undertakings which he had previously refused if he were permitted to return to Buganda. The Secretary of State, wishing to end the crisis, was receptive to the idea, but Cohen refused. The governor argued that it would take only a short time for the Baganda to settle down. If only the Colonial Office reaffirmed the finality of the deposition, the Baganda would choose a new Kabaka. On 22 December, the Secretary of State gave his "final" decision. The Kabaka could not return. Most Baganda were unconvinced that this was the end of the matter.

The deportation, intended by the governor to remove an obstacle to the constitutional development of a unitary state in Uganda, threatened instead to render such a development impossible. Despite the repeated assurances that Mutesa II would never return, the Baganda were adamant and instead launched an intense campaign to have their Kabaka back. The Lukiiko appointed and sent a delegation to London to plead with the Colonial Office and the British government and to drum up public opinion for their cause. They lobbied members of parliament, the churches, the missionary societies, the

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[30]. See HCD, vol.521, cols. 1229 – 1286, 2 December 1953.

Fabian Society, addressed press conferences and registered a favourable impression on the British public generally. They were successful in drawing sympathy for Buganda.[31] Meanwhile in Buganda, the anger and frustration was turning into anti-British, anti-European and anti-Christian hostility.[32]

Cohen was quick to acknowledge that the crisis was only a symptom of the deeper conflicts within Buganda and in the relationship between Buganda and Uganda. The root causes needed full examination. Realising that the Baganda were not likely to give way and wishing to direct these energies towards something more constructive, Andrew Cohen took the initiative. He flew to London and held talks with the Colonial office. He proposed that a constitutional expert be sent to Uganda to review the organization of the Buganda government and its relations with the Protectorate government.

Equally crucial was the issue of the future constitutional framework. Whereas Ugandan Africans were strongly opposed to an East African federation, they preferred a federal structure to a unitary form of government in Uganda. Cohen did not believe federalism was suitable for the country but wanted an independent and outside opinion on this too.[33]

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[31]. See Mergary Perham, The Times, London, 10 February 1954.

[32] See Andrew Cohen's Memorandum to the Colonial Office Sept. 29, 1954

[33]. CO 822/894 Andrew Cohen to Gorrell Barnes, letter dated 26 May 1954. Note also that in an article in The Times, London, 10 February 1954 Mergery Perham had suggested a small expert commission to visit Uganda. There is no evidence to

After a frantic search, the Colonial office and the governor agreed on Professor Keith Hancock, the leading commonwealth historian of the day and Director of the Institute of Commonwealth Studies of the University of London.[34] As editor of the British civil histories of the war, he was conversant with the operations of whitehall. Furthermore he was Australian - a fact that helped to underline his independence of the British government. Hancock was approached. He in turn consulted his friends and met Cohen in London and discussed the purpose of the possible mission to Buganda. In addition, he met the Lukiiko delegation in London to ascertain whether he would be acceptable to them. Finding general support, he accepted the appointment.

On 23rd February 1954, Oliver Lyttelton made a statement in the House of Commons publicly stating for the first time that there were no plans to make Uganda a multi-racial society on the pattern of Kenya. He mentioned self-government as a

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show that Cohen was prompted by Perham, but it is clear the two minds had been working in a similar direction.

[34]. The traditional course would have been to appoint a former colonial Governor, senior civil servant or perhaps a retired judge. Hancock, however, had a solid reputation among Africans and academics in Britain as a liberal reformer with deep historical understanding of African problems. One of his two major works had involved substantial studies of Africa. Through his teaching of colonial administrators who had come on "Devonshire" courses at the University of London, he had come into close contact with some of the young officials from the colonies. He already had a reputation as a seminar chairman. In addition, he was a good listener. He was undoubtedly the best choice.

goal for Uganda. When that time came, Uganda would be "primarily an African state" with proper safeguards for the minorities. More relevant to the resolution of the crisis, he announced that an independent expert would visit Uganda to consult with representatives of the Lukiiko about reorganization of the Buganda government and Buganda's position in Uganda.[35]

Meanwhile, in the continuing drama of the crisis, the Lukiiko, with the advice of a British barrister Kenneth Diplock Q.C., had devised an ingenious test case in the Uganda High Court. The case was to challenge the legality of the governor's actions in withdrawing recognition from the Kabaka. Ostensibly, it was not concerned with this but with the validity of the appointment of the three members (defendants) of the Lukiiko whose election was confirmed by the regents. The plaintiffs sought for three declarations:

(a) that the Kabaka was and had been at all material times been "Native Ruler" of the Buganda province,

(b) that the regents were not entitled to act as regents, and

(c) that the defendants were not members of the Lukiiko. Furthermore, they sought an injunction restraining the defendants from sitting or taking part in the proceedings of

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[35].HCD, vol.524, cols.212 - 3, 23 February 1954, Oliver Lyttelton' speech.

the Lukiiko.[36] This was a case of pure politics whose sole purpose was for the plaintiffs to air their political grievances. The proceedings were merely a device to enable the main constitutional issue of the status of the Kabaka to be brought within the jurisdiction of the courts. Ultimately, the plaintiffs hoped to force the courts to determine whether or not the Kabaka was still the traditional ruler of Buganda. Both the plaintiffs and the defendants were members of the Buganda Lukiiko and no doubt the defendants wanted to lose the case.[37] The plaintiffs, three of the Kabaka's nominees, challenged four newly elected members' rights to sit in the Lukiiko without the Kabaka appointing them. The Attorney General of Uganda joined the case as a co-defendant to represent not only the Uganda government, but the British interests as well. From the very outset, the British acknowledged the fact that if the plaintiffs won, the British government did not have to take Mutesa back on legal grounds but there was bound to be strong political pressure to do so. Likewise, by allowing the court to become a political forum, it was possible to win the case legally and lose it politically. Thus the Colonial Office took a keen interest in

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[36].CO 822/764   See enclosure, Telegram No.67, Governor's Deputy to Secretary of State, 29 January 1954.

[37]. The plaintiffs were: Semu K. Mukwaba, Alafairi Kasule and Juma Tomusange. The Original defendants were Daudi M.Mukubira, Matiya K.Wamala, Andereya Nyanzi and Yeke Kyaze.

the case, whose outcome, they argued, would have implications not only in the whole of British Africa, but throughout the British Empire.[38] It is worth noting that at this time there was another complicated case, that of Seretse Khama, pending. Fearful of an adverse decision, the Attorney-General took the precautionary measure of pleading that the deposition of the Kabaka was an "act of state" over which the courts had no jurisdiction.[39]

## The Hancock Mission

Through prior negotiation with the Lukiiko delegation which had gone to London to plead for the Kabaka's return, the Colonial Office was able to persuade the Lukiiko to appoint a committee to meet with Professor Hancock. When the Lukiiko finally chose its delegates to the Buganda Constitutional Committee, they were the "intellectual cream" of Buganda.[40] Clearly, the Lukiiko selected men whom they

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[38]. CO 822/768 See minute by Sir T.Lloyd to Secretary of State, 29 October 1954.

[39]. CO 822/751 See Secretary of State's letter to Henry Hopkinson, M.P.

[40]. It was notable that although the governor had asked the Lukiiko to select a committee of chiefs and unofficials, originally no chief was elected. The final line up was: Kalibala, a Muganda Ph.d who had been living in the U.S. for many years and was working in the U.N. Secretariat; Father Masagazi, a catholic priest who had just returned from four years' training in Rome and was editing the Luganda newspaper Munno; Monsignor Kasule, another leading Catholic priest; Sengendo Zake, the headmaster of Aggrey Memorial college, the

thought would be able to conceptualize the issues under discussion at the same time defend Buganda's interests. Most of the members were not from the Lukiiko, a conservative body, but respected members of society - mostly "moderates". The committee under the chairmanship of Hancock became the "Hancock Committee" and began meeting in late June 1954 at Namirembe. It conducted most of its work in confidence. Professor Hancock's assignment was to achieve "an agreed memorandum between the Uganda Government and the representatives of the Baganda" which he would submit to the Secretary of State. He in turn would lay it before parliament.[41] Hancock was further authorised to attempt, together with the Baganda representatives, a thorough review of the constitutional system of Buganda, in respect of its internal structure and distribution of power as well as its position as a constituent part of the protectorate.[42] Hancock

largest private school in the country; Y.K. Lule, a lecturer in education at Makerere; Bishop Kiwanuka of Masaka, Mugwanya, the Omulamuzi; E.M.K.Mulira, a schoolmaster turned publisher; A.K.Kironde, a lawyer and advocate in the Uganda High Court; Alafairi Kasule, one of the Kabaka's nominees on the Lukiiko and Musoke, a ssaza chief.

[41] CO 822/894 See W.K.Hancock to Sir Andrew Cohen, letter, 28 April 1954.

[42]. Hancock's role as an intermediary was an unusual one and very different from the normal status of a commission of inquiry. The Government(s) concerned in the later case retain their freedom of action and might or might not accept the recommendations. Hancock by contrast was to try to produce proposals agreed between the protectorate Government and the Baganda for submission to the British Government. Although this in theory left the British Government free to accept,

was aware and made it clear from the very start that his three
- month mission could not by itself realise the long-term
objectives which had been outlined by the Secretary of State.[43]
He nonetheless felt that the mission would not make sense
unless it did "something immediate and practical to open up
the road towards their realisation, and to strengthen
confidence" among the Africans that they would in fact be
progressively realised. Although outside his terms of
reference, he claimed the right to tender confidential advice
on the urgent political issues of the Kabaka's deportation and
its aftermath.[44]

Before flying out to Uganda, Hancock prepared himself
through a series of seminars which he conducted at the
Institute of Commonwealth Studies in London. Academics and
experts from the Colonial Office submitted papers, which among
other things brought out the crucial significance of Uganda
on the map of Africa and of Buganda's within the protectorate

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reject or propose modifications, in practice it would have
been extremely difficult for the British Government to reject
proposal agreed by the Protectorate Government. This made it
essential that the Colonial Office was kept in the closest
touch throughout the negotiations.

[43]. Secretary of State, speech to House of Commons, HCD,
vol.524, cols.212 -3, 23 February 1954.

[44]. CO 822/894 See letter, W.K.Hancock to Sir Andrew
Cohen, 28 April 1954.

of Uganda.[45] From these presentations, Hancock gained the impression that the governor had missed his chance, if it had ever existed, of persuading the Lukiiko to chose a successor to Mutesa II. Unless and until Mutesa returned from London the new Agreement, if it were achieved, would "amount to nothing more than a scrap of paper".[46]          On the 25 June 1954, Hancock's party arrived in Uganda. He had chosen to stay at Namirembe, the Anglican headquarters which signified to the Baganda not only his religious upbringing but also his independence from government. This pleased the Baganda. The following day he addressed the Lukiiko, where amid applause he once again proclaimed his independence:

> I have been called an independent expert. I do not like the word "expert". It implies that I know all the answers. But I do very much like the word "independent", for it means that I am not in anybody's pocket. I have come here by my own choice as a free man to do certain work which I myself have defined. If the government should attempt to take away my freedom I would not permit it. If the Lukiiko should attempt to take away my freedom I would not permit it.[47]

This declaration of independence won him confidence among the Baganda generally and registered a favourable impression on the Lukiiko. This was important; for his mission to succeed

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[45]. See W.K.Hancock's <u>Buganda Papers</u>, Institute of Commonwealth Studies, London.

[46]. W.K. Hancock, <u>Professing History</u>, (unpublished version), p. 101

[47]. <u>The Times</u>, London, 24 June 1954.

he needed the trust of the Baganda.

The meetings of the Buganda Constitutional Committee began at Namirembe on 27 June 1954 and Hancock was elected chairman. He was accompanied by Stanley de Smith from the London School of Economics. Hancock had wanted an assistant whose skills would complement his own. De Smith was already one of the most knowledgeable men on the law and constitutions of the British colonial territories. He was elected secretary to the committee.[48] In the four weeks which followed, the committee got down to work. There was hard bargaining. On a few occasions, Hancock lectured the Baganda members on the hard choices that confronted their country. Although there were a few issues, such as federalism in Uganda, on which agreement was not possible, the committee made quick progress. Eventually when it had formulated some concrete proposals, it was joined by the governor and two of his senior advisors and became the "Namirembe conference".

The Namirembe Conference opened on 30 July 1954. Hancock appointed himself the chairman amid protests from J.P.Birch, the resident of Buganda.[49] Nothing like that had ever happened before in any British territory - a reigning governor sitting down with a locally elected committee under the chairmanship of an independent expert to discuss constitutional reforms in

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[48]. See W.K.Hancock's "Buganda Papers", op. cit..

[49]. Ibid., p.104

his territory. But Cohen did not feel scandalised, further testimony to his liberalism. Throughout the negotiations, the governor was in consultation with the Colonial Office so that whatever was agreed by the Namirembe Conference was acceptable to the Colonial Office. By accepting to join the Hancock Committee, Cohen gave the Baganda the opportunity which the Kabaka had earlier demanded to discuss the future of Uganda. But Cohen's flexibility was vital if reconciliation was to be achieved and a greater challenge to the colonial power avoided. After nearly two weeks of tough bargaining, a number of the most contentious issues remained unresolved.[50] Cohen therefore decided to go to London for further consultation. It was at this juncture that Hancock chose to exercise his right of tendering confidential advice on the urgent political question of the Kabaka in exile. He told Cohen that he was hopeful that an agreement would be signed, but felt certain it would be endangered unless it were accompanied, or at least closely followed by, an announcement that the Kabaka would be restored to his throne.[51] Cohen was not shocked because he was already inclined to the same view but still doubted the wisdom of such a move. He did not however, reveal this to Hancock. Thus by August, the governor was reassessing his earlier stand that Mutesa would never return as Kabaka.

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[50]. W.K.Hancock, Professing History, (unpublished version), p.105.

[51]. Ibid..

In a secret memorandum to the Secretary of State, Cohen gave the first indication that he would ask the Colonial Office to do the same. He noted that the objections to contemplating Mutesa's return were very great indeed, but that in his opinion to close his mind and "refuse to analyze the risks would be foolish".[32] As far as public opinion could be assessed, the larger majority of the Baganda were pro-Mutesa, and because of the "very considerable sympathy" from the British public generally and some influential support, they were not likely to give way. Waiting for the Baganda to calm down had its own risks. He was also aware of the missionary circles in England, who because of their strong historical attachment to Uganda were "very gravely concerned" about the situation. There were other groups in Britain to worry about. The views of the Labour party were yet unclear. Oliver Woods of The Times had informed him that the British might have Mutesa back under certain circumstances with "clipped wings". Professor Hancock had tentatively formed an opinion in favour of allowing Mutesa back and Hancock's attitude after he returned to London was bound to carry "considerable weight with an influential section of the public opinion". By Cohen's assessment, there were even greater risks involved in standing firm. There was the possibility of trouble and disturbances in Buganda during a "long interregnum". This might take the

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[32]. CO 822/751 Andrew Cohen's letter to Secretary of State, 8 August 1954.

form of further boycotts, strikes, pressure on farmers not to plant cotton or actual disturbances or it could merely take the form of ill-feeling and bad relations.[53]

It was a hallowed tradition in the Colonial Office, and one shared by all colonial secretaries, that questions or debate on colonial situations in the Houses of Parliament were occasions to be avoided. Uganda was already attracting too much attention. The governor worried about the risk of permanently damaging the relations between the Baganda and the British if the stand-off continued for long. Last, but not least, Cohen feared that a long interregnum would result in British public opinion coming out so strongly in favour of Mutesa's return as to force the Colonial Office to give way. If that was to be the case, he wrote: ".... much less harm would be done by going forward on our own initiative at the psychological moment rather than being forced to give way at some later stage".[54] Thus Cohen indicated he was willing to be flexible or even to eat his words. He sought to keep the initiative for a peaceful end to the crisis. He admitted that there would be damage to the British and Protectorate governments' prestige not only in Buganda, but throughout the

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[53]. CO 822/751 Andrew Cohen to Secretary of State, 8 August 1954. There had been a fierce debate in the House of Commons on 4 June 1954 regarding the re-imposition of a state of emergency in Buganda.

[54]. Ibid..

Protectorate and perhaps beyond it. However, that damage could be minimised, and no opportunity should be lost to persuade Buganda fully to join the protectorate institutions:

> .... If there is a deadlock with the Lukiiko over the return of Mutesa when the proposals arising out of Hancock's mission are submitted to them, we shall lose an opportunity of persuading the Baganda to come fully into protectorate institutions, which is of course what the whole crisis had been concerned with.[55]

Cohen saw Mutesa's return as essential to the reconciliation process. He had no doubts that the promise of the Kabaka's return would greatly aid the negotiations with the Lukiiko. But the Colonial Office had not been prepared and was not ready for what it termed "a major change of policy" which would have ramifications throughout the empire. Officials argued that letting the Baganda "get away with it" would encourage other "agitators and extremists" who would receive the impression that the British government would repeal unpopular policies if pressed hard.[56] It would mean betraying those in Uganda who had supported the Protectorate government when the going was tough. It would undermine the morale of the colonial officers in Uganda. There were as many arguments for concession as there were against it.[57]

On the 16 of August 1954 Cohen arrived in London and in

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[55]. Ibid..

[56]. CO 822/751 Secretary of State to Henry Hopkinson.

[57]. Ibid..

a series of discussions chaired by the Secretary of State struggled, but with little success, to convince the Colonial Office that the agreement, if and when signed, would create "a new situation" which would not only justify but make urgent the return of the Kabaka. Cohen was taken to task for his proposed change of policy. He was alone in his view that Mutesa's return was vital for the reconciliation with the Baganda. No immediate decision was reached, but the ministers indicated that they were favourable if an opportunity arose where the government could be seen to act from a point of strength. Cohen's arguments were based on the conviction that the government must "retain the initiative". In fact this had become a sort of Colonial Office traditional response to nationalist pressures after the experience in India. In a lengthy memorandum before he flew back to Uganda, Cohen tried to impress upon the Colonial Office the importance and urgency of his proposals:

> It was an essential part of the recommendation I made to the Secretary of State that action should be taken ... to ensure that we have the initiative. I would do my best to prevent our losing the initiative, but this was not something we could necessarily control. If we lost the initiative my advice in October might be      different...[58]

Although officials and ministers at the Colonial Office appreciated Cohen's fears and his desire to end the crisis,

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[58]. CO 822/751 Andrew Cohen's letter to Colonial Office 20 August 1954.

they did not feel as passionately as he did about retaining the initiative. One top official cautioned the Secretary of State that a decision to allow Mutesa back would greatly harm British interests. He blamed Sir Andrew Cohen for going out of his way during his first year "to show himself friendly to all Africans including the extreme nationalists", and by so doing had encouraged Mutesa "to feel that he had better climb on the bandwagon of the nationalists". He regretted that the governor had not been overruled when he had resisted Lyttleton's suggestion that the Kabaka be sent back at the time of his recantation in December 1953.[58]

On the 15 September 1954, The Agreed Recommendations of the Namirembe Conference together with an appendix establishing a council of elders, and a Statement by the Governor were signed. The main document consisted of forty - nine articles but a few deserve special emphasis. Article one reaffirmed that Buganda should continue to be an integral part of the Uganda protectorate. Articles four and five were designed to preserve the dignity of the Kabaka while article eight established a constitutional monarchy stating that "the conduct of the affairs of the Kabaka's government shall be the responsibility of the ministers". Thus all formal communications with the Protectorate government were to be transmitted to and by the Buganda ministers. Should a deadlock

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[58]     Gorrell Barnes to Secretary of State, Minute on CO822/751

occur, article sixteen empowered the governor-in-council to tender formal advice to or to dismiss if necessary, the Buganda ministry. Consequently, while placing the Kabaka "above politics" to avoid a repetition of the events of November 1953, the agreement secured British control over Buganda. Articles thirty-two, thirty-three, thirty-seven and thirty-eight outlined the mechanism for dispute resolution between the Buganda and Uganda governments.[60] Through consultative committees of minister and permanent officials of the two governments, the Buganda government would be able to express its views on protectorate policy. Besides article one, Cohen's major success was article forty-three which recommended that the Lukiiko should accept elected Baganda participation in the Uganda Legislative Council.[61] This was a step which, fearful of being overshadowed, the Lukiiko had hitherto consistently shunned.

Historically significant too were the changes contained in the attached Statement by the Governor. First, it revealed that half of the total membership of the Uganda Legislative Council was to be African. Secondly, there was to be a ministerial system at the centre which would include "seven members of the public, of whom five would be Africans". Undeniably, these two constituted the most dramatic and

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[60]. Cmd. 9320, 1954 See UGANDA; Buganda :" The Agreed Recommendations of the Namirembe Conference", p.24.

[61]. Ibid., p.15

significant changes in the entire settlement. The old, balancing act between races was discarded. In addition, it fulfilled Hancock's early hope that "something immediate and practical" should be done to meet Baganda anxieties about the shape of their political future.

Nevertheless anticlimax followed. The recommendations could not be published immediately for they had to be translated into Luganda. This also meant that the details could not be made public until after the ruling in the Kabaka case in the Uganda High Court. Worse still, in the Colonial Office and in Whitehall, the bureaucrats and politicians wasted twelve precious months dithering and dally-dallying. As Hancock observed, if the Colonial Office had heeded the advice he and Cohen gave and allowed the Kabaka to return to Uganda in October 1954, Mutesa II would have returned as a constitutional ruler.[62] But as it turned out the Kabaka returned to Buganda triumphantly in October 1955, "not merely to reign, but to govern". Ultimately, that was a British error.

Notwithstanding all the shortcomings arising from the delay in its implementation, the Hancock settlement had three very important achievements to its credit. First, it made the concept of the primarily African state a reality. Henceforth Africans were to participate actively in the central

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[62]. W.K.Hancock, Professing History, (unpublished), P.108

government. In the Legislative Council half the members would be Africans while on the representative side the proportions would be 16:6:6, sixteen Africans, six Europeans and six Asians. Secondly, it resolved the major issue between the British and the people of Uganda to which the Kabaka had tried to draw attention. The Africans were now certain of their political future. They were assured of a voice on how the country was to develop. Lastly, the settlement managed to prevent the relations between the British and the Baganda from worsening. This was a distinct possibility at a time when the Mau Mau uprising in Kenya was at its peak and federation was being imposed on Central Africa. Therefore, Hancock's mission played a positive role in the peaceful resolution of the crisis.

In a meeting in late September 1954 with Lennox-Boyd, who had by that time replaced Lyttelton at the Colonial Office, Professor Hancock advised him that the right thing was to permit Mutesa to return under appropriate conditions.[63] Hancock argued that the cordial relationship between the Baganda and the British was a valuable thing which should not be "lightly jettisoned", particularly having regard to the growing "Egyptian influence in the Sudan" and the "situation in Kenya". Furthermore, because of the "new situation" which had been created by the Buganda constitutional proposals the

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[63]. CO 822/751 Minutes of meeting between professor Hancock and Alan Lennox-Boyd, d.28 September 1954.

British government could take a new decision "from strength and without any loss of prestige".[64]

Ironically, the governor became one of the great campaigners for the Kabaka's return. He asked the Colonial Office to consider certain factors before taking the "final decision" on Mutesa: if affairs were out of joint in Buganda what chances were there of a good state of affairs in the Protectorate generally? If the decision was changed, would the British position either with the Baganda or other ethnic groups, or both, be so seriously weakened as to make it impossible to carry out the general policy for the country? Lastly, would the return of Mutesa prejudice the future development of Buganda and Uganda generally? His observation was that the Baganda were solidly and emotionally against the British on the Mutesa issue. Mutesa had been "idealised and represented the national pride of the Baganda deeply wounded and personified".[65] He believed the choice of reconciliation through the medium of Professor Hancock in fact involved the promise of Mutesa's return if the mission succeeded, but this had not been realised at the start. More important, the Hancock mission had produced an agreement which, if accepted by the Lukiiko, would bring Buganda fully into the

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[64] _Ibid._.

[65] CO 822/751 Andrew Cohen, Memorandum to the Colonial Office, 29 September 1954.

Protectorate institutions as an integral part of the country, thus disposing of what had been the main bone of contention with the Kabaka the previous year. He reasserted that a failure of reconciliation would strengthen "the extremists in Uganda" who would retain a powerful rallying cry against the British.[66]

In early October, the Secretary of State visited East Africa to see the situation for himself. On his return, Lennox-Boyd seemed to be leaning against restoration of Mutesa and was supported by his advisors and many of the governor's senior advisors. To them Cohen looked like a man anxious to repair the damage in Uganda without due regard to the repercussions the change of policy would have on the rest of Africa and throughout the British Empire. But pressure for reconciliation continued to increase.

Late in October 1954, the Archbishop of Canterbury wrote to the Colonial Secretary urging him to avoid any further action which the already "anxious and suspicious" Africans would not understand and hence treat as an injustice. He was of the opinion that the Kabaka crisis could not be explained by the failure of one man, the Kabaka, but that "neither the Kabaka nor the governor quite measured up to the situation". He pleaded with the British government to be "magnanimous and generous" and let Mutesa return to Uganda. He believed such

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[66]. _Ibid._.

a gesture would "work a miracle throughout Africa and regain British initiative in leading Africa through its growing pains".[67]

The influence of the church on Uganda politics has been both significant and historical, dating back to the religious wars of the 1890s. The church was both a divisive and a unifying factor. It was divisive in the sense that it had pitched Protestant against Catholic. It was unifying in that religion transcends ethnic boundaries. The church, both local and European, had a significant voice in Ugandan politics. Missionary societies played a vital role in the provision of social services such as education and health care. It was against this background that the archbishop's plea should be perceived.

In the meantime, a disagreement on tactics and timing of the announcement about Mutesa's return, if he were to return, was developing into a mini-crisis. Andrew Cohen wanted a statement opening the door to Mutesa's return made before the Lukiiko had debated and voted on the agreed recommendations of the Namirembe Conference, and if possible, the Lukiiko to be persuaded to withdraw the Kabaka case from the courts altogether. The Colonial Office insisted that a statement could not be made until a ruling on the case in the Uganda High Court had been delivered. It was a complex matter of

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[67]. CO 822/751 Letter from Lambeth Palace to Lennox-Boyd, 23 October 1954

timing and face-saving schemes. An adverse ruling could seriously embarrass the government, force it to act from a point of weakness or risk an interregnum while appealing the judgement,which would probably put at risk the benefits of the Hancock mission. On the other hand, the Colonial Office hoped that if the Baganda lost the case and also accepted the Agreed Rec mmendations, this would create the "new situation" from which the government could act without loss of prestige. Cohen insisted that any delay in making a statement could cost the government "the initiative". The compromise which the Colonial Office offered looked unacceptable to Andrew Cohen. Another crisis was developing within the crisis. Under strain, convinced that reconciliation was vital for building a united Uganda and frustrated by the Colonial Office's inaction, it looked as if Cohen could no longer bear "the white man's burden". On the 16th of October he sent a letter to Sir Thomas Lloyd offering to resign his post in Uganda:

> If - and I sincerely hoped this would not happen, even this decision, which the Secretary of State accepted in our discussion, should in the end prove unacceptable ... rather than see a plain re-affirmation of the 1953 decision on Mutesa, I said that I would like to suggest that there should be a change of governors here ...[68]

The task of political integration had made a public servant's career in Uganda not only difficult and frustrating but also

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[68]. CO 822/751 Andrew Cohen to Sir Thomas Lloyd, Permanent Under-Secretary of State, 16 October 1954.

insecure. At that moment, the careers of the two most powerful men in Uganda were in balance, but more at stake was the future of Uganda.

The judgement in the Kabaka case was delivered on the 4 November 1954. At the conclusion of the judgement, all the declarations asked for and the injunction were denied. In dealing with the third issue which was whether the British Government had acted properly or improperly in withdrawing recognition from Mutesa II on 30 November under article six, the judge found that the Kabaka's refusal to abide by decisions on policy constituted disregard of his duty under the Agreement with the consequence that the Agreement could have been brought to an end under article twenty, or the Kabaka's recognition withdrawn as an act of state. The Chief Justice however held that by declaring withdrawal of recognition under article six of the Agreement, the Secretary of State had erred.[69] The immediate reaction of the great majority of the Baganda was that the judgement constituted a victory for the Kabaka. The news quickly spread throughout Buganda. There was great excitement and rejoicing. Large crowds converged on Kampala and Masaka.[70] Although the British technically won the case, the judgement amounted to a legal rebuff. This further weakened the arguments against Mutesa's

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[69]. CO 822/768 Telegram No. 663 From Acting Governor to Secretary of State, 4 November 1954.

[70]. Ibid..

return.

Few Baganda doubted that the "victory" in court did not mean the return of their Kabaka. Cohen was confirmed in his view that the Kabaka's return was inevitable. The only opportunity left by which the British could act from a point of strength was by ensuring the success of the Hancock settlement. But the debate on tactics, which had been going on continued with the result that more time was wasted.

Finally on the 16 November, the Secretary of State informed the House of Commons that two new factors had emerged in Uganda which created a new situation in which it was possible and desirable to review the decision on the Kabaka. The first and most important was the agreement reached on constitutional matters at the Namirembe Conference. The second was the judgement given in the Uganda High Court on the 4 November 1954 in the case brought to test the legality of the withdrawal of recognition from the Kabaka. Consequently, if the constitutional proposals were accepted by the Lukiiko, and if the Lukiiko agreed to the terms of the solemn engagement recommended by the Conference to be entered into by the Kabaka, that would settle satisfactorily the points of difference which had arisen in 1953. After amendments to the 1900 Agreement to give effect to the proposals had been agreed and brought into effect, and after a suitable interval, the Lukiiko would have the opportunity to choose whether a new Kabaka should be elected or whether Kabaka Mutesa II should

return as "native ruler".[71] The decision was simultaneously communicated to the Lukiiko by the governor.

That same month, two sets of constitutional proposals were published. The first concerned the reconstruction of the Protectorate government with the establishment of a ministerial system and an increase in the number of African members in the Legislative Council. The second, put forward by the Namirembe Conference, concerned Buganda and its relationship to the Protectorate government. These included the recommendation that in view of the proposed central reforms, the Lukiiko should henceforth elect members to the Legislative Council, a step which Buganda particularism had hitherto prevented. The two sets of proposals constituted a major political advance for the Africans and Uganda in general. It was also hoped that they would go far in solving the problem which had been behind the crisis, that of integrating Buganda into the Protectorate.[72]

However, throughout the Namirembe negotiations, the Baganda's paramount concern had been the return of their Kabaka. Because the Hancock settlement had not dealt with the issue directly, the Lukiiko was not enthusiastic with the proposals. Instead of accepting the Namirembe proposals as they stood, the Lukiiko established a sub-committee to examine

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[71]. HCD, vol. 533, cols. 219 - 222, 16 November 1954.

[72] CO822/900 See Telegram #104 dated June 6 1954.

them article by article. This Sub-committee, known as the "Kintu Committee" from the name of its chairman, did not present its report until five months later in April 1955. The Kintu report suggested few modifications and was quickly accepted by the Lukiiko which then appointed a drafting committee to go to London to negotiate a new Buganda Agreement and a revised constitution for Buganda. On the 22 July 1955, the Secretary of State announced to the House of Commons that he had reached agreement with representatives of the Lukiiko.[73]

Having won the first round, the Baganda felt confident they could extract even more concessions from the Colonial Office. They made an issue of the nine-month period which the Colonial Office had insisted would have to elapse between signing the New Buganda Agreement and Mutesa's return, and demanded that the Kabaka be permitted to return immediately. They used the governor's plan to appoint an Asian minister in the Protectorate government to put the Colonial Office on the defensive. One official, infuriated that the Baganda were demanding too high a price for their participation in the Protectorate institutions and perhaps in revenge for Cohen's insult to their national pride, wrote:

> We may be told at one stage or another that some further concessions are necessary in order 'to obtain a happy and agreed solution' or 'to heal the wounds' between Britain and Uganda. I am sure we must not listen to any of this. If the Baganda will not play, our only course will be to go ahead with the Protectorate reforms, ... until they choose to

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[73] HCD, vol. , 22 July 1955.

come in. If the Baganda succeed in persuading the other Africans not to cooperate either, then we should ... continue with the present form of government and be prepared to deal firmly with any 'nonsense'.[74]

The Colonial Office worried that more concessions to Buganda would have far-reaching and most unfortunate effects in East Africa. Probably they would undo many of the good results secured by the firm stand against the United Nations Mission's suggested timetable for independence in Tanganyika, and even set back the "promising progress towards real multi-racial government" in Central Africa.[75]

On the issue of an Asian minister, the Lukiiko delegation found itself allied with the Uganda National Congress, a nationalist political party that had capitalised on the Kabaka's deportation to increase its support, especially in Buganda. By opposition to Cohen's appointment of what they termed a "multi-racial" government, the Baganda and the nationalists were in effect demanding a declaration that Uganda was "purely" and not "primarily" an African state.

The argument that the Colonial Office steak to its guns and "ride out the storm" if any arose was dismissed as impractical in the circumstances: "I do not think that we shall have behind us the public opinion in this country

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[74]. CO 822/906 Gorell Barnes to Sir Thomas Lloyd, minute, 27 July 1955.

[75]. Ibid..

necessary to carry out a consistently repressive policy which I strongly suspect would be required".[75] Clearly the Kabaka had become a political hostage which each side used to make a deal. The Colonial Office agreed to reduce the nine months which would elapse after reaching agreement before the Kabaka could return to Buganda to six weeks. In exchange Buganda dropped its opposition to the appointment of an Asian Minister. Once more the Colonial Office changed its publicly declared policy in the interest of creating a united Uganda, with Buganda as an integral part of it. It was not an easy decision, but the price was worth paying and the risks involved in preserving the appearance of a colonial power in full control were high:

> The line I am advocating is, I must confess, one of slightly disguised appeasement. But I still think that what really matters in Uganda at the moment is not the prestige of government ..., but getting the Baganda voluntarily into the Legislative Council and the Protectorate institutions, especially when we can do so without giving away anything concerned with central institutions themselves.[77]

Conclusion

During the crisis, the Colonial Office's major concern was the preservation of the unity of the Protectorate, with Buganda participating in the central institutions. The New Buganda Agreement of 1955, which ended the crisis and enabled

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[75]. CO 822/906   See Minute by Mathieson to Sir Thomas Lloyd, 11 July 1955.

[77] CO 822/906   See Minute by Mary Fisher to Mathieson, 8 July 1955.

the Kabaka to return to Buganda, ensured that. The same Agreement ended any hopes of an East African Federation imposed by the British as it gave the Buganda government veto powers over any federation scheme in the future. In an effort to placate Buganda, Andrew Cohen pressed the Colonial Office to agree to a big constitutional advance, with a pledge that the whole constitutional structure could be reviewed before the end of 1961, a date which the nationalists made their target for self-government, although the Colonial Office persistently rejected that assumption.

The deportation of the Kabaka was a turning point in the history of Uganda. There were three apparent changes within Buganda politics which in turn had a significant impact on the protectorate. First the crisis saw the transformation of Mutesa II from a collaborator into a resistor in the mould of his grandfather, Mwanga. Mutesa II now projected himself as a Buganda nationalist. Secondly, whereas during the 1945 and 1949 disturbances the Baganda masses were pitched against their chiefs and looked towards the Kabaka, and to some extent, the British for reforms, Cohen had now unintentionally united "the Kabaka, chiefs and people" against the British. Lastly, in complete contrast to the 1896 - 1900 situation when the Baganda had supported the British against their Kabaka, in 1954 they supported their Kabaka against the British. Just as the former action had marked the genesis of European domination, the later signalled the beginning of the end to

colonial rule. There was no doubt that the Colonial Office had lost "the initiative".

Unfortunately the dilemma of Uganda did not end with the settlement of the Kabaka crisis. In retrospect, the Kabaka crisis was only the tip of the iceberg. Buganda emerged from the crisis more united, more confident and more autonomous than before. Following the triumphant return of the Kabaka, Buganda nationalism and traditionalism combined to produce a force which made Cohen's dream of a unitary Uganda at independence less likely. The irony was that Uganda had been built, as Margery Perham put it, "around and above" Buganda.[78] The British were now trying to integrate Buganda into a Uganda which hardly existed, except on the map. Moreover, the more concessions the British gave to Buganda, the more they alienated the rest of Uganda which was beginning to feel that the British were rewarding the Baganda for making trouble.[79]

In these events, in some precise detail, we see the struggle between the resilient primary nationalism based on the precolonial state and modern African nationalism. Primary nationalism was just like European nationalism of the nineteenth century. That is, it was nationalism based on the idea that people who spoke the same language and shared the same culture had the right to live in a single state, the

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[78]. Margery Perham, "Difficulties in Buganda", an article to The Times d.8 February, 1954.

[79]. See New Commonwealth, London, 13 June 1955.

"nation-state". Modern nationalism in Africa was based on loyalty to the arbitrary colonial state created by the imperialists. What makes the case of Uganda more fascinating is the fact that the "modern nationalism" was in its infancy and it was therefore the imperialists who were forcing the concept of "the nation" based on the colonial unit, a state which would operate in the English (imperial) language and not in a vernacular African language. Clearly, the Kabaka crisis was a case of strong precolonial nationalism confronted with the demands of establishing a modern African state. Ironically, the governor's attempt to induce Uganda nationalism, which was late in developing, only succeeded in intensifying Buganda nationalism.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## THE FAILURE OF POPULIST NATIONALISM

Uganda did not produce a strong nationalist political movement comparable to those which arose in some other African colonies. Prior to 1952 when the Uganda National Congress (UNC) was formed, there had been no nationalist political party. Even then, the UNC unlike TANU, did not become the party of independence in 1962. In the decade between, Uganda nationalism was tested. Numerous political parties were founded. Most faded away unnoticed. Few could be classified as national parties with membership outside Kampala, let alone Buganda. Consequently, there have been doubts as to whether Uganda really produced a nationalist movement despite the presence of groups of nationalists. This chapter considers the delayed development of "Uganda nationalism". It examines its social and economic origins. It attempts to locate the rise of Buganda nationalism and anti-Buganda sentiments. Lastly, it seeks to explore and explain British policy towards Ugandan leaders and nationalism, particularly the attempt to "manage" them.

## Defining Nationalism

Any attempt to give a precise definition of the term "nationalism" appears to be futile. Scholars from different disciplines and backgrounds have given quite different

meanings to the term. But it is essential to have a functional definition. The classic definition is that: "Nationalism is the feeling among people of the same ethnic group of being a nation, the feeling of 'Germanness' or 'Zuluness'".[1] In the African context nationalism as defined above would correspond to the "Primary nation". Hargreaves has defined the Primary nation as:

> "A community of people, within or across colonial boarders, who on account of common language, culture or historical experience claim special respect for their common identity."[2]

But African "modern nationalism", the emotions which inspired the independence movement, did not seek a return, except in a few cases, to tiny linguistic principalities. Thus the classic meaning of nationalism is inadequate in defining modern nationalism in colonial Africa. In Nigeria: Background to Nationalism, Professor Coleman defined nationalism simply as:

> Broadly a consciousness of belonging to a nation (existent or in the realm of aspiration) or a nationality, and a desire, as manifest in sentiment and activity, to secure or maintain its welfare, prosperity, and to maximize its political autonomy. The reference group for "nationalism" can be a de facto nation or nationality, or a territorially defined group in which certain members believe and advocate that it ought, or is destined, to become

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[1]. See Webster, J. Bertin, "Tribalism, Nationalism and Patriotism" in Harvey L. Dyck & Peter H. Krosby (eds.), Empire and Nations, University of Toronto Press, 1969, pp. 200-1.

[2]. Hargreaves, D. John, Decolonization in Africa, London & New York, 1988, p.2.

a nation.[3]

This has become the standard definition because African nationalism, as Coleman correctly perceives, cannot be delineated by a common language, culture, or even boundary. It is "a consciousness of belonging" to a common group existent or in creation. According to John Breuilly, nationalism may also refer to "political movements seeking or exercising state power and justifying such actions with nationalist arguments". Nationalism, therefore, "speaks and acts on behalf of the nation".[4] Nationalist movements are also the organs through which nationalism expresses itself.[5]

In Africa, several primary nations enjoying traditional political, economic and cultural sovereignty were usually forced into an artificial polity created by the colonial power. This explains the main difference between African modern nationalism and European nationalism. Nationalism in the European context was comparable to the traditional precolonial primary nations in Africa.[6]

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[3]. See Coleman, S. James, <u>Nigeria: Background to Nationalism</u>, Berkeley, California University Press, 1958, p.425.

[4]. Breuilly, John, <u>Nationalism and The State</u>, Manchester University Press, 1982, p.3.

[5]. In this study, the term "nation" will be taken to be the same as "state".

[6]. See Webster, <u>op. cit.</u>, pp.212-215. It should be noted that many precolonial states in Africa were multinational for example the West African Empires of Ghana, Songhai, Sokoto,

In colonial Africa most territories lacked the basic requisites for the emergence of successful nationalist movements. As Seton-Watson pointed out, "nationalist movements become effective when they have mass support". In the emergence of this mass support, "economic and social forces" play a tremendously important role.[7] He, however, noted that nationalism could not "begin until there is an elite of convinced nationalists, expressing the national idea..."[8] An interesting question then arises: Could a nation exist without nationalism? Yes, according to Webster. He has argued that :

> A nation may exist devoid of nationalism, but nationalism hardly exists without a nation, the former arises out of the later. It might be difficult to argue that in this or the last century any nation existed completely devoid of nationalism, certain individuals having always possessed nationalist emotions. But the development of these feelings among a sufficiently large proportion of the people of the nation to affect its corporate behaviour may be taken as the point where it can be said that a nation possesses a national spirit.[9] [emphasis added].

This was true in Africa where modern nationalism originated in the thinking of a tiny educated elite, which then faced the task of creating and cultivating a national feeling among the masses. Furthermore, because of the circumstances in Africa, nationalism developed at three levels. These were:

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and Bornu.

[7]. Hugh Seton-Watson, Nationalism: Old and New, 1965, pp.5.

[8]. Ibid., pp.14-5.

[9]. Webster, op. cit., pp.200-1.

Primary state nationalism as in the case of Buganda, Lesotho, Ashanti, Igbo, Swazi or Yoruba nationalism; the modern nationalism attaching itself to colonial state boundaries as in the case of Ugandan, Nigerian, Zambian or Ghanaian nationalism; and supranational Pan-Africanism. As a result the nationalist parties, seeking to inherit the control of the colonial state, faced the hostility of well established traditional state nationalism. The modern political parties had no deeply rooted wider nationalism on which to draw, unless they could create such feelings and mobilize them.

The popular view expounded by many African scholars is that modern African nationalism began at the colonial territorial level as a conscious and determined struggle by the African educated elite to throw off the yoke of European imperialism. This view is expressed explicitly by Festus Ohaegbulam who argued that:

> Modern African nationalism sought to liquidate the colonial order - the political domination and economic exploitation of African peoples by alien governments and their peoples - and to restore to African peoples their natural right to be free to rule themselves.[10]

In most colonies, the strategy of the nationalists was initially designed to gain access to the political centre but eventually to wrest political power away from the colonial power. In the struggle to regain their land, freedom and

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[10]. Festus Ugboaja Ohaegbulam; *Nationalism in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa*, University Press of America, 1977, p.22.

dignity from the alien rulers, modern nationalist were able to mobilize popular support on colony-wide bases, at least temporarily. But in Uganda, even this temporary unity against a foreign power was not achieved. The main explanation for this appears to be the absence of a class or group with a truly national agenda which could mobilise the masses. This is what made Uganda's advance to self-government unique in British tropical Africa.

## Late development of nationalist movements

There are many factors which have been advanced to account for the indifference towards political unity and the absence of the urge to struggle for sovereign power in Uganda. Foremost among them was the effect of the practice of indirect rule." With the exception of Buganda which made up a province, the administrative districts were drawn in most cases to approximate to the linguistic boundaries. Busoga and Teso districts in the east, Acholi and Lango districts in the north, and Bunyoro, Toro and Ankole districts in the West all reflect linguistic and cultural communities. The major concern at the time was efficient administration at a minimum cost. After the Second World War, British policy promoted local councils partly to provide an outlet for the political aspirations of the growing numbers of educated Africans.

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". D.A.Low, Buganda in Modern History, University of California Press, 1971, p.167.

Because local government was based on these units, the
district councils were no more than "tribal" councils. The few
educated Africans generally aspired to serve in their local
governments and they were encouraged by the British.[12] Because
the local councils dealt mostly with local issues, the British
administration allowed the Africans considerable latitude in
discussion. This absorbed a great deal of their energy and
diverted them from the national political struggle. Those who
made their way to the pinnacle of power in their respective
districts were satisfied and served their people with
commitment.[13] Rarely did these Africans look beyond their
communities to view Uganda as a single unit or "nation".

This aspect of seeking satisfaction in the local
government was most exemplified in Buganda. Here the top posts
in the Buganda government: the Katikiro, Omulamuzi and
Omuwanika conferred prestige, influence and wealth. They
exercised real and immediate power. Since it was easier to
attain power and influence in Buganda than to attempt to wrest
control from the colonial regime, such offices were attractive
to relatively enlightened, educated Baganda. Others aspired
to become chiefs, either as Ssaza or Gombolola, for the
prestige, the favour at the Kabaka's court, and the

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[12]. See John Hatch, <u>A History of Post-War Africa</u>, London,
1965, p.312.

[13]. Ibingira, G.S.K., <u>The Forging of an African Nation</u>,
New York, 1973, p.65.

perquisites which were attached to such positions." Most Uganda Africans did not feel degraded by being under colonial rule. The British had allowed the respect and pomp accorded to the traditional society to continue. It is not surprising that most Baganda were not aware of the real meaning of colonial rule until the deportation of their Kabaka in 1953! Colonialism rested lightly on the Baganda. They saw themselves linked in an alliance with the British which had been negotiated in written agreements. They were partners with, rather than under the British." Grace Ibingira, a major participant in nationalist politics, has convincingly argued that the most enlightened Baganda, by seeking positions within their own society "nullified the prospects of an all-embracing Uganda consciousness". He asserted that since Buganda had always been the focus of Uganda's development in almost every field, this approach was inevitably felt throughout the

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". See Fabian Colonial Bureau (FCB) 127/2 Uganda Documents, Record of a discussion with B.Kiwanuka, leader of DP, in London, 19 October 1960. Explaining the difficulty of attracting support to modern political parties, especially from those with influence, Kiwanuka pointed out that the hope of being a Ssaza chief was very effective. There was little work involved and much money to be gained because under the 1900 Buganda Agreement the Kabaka could grant sixteen square miles, which meant a saza chief would receive L200 a year plus rents. "This was more than a minister received in the central government".

". During decolonization, the British sought to portray this attitude as a Kiganda delusion. But the British also clung to a delusion of thinking that they controlled Buganda. Such control could only have been established by a bloody conquest which the British had declined. Clearly, Anglo-baganda relations suffered from a double delusion.

country."[16] Low concurred that Buganda leadership was essential in the development of Uganda nationalism: "what happened or did not happen there was bound to influence what was to happen or not to happen in the other three provinces of the protectorate".[17] Thus Baganda satisfaction and preoccupation with their internal politics undermined the growth of Uganda-wide nationalism.

The balance of the educated Africans who could have been in the vanguard of mass mobilization were employed by the central government as civil servants. Given the restricted nature of English education in the country, the Ugandan civil service could absorb the majority who qualified. This set Uganda apart from Ghana and Nigeria. There an explosion in high school education had occurred well before independence often under private auspices and outside colonial control. The private initiative never did flourish in Uganda. Following British tradition, Africans in the civil service were expected to be apolitical. For job security and to ensure promotion, they had to be "nice chaps" in the eyes of their masters. All this meant that they could not engage in political activities against the established order.[18] Since many of the well educated Africans were absorbed by the colonial civil service,

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[16]. Ibingira, Op. cit., p.66.

[17]. Low, D.A. Political Parties in Uganda 1949-1961, London, 1962, p.17.

[18] Ibingira, op. cit., p.65.

the nationalist movement lost many of its potential leaders to the colonial administration. As a result, there was a quietude uncommon in most other British African colonies.

It is also important to recall that since the 1920s, Buganda had persistently opposed participation in the Legislative Council at a time when it was the only component in Uganda with the educated manpower which might have led the way towards building a national consciousness.[19] The Kabaka explained:

> After the war [First World War] a legislative council was set up, controlled by the Governor. There was some fuss as how Indians, of whom there were now 20,000, should be included. No African was a member or wanted to be. The Baganda have always been wary of Legislative Council (as it was called) on two counts. It was deemed unwise to be represented in a body in which you had little influence, as you might then be a party to decisions you disliked, and thus bound by them. Also, there was a suspicion that efforts might be made to increase the influence of the Legislative Council at the expense of the Lukiiko, which would then dwindle to a centre of politics, but not power.[20]

The chance was missed. If Buganda could not take it, neither would the other provinces or districts. While the rest of British Africa was mobilising against colonialism, most Ugandans were preoccupied with primary nationalism. It followed, therefore, that the Legislative Council together

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[19]. In other colonies there was a similar reluctance on the part of pre-colonial state units, as in Asante or Northern Nigeria but unlike Buganda, the western educated elite was weak in those areas, and strong in the coastal regions.

[20]. The Kabaka of Buganda, Desecration of My Kingdom, Constable, London, 1967, pp.73-4.

with other national institutions remained alien to Ugandan Africans.

The absence of some definite threat from British rule also undermined the development of Uganda nationalism. In territories where there was swift mass mobilization, it was normally in response to apparent or specific oppressive policies by the colonial administration. In Kenya for example, landlessness was a crucial issue; in the Rhodesias it was land and racial discrimination. On the other hand, the British had ruled the indigenous communities in Uganda "with a benevolent hand".[21] There were no political or economic issues of the magnitude essential to arouse mass opposition to foreign rule.[22] There was no land problem like that of Kenya. Virtually every African had access to land. The landless were mainly migrant foreign workers from Rwanda and Burundi.[23] In fact, legislation had been passed to exclude non-Africans from acquiring freehold tittle to land. Moreover, the Baganda, the foremost African group in Uganda had benefitted most from colonialism through the land settlement, the cultivation of cash crops, and jobs in the civil service. Consequently a nationalist leadership devoted to the overthrow of the colonial state was not likely to develop in Buganda.

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[21]. Ibingira, op. cit., p.

[22]. Ibingira, Ibid..

[23]. Apter, D.E., The Political Kingdom in Uganda, Princeton, 1961, p.55.

Discrimination was based on cultural and ethnic differences.[24] The Indian community, which had been restricted to gazetted townships, did not constitute a threat "strong enough to warrant positive nationalism."[25] There were other means of dealing with the issue. As a result, Ugandans were almost certain the British would go and self-government would come at the right moment. There was no sense of urgency to unite and mobilise the general population against the British.

In addition, there were no European or Indian political organizations for the Africans to compete with or use as models. Moreover before 1955 the number of Ugandan Africans who had been overseas, with the exception of the war veterans, was negligible. Consequently, there was an absence of imported or external political and organizational experience or knowledge which such men as Kwame Nkrumah, Azikiwe, and Kamuzu Banda brought to their countries.[26] For these factors, the development of populist nationalism demanding independence in Uganda was long delayed, disorganized and weak.

## Origins of Ugandan nationalism:

Who were the nationalists in Uganda? Is it possible that

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[24]. The internal problems were mainly between the ethnic or religious groups, and these were rarely blamed on the British. See Apter, op., cit., p.46.

[25]. S.R. Karugire, A Political History of Uganda, Heinemann, Nairobi, 1980, p.146.

[26]. Low, op. cit., p.172.

the statements and political demands of "Ugandan nationalists" were the enunciations of a limited group of Ugandans lacking a popular base? Is it also possible that Baganda nationalists represented a certain group of Baganda rather than all Baganda? Nationalism, in fact is a very useful ideology to assert that the interests of all people in a certain area are identical to those held by certain self-appointed spokesmen.

There was a temptation to argue that in the context of the colonial period, the interests of all Africans were the same, and therefore the perspectives of a nationalist interpretation and a class interpretation yield the same results: that is, Africans were united against Europeans. Arguably this might be true in most territories in East and Central Africa, though even this is doubtful; it was not true in Uganda. In Kenya and Tanganyika, racial divisions to a considerable extent were the same as class divisions. There an exclusively European upper class, a predominantly Indian petty bourgeoisie and an almost exclusively African worker and peasant class existed; only in the bourgeoisie proper was there a significant mixture, and here the Africans were excluded. Class antagonism could therefore be expressed as anti-colonialism although it would include anti- Indian and anti-European feeling as well. Uganda was different.

European settler farming in Uganda had failed. As a result, an African peasant agriculture thrived.[27] Asians confined themselves to commerce. Europeans were found in government or limited commercial activity. Despite the apparent division of social life into racial-economic sectors, the situation in Uganda never hardened. There were some Africans in the European dominated upper class, and a large number aspiring and capable of joining the petty bourgeoisie.[28] Social mobility was never entirely restricted by racial boundaries. This significantly altered the pattern of anti-colonial activities from that prevailing in Kenya and Tanganyika. Mamdani and Apter have already attempted to locate the interests of certain classes of Ugandans and how these affected the development of Ugandan nationalism.[29] This factor was so important in understanding the genesis of Ugandan nationalism that further analysis is justified.

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[27]. In respect of African agriculture, a dual economy prevailed. One section was the large and important cash crop-economy, centred on cotton and coffee. The other was a large subsistence economy. Almost no African farmers were completely divorced from the subsistence sector. Thus to a certain degree they were not integrated in the internal marketing system for many of their daily "groceries". This helped to insulate them from economic crises, at least with respect to the more immediate necessities of life.

[28]. Apter, Op. cit., p.47.

[29].See Mahmood Mamdani, Politics and Class Formation in Uganda, Heinemann, London, 1979, chaps. 6 & 7. Also Apter,D.E., ibid., chapter 10.

Social and Economic Origins of the UNC.

The emergence of political parties in Uganda was tied to the conditions in Buganda. By the 1900 Uganda Agreement, the British redistributed land in Buganda, granting freehold rights to certain important persons who had been prepared to accept British domination. This had been a conscious effort to create a landed class which would have an interest in maintaining the new order and in supporting the British presence. Some 4000 Baganda became differentiated from the rest of the Baganda and other Ugandans.[30] By the 1950s this group had grown to over 60,000 through inheritance and sale. From among this group came officials whom the British appointed in almost all parts of the protectorate as their agents.[31]

However, when the interests of this class came into conflict with British interests, the colonial state intervened to limit the powers of this class. Naturally the landlords opposed the proposed Bill but the British succeeded in portraying the change as a response to the complaints of the peasants. In 1928, the Busuulu and Envujjo law was passed,

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[30].See Apter, ibid., p.178

[31]. Also, in the early period of British rule, this class of Baganda officials became the growers of cotton. In this period peasants were generally obliged to work for a certain part of the year on the farms of this new landed chiefly class and in addition to pay tribute (Nvujjo) to them as lords. Hence the position of the Baganda official/landlord class became consolidated as a result of their increased economic power.

limiting the amount of tribute and rent which should be paid to the landlords:

> The 1928 Busulu and Nvujjo Law, by robbing the landlord-tenant relation of its economic substance, created the conditions for the emergence of a numerically large and powerful coffee and cotton-cultivating kulak class in Buganda. The law gave security of land tenure to the Muganda peasant and his children as long as they cultivated it effectively. Although his children could inherit the land, he could not sell it. Furthermore, the law limited busulu [rent] to 10 shillings per annum and Nvujjo [tribute] to 4 shillings per annum, but the legal limits applied to the maximum of three acres per cash crop; beyond this, the landlord could ask for as high a payment as he wished. On the other hand, the landlord was not allowed to evict the tenant as long as the latter was cultivating the land, even if the landlord wished to farm it himself.[32]

The law nevertheless emphasized the superior status of the official/landlord.[33] It was passed after the British had realised the potentials of greater cotton production if the relations between landlord and tenant were changed. Cotton prices were rising at this time, cotton production increased, and peasants were able, virtually for the first time, to gain some income over and above their tax obligations. More important in the long run was the security of tenure aspect of law. It gave the landholding peasant group an interest in upholding the land tenure system similar to that of the landlords.[34] This was the group which was later to become part

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[32]. Mamdani op. cit., p.152.

[33]. Mamdani, Ibid..

[34]. CO 1018/83 See Office note, "Uganda: possible lines of future development", undated.

of the petty bourgeoisie (whom Mamdani calls kulaks).[35] Rather
few Baganda were not land holders at this stage:

> There has thus grown up in Buganda a large
> proprietary class of a character unusual in native
> Africa. It is likely to increase in the future, for
> the instinct of individual ownership has been widely
> aroused, and it extends to areas to which the
> "mailo" system of grants has applied. ... It is
> already possible to recognise the changes in the
> social structure which the appearance of these
> circumstances is beginning to produce. The communal
> interest based on the older custom of land tenure,
> and the traditional ties connected with the clan
> organization, have given place to a relationship of
> which the basis is largely economic. <u>Buganda may now
> be viewed as a country of proprietary landowners,
> large and small, of tenant farmers, and of landless
> farm labourers.</u>[36] [emphasis added]

In the area outside Buganda, no freehold land had been
granted and therefore no rents or tribute were collected.
Instead, Baganda officials outside Buganda tended to emphasize
labour obligations. In Busoga for example, up to sixty days
a year of labour at the officials' disposal was imposed. Some
non-Baganda had complained of the oppressiveness of Baganda
officials and had asked for their replacement by local men.
Reluctantly and very hesitatingly the British conceded to
ethnic demands. The British held up the Baganda officials as
the model to which the local people must conform. Cautiously,

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[35]. Mahmood Mamdani defines a Kulak as "a rich peasant
who regularly supplements his family labour with hired labour;
he is thus both a cultivator and an employer". <u>op.</u>, <u>cit.</u>,
p.152.

[36]. CO 1018/83 See Office note "Uganda: possible lines
of future developments", undated.

the British appointed new officials from among the local groups, each in his own district, but when one failed, a Muganda was often brought back. The British and the people referred to this policy as "self-government".[37] Although the requirements for compulsory labour were moderated, the system remained intact. Nevertheless, the local groups failed to amass as much wealth as their counterparts in Buganda and thus a petty bourgeoisie failed to emerge. In the northern province, labour migration and army recruitment were encouraged. In such areas, this deprivation of able-bodied men eventually had underdeveloping effects. In the eastern province, that is, Busoga, Bukedi Bugisu and Southern Teso cotton was grown on an increasing scale during the 1930s. But as prices fell, forced labour become more prevalent with fewer people willing to cultivate it. In areas where cattle raising was paramount importance people grew a cash crop in order to purchase them. When cash crop prices fell the people could and

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[37]. There were basically two result of this policy. The Baganda often became pictured as the enemy while the British posed as those willing to smooth the path to "self-government" if the local elite could only match up to the Baganda standard. Thus the whole process greatly heightened ethnic consciousness throughout the non-Baganda regions of the country. So intense had this ill-will become in parts of Eastern Uganda, for example, that there was a movement to cut down all the Mango trees because they had been planted by the Baganda officials and were a reminder of them. In Teso, for instance, it took many years before people came to realize that their problems were not necessarily related to the Baganda but to the imposition of autocratic chiefs and that Iteso chiefs were as bad as their Baganda predecessors. Secondly, the local people were diverted from state-wide politics in pursuit of local nationalism.

did sell cattle for luxuries such as school fees, bicycles and radios. Cattle cushioned the people even from the loss of luxuries at least during the short falls in the prices cycle.[36] Among the Baganda, the less prosperous times meant falling back upon subsistence for daily necessities. Many Ugandans manipulated the dual economy such that they could fully participate in the international market when it was to their advantage, yet withdraw from it when it was not, without major hardships. Thus to maintain the cotton production levels, the British often had to resort to forced labour.

In Buganda, relatively rich peasants offered two additional responses. They too suffered from the fall in cotton prices in the 1930s. But some of them had acquired sufficient capital to move into coffee cultivation instead of, or in addition to, cotton. Coffee was a more lucrative crop than cotton, but it required an initial outlay for plants and careful attention and patience during a non-bearing period of three to four years. The rich peasants were able to afford both, to buy plants and to employ labourers.[37] In addition many areas of Buganda were particularly suited to robusta coffee growing. In time, therefore, the already relatively

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[36]. I am indebted to Professor Webster who furnished me with vital information especially on Eastern Uganda.

[37]. Coffee cultivation was more attractive because an average yield of two tons per acre fetched the grower ten times more than cotton yielding 400 pounds per acre. See Mahmood Mamdani, ibid., p.155.

prosperous Baganda farmers became more prosperous and a petty bourgeoisie class was in the making. This class eventually emerged as a significant political force in the mid-1950s largely as a result of very high coffee and cotton prices in the early 1950s.

Cooperative organisation was another alternative. The Uganda African Farmers Union (U.A.F.U.), registered in April 1947 as a business partnership headed by I.K.Musazi, attempted to organise cooperative buying of cotton in areas inside and outside Buganda. Its professed aims were to act as commission agents for the sale of cotton, coffee and other produce. The union's growth was rapid because many growers believed that its success would bring them greater prosperity and, in particular, that the union would be able to secure higher prices for agricultural products, especially cotton. Although cotton had been grown commercially in Uganda for over forty years, its purchasing, ginning and sale remained exclusively in the hands of Asian and European commercial firms. Furthermore, the government exercised strict control over the cotton industry in accordance with the economic policy of the British government. This resulted in the Uganda producers receiving a price far below the world price for cotton and the Uganda government accumulating large sums of money in a Cotton Fund amounting to approximately L9,000,000 by 1948. This money

became a major issue in the U.A.F.U. campaign.[40] Clearly, this could be seen as an attempt to recruit cotton farmers as a group for interests which were basically economic. The U.A.F.U. played a major role in the 1949 disturbar- -- .[41] These were the culmination of long antagonism towards Buganda officials expressed largely through demands for the democratization of the Lukiiko and the election of chiefs.[42] The officials, through their domination of the Lukiiko, appeared to Baganda farmers to monopolise both power and wealth within Buganda. Who were the leaders of these aggrieved farmers? Apter noted:

> Many of them were the children of older chiefs who themselves had unsuccessful experiences as chiefs and had been removed. With inherited land, a sense of their own worth, and considerable education, such farmers attempted to engage in economic enterprise to restore their social situations.
> They attempted retail distribution. In most cases could not compete successfully with Asian and European business groups, or else they came up against government restrictions. Whether these were in form of actual restrictions or only reluctance on part of government to provide aid for African businessmen, many of the most important chieftaincy families soon found themselves with members who were estranged from both the Buganda and the protectorate governments.[43]

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[40]. See the Kingdon Report, paragraphs 323-326.

[41]. CO 537/5863 Governor John Hall to Secretary of State, cover letter to the Kingdon Report, 21 December 1949.

[42]. See Kingdon Report, paras. 464-473.

[43]. Apter, op., cit., p.183

The failure of this group to enter commerce partly explains the hostility which the U.A.F.U. and later the UNC displayed towards Asian business.

The alternatives available to the Baganda farmers were not there for most of the peasants in the north and parts of the east. Here, the cash crop was almost always cotton. It is true that arabica coffee was grown in Bugisu but by the 1940s it had not become a significant source of income. By the late 1940s when higher prices began to be paid for cotton, even the northern region, particularly Acholi, Lango and Southern Teso began to grow cotton voluntarily as a relief from migrant labour and army service. It was not until this stage that cooperatives began to be considered in this region.

The UNC was the political response of cotton farmers in Buganda and capitalised on the readiness of farmers in Acholi, Lango, Bukedi, Busoga and Southern Teso for political organization.⁴⁴ The Congress was founded in 1952 partly because of the realization of certain Baganda intellectuals that such a possibility existed, but also because of the specific situation related to cotton prices in the period from 1948 to 1951.⁴⁵ World commodity prices were rising in the post-war

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⁴⁴. CO 537/7224 Political Intelligence Summaries - Uganda, 1951. This noted that the only significant political agitation at the time centred on cotton prices and the buying of cotton. Education had also become an issue, advocated by local welfare societies and the "Bataka Parties".

⁴⁵. See Uzoigwe, Uganda: The Dilemma of Nationhood, NOK, 1982, pp.234-5.

period and had received a remarkable boost from the preparation for, and the early conduct of, the Korean war which began in 1950.

Growers' prices were also rising in Uganda, but not as fast as world prices. This situation was caused by the taking over of cotton marketing by the government leading to the setting up of the Lint Marketing Board in 1949. Since the government now decided the prices, it could keep them down as a means of balancing food and cash crop production, price stabilization and prevention of inflation:

> The limitation placed upon individual productive effort by the use of the hoe as the standard implement of cultivation inevitably means that increased production in one direction entails a corresponding reduction in another. It follows that the payment of high prices for economic crops involves either a reduction in the production of food crops, with the consequent risk of famine; or, if a balanced economy is to be maintained, a corresponding increase in producer prices for food crops with the usual inflationary repercussions which follow.[46]

Government policy therefore was to restrict the prices paid for cash crops to what it regarded as a "reasonable return" for the productive effort involved to match the prevailing cost of living. In fact the government set the prices so low that the total profits of the Board approximately equalled the total amounts distributed to the growers.[47] When the

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[46]. CO 537/5863 Governor John Hall to Secretary of State, Introduction to Kingdon Report, 21 December 1949.

[47]. CO 537/5863 See Office minute by James Warren, 24 January 1950.

U.A.F.U. became aware of this situation, they turned their attention away from the Buganda officials to the British officials who decided the cotton prices. Consequently, the Baganda farmers began to see their interests as being frustrated by the colonial state. This was no doubt a great spur to anti-colonial nationalism.

A second source of antagonism was the Indian community which controlled the cotton ginning industry. Bitter opposition to Indian ginners arose at about the same time and for the same reasons as opposition to British marketing policies.[48] In fact the two were interrelated. Government control of prices had taken away from ginners the possibility of making large profits on the buying and selling of cotton. The Indians turned instead to manipulating weights and systematically underpaying growers. For instance the _Intelligence Newsletter_ noted:

> The native growers' desire to upset the present method, whereby the grower is compelled to see the raw cotton pass, immediately it is picked, into the hands of the two other races is understandable, and, provided, this could be achieved peaceably there is little fault to be found with the ambition of the African to play a much greater part in the industry. A commission which enquired into the industry two years ago revealed that buyers resorted to every form of trickery to cheat growers. False weights, juggling with figures and prices, keeping the grower waiting all day until he was too tired to care whether he was paid the full amount, were but a few of the devices used. The "cotton battle" is certainly not a mere difference of opinion between politicians, it is a vital issue over which passions

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48. _op. cit.._

and strong feelings may be all too easily aroused.[40]
[emphasis added]

At the same time growing incomes  and knowledge of the
industry on the part of some Baganda growers made them desire
to control ginneries themselves. Indians could not surrender
their monopoly without resistance. Herein lay the root of the
hostility toward the Indian business class. An emergent
Baganda petty bourgeoisie saw their incomes being held down
at a time of rising world prices by a rapacious British
government and their entrepreneurial opportunities being
blocked by an Indian ginning monopoly. Hence the desire to
control both marketing and ginning, which they believed, could
only be achieved by political action. It should emphasized
that the UNC was closely tied to the system of export cash
crops. Undoubtedly, one of the major objective of the movement
was to gain larger incomes for Africans.

The social origins of the Uganda National Congress was,
then, threefold:

(a) Baganda cotton farmers, whose interest in larger incomes
had long been expressed in political ways, were opposed more
specifically now to the colonial state because it controlled
the prices of cotton at a much lower level than was clearly
possible.

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[40]. CO 537/5920   See East Africa Command Fortnightly
Intelligence Newsletter, Nairobi, No.61, 1 November, 1950.

(b) Non-Baganda cotton farmers in certain areas, notably Acholi, Lango, Bukedi and Busoga who had gained an interest in the prices of cotton and in organizing to participate in its marketing.

(c) The emergent Baganda petty bourgeoisie who wished to participate in the lucrative trading and processing sectors of the economy, together with certain educate elements who advocated a nation of Uganda in which Afric rowers would be united, and in which an African bourgec . would be welcomed as a replacement for a European and Indian one.

## Collapse of the Nationalist initiative.

Nationalist politics of the UNC brand were short-lived. Two reasons lay behind the failure of the UNC's initiative. A widening gap developed between the Buganda petty bourgeoisie and the non-Baganda peasants, while the gap between the Baganda ruling class and the Baganda petty bourgeoisie narrowed.[50] Both cotton and coffee prices were rising in the period 1952 - 1954. Cotton reached a peak of 61 cents a pound in 1954, but coffee reached Shillings 1/50 a pound that same year. Cotton farmers were still, even at a price of 60 cents, subsidizing the export of cheap cotton through providing their own subsistence. The point to note is that only a handful of cotton farmers could become anything other than peasant

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[50]. See Mamdani, op. cit., pp.205-9

farmers, and these were increasingly confined to the northern and eastern regions of Uganda. It might be noted that the western province and West Nile in the north did not grow cotton at all. While in the drier parts of Buganda furthest away from Lake Victoria cotton was still the major cash crop, in most of Buganda during the late 1940s and the 1950s coffee was increasingly grown and in certain areas, notably Masaka district, had almost replaced cotton altogether. Here, both land and labour were abundant. The climate also favoured coffee production. A large number of Baganda kulaks/traders were making their appearance by the 1950s, and were becoming increasingly conscious of their interests. They were beneficiaries of the colonial economy. They believed themselves and their area to be more "developed" than other areas.[51] They began to see their interests as different from those of farmers outside Buganda. They were differentiating from cotton farmers and increasingly so. They could afford more education for their children and place them in lucrative salaried employment. So far as their economic position was concerned, they could see little reason for change, and as argued earlier, they feared rapid change that seemed to leave them out of the picture. Thus economically, the Baganda farmers were becoming increasingly satisfied. Their specific

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[51]. See M.S.M. Kiwanuka; "Nationality and Nationalism in Africa: The Uganda Case"., Canadian Journal of African Studies, 4,2,(1970) p.239.

grievances had focused upon the proportion of the cash proceeds from cotton and coffee siphoned off by the government, and the composition of the Lukiiko. The British administration decided to deal with both these grievances. By increasing both cotton and coffee prices, the British removed one of the specific grievances. Cohen also took measures using part of the accumulated profits from the marketing boards to open up the possibilities of Baganda participation in ginning.[32] Furthermore, a committee was established to examine the position of Africans in trade. Proposals for developing African trading helped to assuage the feelings of those shopkeepers and small merchants who had been among the most aggrieved in Uganda and whose political activities were of major significance. By dealing effectively with the economic discontent, it could be argued that Cohen had dealt the nationalist movement its death blow.

Politically, by early 1953 Cohen had persuaded the Kabaka to increase very significantly the elective representation in the Lukiiko, thus dealing with one of the pressing grievance. Another political grievance existing at the time of the founding of UNC was the threat of an East African Federation. Baganda farmers feared that in the federation, production and the distribution of land would be organised for the benefit of the Kenyan settlers. This threat

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[32]. Apter, op. cit., pp.268-9.

was diminished by the end of 1954 during the Kabaka crisis.
Cohen's liberalism and his policy of "keeping the initiative"
spelled disaster for Uganda nationalism:

> Not only did the reforms go to the heart of the
> difficulties facing Uganda but, as well, the
> government stole the initiative from the public. It
> became the most aggressive and positive force for
> change - change, moreover, whose object was to draw
> together the nation as a whole.[33]

Consequently, by the mid-1950s, both the specific grievances
and the class alliance on which the UNC had been founded had
virtually disappeared.

Sir Andrew Cohen wished to guide nationalism into what
he called "constructive channels", by which he meant
deliberately to prevent a radical and non-cooperative
political opposition. The deportation of the Kabaka, because
he protested against the threatened imposition of the East
African Federation, could be presented as a nationalist
grievance common to all Ugandans. This held the UNC together
during the period of the Kabaka's exile. Congress had an issue
which might be presented as "national" around which people
could be mobilised, especially in Buganda.

But after 1955 the organization of the party broke with
the threat of an East African Federation receding, and
diminished Baganda participation in the movement with
increasing satisfaction of the Baganda petty bourgeoisie. This

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[33]. Apter, _Ibid._.

in turn led to greater prominence of non-Baganda in the movement. But the Baganda leaders refused to accept that Baganda dominance in the higher positions of the party should be weakened.[54] In response the Non-Baganda supporters became increasingly suspicious of the Baganda leaders. The decision to form the UNC was itself a turning of attention to the British and away from the Baganda ruling class. The high point of class feeling in Buganda had been reached in 1949. After that, relationships had improved rapidly.[55] It was symptomatic of the changed situation that Musazi, who had been deported from Buganda in 1949 for opposition to the Kabaka, fled to Sudan on the day of the Kabaka's deportation fearing retribution for his support of Mutesa. The greatest changes however, had occurred on the side of the Baganda ruling class under the leadership of the Kabaka himself. In effect he decided to oppose the colonial government and therefore to ally with the nationalist movement. His motives might have been two fold: the federation of East Africa would have seemed

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[54]. See Letter by Paulo Muwanga to the General Secretary, British Labour Party, dated 11 July 1957 explaining the split in U.N.C. leadership, and the formation of a new party, the United Congress Party.

[55]. It has already been noted that class antagonism in Buganda was moderated by the Busulu and Nvujjo law of 1928. The 1945 assassination of the Katikiro Martin Luther Nsibirwa because he sought to change the land law illustrated the growing interest of Baganda peasants in the status quo as far as land tenure was concerned. When incomes from cash crops rose rapidly after 1945, interest in land tenure became even greater. Meanwhile, the rent and Nvujjo payments had become insignificant.

to him a most serious threat to his own position and that of
his class. Indeed that class could not have existed if
European settlers had been present in Uganda in large numbers,
as was the case in Kenya. If now European settlers were to
capture the predominant political position in East Africa, his
own class position would be destroyed. Alternatively, if the
British did not impose federation but instead withdrew from
formal political control of Uganda, as they had already done
in India and clearly intended in Ghana, the Baganda ruling
class would be in danger if a political movement it did not
control took power. For this reason, it was necessary to
become a Buganda nationalist in order to preserve his class
position. The Kabaka argued his case thus:

> Our friendship [with Cohen] deteriorated fairly
> rapidly from mild rriendship through polite
> restraint to open enmity. It soon became clear that
> his plans for a unitary state with a Legislative
> Council directly elected could not include me. His
> mistake was to think that it was a personal issue,
> that if I could be removed all would be well.[36]

Indeed it was not a personal issue. It was a national issue.

Accordingly, he had opposed Cohen on three basic issues:

(a) the threat of an East African federation

(b) the demand for a timetable towards Buganda's independence

(c) Buganda's representation in the Legislative Council

The last was a corollary to the second; if independence was
to be pursued by a movement under his control, it could not

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[36]. The Kabaka, op. cit., pp. 114-5.

be achieved through the Legislative Council, which was not under Baganda control. At the same time the Kabaka was by definition the rallying point of Buganda nationalism. There was therefore one line of policy which the Kabaka could reasonably be expected to pursue, and that was to fight for the independence of Buganda. However unrealistic this might have appeared to others, it would have been absurd to expect him to support the interests of the protectorate government if these ran counter to this aim. It was clear that the leaders of the UNC must support the Kabaka on the first issue, that of the East African Federation.[57] While trying to defend the interests of his class, the Kabaka practically forced Sir Andrew Cohen to deport him. The deportation of the Kabaka weakened the UNC because the Buganda ruling class had to control the alliance between themselves and the petty bourgeoisie.

Last but not least, Cohen, who was constitutionally minded, wished to press on with constitutional development and thereby anticipate demands not yet vocal. This seems to have been a factor behind his appointment. The Colonial Office was always being accused of making offers too late. It would be understandable if in this case an attempt was made to move ahead of public demands. But by moving ahead Cohen took the sting out of the nationalist movement by opening up the

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[57]. See Mamdani, _op. cit._, p.211.

Legislature and the Executive Councils to Africans before they even demanded it.[56]

## The Social Origins of the Democratic Party

The founding of the Democratic Party (DP) in 1956 was a new response to an old situation. Like that of the UNC, its leadership sprang from politics within Buganda. But in this case, the social cleavage which gave rise to political expression was religious rather than economic.

Protestant (Anglican) ascendency within the ruling class in Buganda dating back to the religious wars of the 1890s and formalised in the 1900 Uganda Agreement, had allowed educated Protestants opportunities in certain administrative posts within the Buganda government, and these in general expanded at the same pace as the provision of education. Social mobility , the lack of which was an important motivation for many educated nationalists elsewhere, existed in Buganda. This was partly the result of the position of Baganda leaders as subordinate administrative allies of the British. But for the Catholics, these opportunities were much more limited. The DP was therefore founded by educated Baganda Catholics who wished to open up employment opportunities for themselves and their group. Many of these were or were related to landowners. They remembered the discrimination practised against catholics in

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[56]. See the preceding two chapters.

the original land distribution. Others were the educated sons of successful tenant farmers who saw discrimination being practised against them in the employment.[58] They sought redress not revolution. This explains the title of the party: democracy was conceived as the allocation of positions of power and influence in accordance with numerical preponderance within the population. The Catholics were the majority in Uganda. It also explains the party's growing concern with Africanisation, that is, the opening up of employment opportunities previously occupied by non-Africans.

The party blossomed. The DP gained support outside Buganda because it was able to find parallel situations on which it could build support. It was common throughout Uganda for Protestants to predominate within local administration. Educated Catholics therefore, had similar motives to their Baganda counterparts. Hence the identity "Catholic" was used to unite these people just as the identity "Baganda " or "Ugandans" was used to unite others.

The success of the DP illustrated the failure of the nationalist initiative. It was not itself a nationalist party in the sense that it did not attempt to use an ideology of nationalism to unite all the people of Uganda against colonial rule. Certainly Karugire was right when he asserted:

> Similarly the formation of the D.P. was not a step
> towards uniting the country under the umbrella of
> a single national, less still nationalist, party;

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[58]. See Karugire, op. cit., passim.

> it was a step towards conforming to religious
> polarities that had existed in Uganda's public life
> since the turn of the nineteenth century. Religious
> faith and ethnic boundaries still counted for a
> great deal and Uganda for less or little.[60]

It is true that DP united people across ethnic lines, but this was at least partly the result of its limited objectives. It started from a premise of competition and not one of unity. National independence was not its priority.

## Social Origins of the Progressive Party

Founded in 1955, the Progressive Party (P.P.) was the party of the men of substance. It was less populist and egalitarian than the UNC. The founding group, led by Eridad M.K. Mulira, included important members of the Lukiiko, African businessmen of "some distinction", and others who had served on various public bodies, township authorities, school boards, and church organizations.[61] The president of the P.P., Mulira was a "quiet, dignified, and courageous" man who subsequently became an important figure in Buganda politics.[62]

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[60]. Karugire, op. cit., p.162.

[61]. Apter, op. cit., pp. 337-9.

[62]. Himself a son of a chief from Kooki, he was related by marriage to Ham Mukasa, one of the great chiefs of Buganda and a great landowner. Mulira was educated at King's College, Budo, Achimota College in Ghana, and at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University. While in London he contributed two articles on the political development of Uganda which were published by the Fabian Colonial Bureau ("Troubled Uganda" and "Uganda: the next crisis country"). A teacher, lay preacher, a newspaper publisher and politician, he was highly respected by all communities in Uganda. Sir

He was the key man on the Lukiiko delegation which negotiated for the Kabaka's return. He was also a leading member of the Buganda constitutional committee which met Professor Hancock at Namirembe, thus playing a vital role during the Kabaka crisis. Mulira was an independent thinker. He set the tone for the party. Writing on the conditions of Buganda after the Second World War, he had advocated individual freedom and representative government:

> No nation can go forward half-free. But the peasants of Buganda are far from being ranked as free. The chiefs make the legislature for them, and the chiefs execute the laws of their own making. The peasant has no say in the whole undertaking except to bow and do the will of his landlord. It would be all right if the overlord had at heart the well-being of his peasant, but when the majority look at chieftainship as a handsome way of getting on in life and securing a livelihood, it becomes hard for the ruled, for each chief tries to seek the favour of the other chief above him as an easy way of getting promoted, rather than to promote the interests of his vassals. ...
> A representative government, therefore, is what we want. We want all the sections of the country to be represented in the government of their country.[63]

This was before the riots of 1945 and 1949 made reforms imperative. But obviously this scathing attack did not endear him to the chiefs. He remained suspect. Loyal to the Kabaka but "sturdily independent" in expressing his views, he became unpopular with the Buganda government after the Kabaka's

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Andrew Cohen referred to him as the "most moderate and intellectual" of the political leaders at the time.

[63]. Reproduced from Apter, op. cit., p.339

return. For protesting against the inequitable distribution of 154 square miles of land, with which the Lukiiko wished to reward those who had been significant in bringing the Kabaka home, Mulira was ousted from the Lukiiko and charged in court with disrespect to the throne and Kabaka. He prevailed in court but was prevented from taking his seat in the Lukiiko for over a year.[84] Firm and consistent, Mulira nevertheless failed to inspire a substantial political following. Frustrated, he later joined with I.K.Musazi in founding the Uganda National Movement in 1958.

Although the P.P. leaders claimed to be "progressive", they were a conservative group. Not exactly a party of intellectuals, nevertheless all were educated men and women. They were mostly Budo and old Makerere graduates. In terms of occupation, the thirty-nine member ruling body consisted of twenty-one landlords and businessmen, nine teachers, two farmers, two housewives, two full-time party leaders, one lawyer and one doctor. On the other hand, the leadership and the following was predominantly Protestant. Of the thirty-nine members of the central committee, there were only four non-Protestants. They were a propertied group. Successful and independent of the Mengo hierarchy, these "prestige-bearing people", were both "envied and disliked".[85] However for a long

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[84]. Apter, *ibid*..

[85]. *Ibid*., p.338.

time the P.P. was the only party with a sizeable representation in the Lukiiko. Its Lukiiko contingent consisted of twelve actual members and twenty sympathizers.

The party advocated a federal system and propounded the need for trade and economic development as well as individual freedom. Although the members were mostly "moderates", they had a large stake in Buganda and its government. Nevertheless, they were not sympathetic to the chiefs, and the Buganda government formed at the time of the Kabaka's return was largely a chiefs' government. Clearly this explained why the Buganda government were antagonistic to the P.P. and failed to recognise that it might have provided its strongest ally in defending class privileges.

## Party politics and the growth of Buganda nationalism

The period from 1954 to independence in 1962 was one of overt competition between political parties. This was partially because the British had made significant concessions during the Kabaka crisis which indicated that self-government would come soon. The British began to look for new groups with whom to cooperate, and the proliferation of parties was clearly a response to this search. The competition among the political parties reflected social cleavages. These cleavages were not primarily along ethnic lines, though this is how they appeared and have often been presented. The parties which spread throughout Uganda illustrate this, and the activities of those who opposed parties, particularly in Buganda,

indicated that they wished to prevent them from spreading

there. This was sadly admitted by the Kabaka:

> The Lukiiko disapproved of the whole idea of
> political parties, and it can be argued that it is
> un-African concept. .... Though parties tended to
> be led by Baganda, they were active outside my
> kingdom. In the long run this was perhaps
> unfortunate, as it meant that there was no national
> party in which we were deeply involved, no natural
> ally beyond our own boundaries.[96]

Lukiiko disapproval was not unanimous. Some of its members

were active in party politics particularly in the Progressive

Party. The gulf that appeared between Buganda and the rest of

the protectorate was partly an expression of, on one hand, the

resentment which the inhabitants of a non-growth area exhibit

for those of a growth area, and on the other hand, the

"superiority complex" which the relatively privileged Buganda

exhibited. However from the outset, the Uganda nationalists

were confronted by Buganda nationalism whose primary objective

was to serve the interests of Buganda rather than Uganda. Why

did Buganda regard itself as a "distinct nationality" and how

did Buganda nationalism help or hinder the development of

Uganda nationalism? What role did the British as a colonizing

power play in promoting or discouraging the growth of Buganda

nationalism?

Apart from British policy, a number of historical factors

have been identified to explain the growth of Buganda

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[96]. The Kabaka, op. cit., p.150.

nationalism. At the advent of British rule, Buganda was a distinct nationality, with a ruling dynasty over five centuries old. The Kingdom was also riding a crest of expansionist nationalism. British occupation curtailed Buganda's imperial ambitions. However, the Buganda ruling oligarchy allied itself with the British in consolidating British rule in both Buganda and neighbouring areas. For their cooperation, the oligarchs were rewarded with freehold land titles and assigned a new role of "sub-imperialists". The Baganda were never treated as a conquered people. As a result of the partition of this region of Africa, their pride and prestige had been boosted.

The size and strategic location of Buganda were equally important in promoting local nationalism. Territorially, it constituted a quarter of the new Ugandan state. This was strategically located in the so-called northern fertile crescent around Lake Victoria. Cash crops, commerce, education, and missionary activity were all first concentrated here. Significantly, the Baganda chiefs were receptive to missionary education and new ideas and techniques:

> As members of an oligarchy which owed its position to its power, its skills, and ability rather than to claims of high birth, they sought for themselves and their sons the techniques and knowledge with which to confirm their leadership. As a result, they have not been rapidly surpassed by new men better educated than they and more suited for political and

administrative responsibility.[87]

These men provided Buganda with strong and progressive leadership for decades, resulting in steady social and economic growth. Therefore, the circumstances of European penetration made Buganda more "advanced" than the rest of Uganda and this accentuated the Baganda sense of superiority.[88]

British policy also contributed to the strength of Buganda nationalism. The "special relationship" between Buganda and Britain established through the 1900 Uganda Agreement, and the practice of indirect rule, reinforced rather than undermined traditional national pride. "By favouring Buganda, the British helped emphasize the differences which already existed"[89] between the Kingdom and the rest of Uganda. In addition, successive governors such as Sir Charles Dundas and Sir John Hall were prepared to give more autonomy to Buganda. Even Cohen, who aimed at developing a unitary state, twice in 1953 and 1955 granted Buganda increased control over its internal affairs. Like his predecessors, Cohen found himself pursuing policies which not only enhanced Buganda nationality, but provoked hostile

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[87]. R.C.Pratt; "Nationalism in Uganda", Political Studies, vol.9, 1961, p.176

[88]. With a population of over 1,5000,000 [1948 census], Baganda were by far the largest ethnic group in Uganda. By the 1950s Buganda was just large enough and wealthy enough for many Baganda to feel that if necessary, they could "go it alone", as an become independent state.

[89]. Kiwanuka, op. cit., p.234.

reaction from other parts of Uganda. For example, when direct elections to the Legislative Council were proposed in 1956, Cohen's view was that they would be held first in Buganda, which would provide an example to the other parts of Uganda.[70] As Kiwanuka pointed out: "To the Baganda and, as well as to the non-Baganda, all these factors indicated British preferential treatment and the repercussions provoked by such a belief are still reverberating".[71] The Buganda superiority complex was replaced by a sense of insecurity as the politicians from the non-growth area began talking of the need for equalization. But insecurity was also a result of the specific clash of interests between the Buganda ruling class and those they conceived as threatening their position. For instance, in Buganda any effort by Catholics to disturb Protestant dominance was likely to arouse reaction.

The ideology used to support the attempt on the part of the ruling class to maintain the status quo was "tradition", sometimes referred to as "neo-traditionalism".[72] It involved an elaborate attempt, for class reasons, to maintain that Buganda tradition went back to 1900, in other words to the time of the land settlement, and no further. The tradition was that the Katikiro should be a Protestant. But

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[70]. See preceding chapter.

[71]. Kiwanuka; op. cit..

[72]. Apter, op. cit., pp.195 - 215

in 1955 the Catholics, through better organization, almost
succeeded in electing Mugwanya (the Omulamuzi) to the
katikiroship.[73] Henceforth, it became a matter of settled
policy among the Protestants to press for the greatest
possible "unity" in Buganda. Appeals for trans-religious and
trans-class support were made through emphasizing both the
traditional loyalty of the Baganda to the Kabaka and
nationalist loyalty to him for his defiance of the British.
Political opponents were accused of disloyalty to the Kabaka
or to Kiganda culture. Not all these were Catholics however;
highly educated Protestants such as Mulira and W.Sentezza-
Kajubi were included, implying that there was an element of
fear of any educated politicians who might try in future to
disturb the existing order. Such was the genesis which
exacerbated Buganda nationalism, "particularism" or
"separatism". It asserted that the Baganda were united: it was
intended to suppress existing divisions among them. But the
ideology had its basis in the social conditions within
Buganda. The alliance between the ruling class and the petty
bourgeoisie particularly the richer peasants, based on their
common interest in the land tenure system, made it possible
for politicians to organise on the basis of Baganda identity.
One peculiar aspect of Buganda nationalism starting in the
late 1950    was its overt hostility towards Ugandan

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[73]. Karugire, op. cit., pp.157-8

nationalists especially those from Buganda. Karugire observed:

> Not content with hamstringing the national political
> parties in this way, Mengo inaugurated and stepped
> up a harassment campaign against the leaders and
> supporters of the national parties lest they secured
> a foothold in Buganda and then threaten their own
> monopoly of power. This harassment took the form of
> frequently imprisoning the leaders of the parties
> on trumped up charges and encouraging arson directed
> against the party leaders and supporters alike. The
> protectorate government looked on helplessly.[74]

Uganda nationalism was "rendered nearly treasonable".[75] The other characteristic of Buganda nationalism was its external aspect, that is, the object against which it directed antagonism. This was not the British. The determining factor seems to have been quite a specific one; an assessment of which group, above all, threatened the land settlement.

From the time of the Kabaka's return in 1955, the Buganda government launched a concerted attack against Uganda nationalism. The primary explanation for this is that the Buganda ruling oligarchy realised that it could not lead Uganda in the way it wanted. Modern political parties, operating in conditions of universal suffrage combined with direct elections, threatened the old order for which the oligarchs stood. It was therefore not surprising that the Mengo regime adopted obstructive tactics to frustrate the

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[74]. Karugire, op. cit., pp.165-7.

[75]. Apter, op. cit., p.178.

Uganda independence movement and the colonial administration.[76]

Buganda's obstructive policies, especially between 1956-61, aroused anti-Buganda sentiments in the rest of the protectorate. Unlike Uganda-wide nationalism, anti-Buganda sentiment had long existed and had been reinforced throughout the colonial period. Non-Baganda politicians began to unite and advocated outright challenges to what they alleged was Buganda domination and separatism. Undoubtedly, Buganda's heightened nationalism perturbed even those politicians who, for the sake of building a united Uganda, were still prepared to co-operate with the Baganda leaders.

The new Buganda elite joined the old elite in shaping Buganda nationalism. Unlike West Africa, where the educated elite often battled the old elite for political influence, in Buganda this confrontation was limited. This, in the last analysis, helps to explain the weakness of Uganda-wide nationalism. Certainly not all the educated elite succumbed to Buganda nationalism, but those who did not were a small minority. Many radical dissenters later capitulated. The explanation for this phenomenon was what Apter called the resilience of "a modernising autocracy".[77] The Buganda ruling oligarchy used to recruit as many of the would-be agitators

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[76]. See Kiwanuka, op. cit., p.239.

[77]. Apter, op. cit., pp.438-58.

as possible.[78] But perhaps the most important factor, as Kiwanuka pointed out, was that many of the outsiders, that is, the potential antagonists of the regime, were either sons or relatives of the insiders:

> As the heirs apparent to the existing regime, their opposition was generally tempered by the hope that in the near future they would have to defend that regime from its enemies. There were other types of outsiders who looked upon themselves as heirs presumptive, that is, they were acceptable members of the establishment either because they wore the right school tie, or worshipped God in the approved manner. Many of these, too, had their opposition tempered by the hope that they would one day walk in the same corridors of power.[79]

Understandably, opposition to the Buganda establishment was mild and vacillating. Once the former opponents joined the oligarchy, they become its extreme defenders so as to win the confidence of the conservatives. Clearly, the strength of Buganda society had been its pluralism over the years and not "populism" as Low argued. Buganda,s nationalism existed long

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[78]. The oligarchy was not limited by tradition or practice to any particular clan or lineage. Entry was open to any Muganda with the talent, the ambition, and the connections which were needed to assure an initial appointment. Moreover, the attractions of office in Buganda had always been much greater than that of any post in the protectorate government. Therefore, educated Baganda had neither needed nor were tempted to stand outside their national institutions as critics. Ethnic /national loyalty, ambition, and family connections always drew them into the oligarchy.

[79]. Kiwanuka, op. cit., p.241

before colonial rule.[80] Buganda had been a cohesive nation-state into which foreigners emigrated in order to assimilate. It was unlike any of the other political entities prior to colonial rule. British policies throughout the colonial period and the Baganda ability to adopt western influence without abandoning their traditional institutions enhanced this nationalism. Buganda's heightened nationalism in turn provoked anti-Buganda resentment as a second and negative force in Uganda politics. It was this feeling which held a number of alliances and coalitions of the many non-Baganda ethnicities together, even though the cultural differences of any of the parties were very great. Because Buganda nationalism had a historical base from which to operate, it showed a remarkable degree of resilience and could hold more allegiances than Uganda-wide nationalism.

## British attitude towards Uganda nationalism

In a quite novel examination of the British attitude to nationalism in colonial Africa, it has been pointed out that the general tendency to regard nationalism and imperialism as "bipolarities in a state of extreme opposition and tension" need re-evaluation. In his study, Flint concludes that: "the relationship between those who made colonial policy and those

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[80]. At the opposite extreme was the loosely administered and relatively tolerant multi-national empire of Bunyoro. The Omukama (king of Bunyoro) often spoke out during colonialism for the acephalus peoples with whom his ancestors had had to deal. Not so the Kabaka who embodied the narrow nationalist spirit of his homogeneous Kingdom.

who articulated nationalist aspirations was not one of opposite and mutually repellant forces".[81] Conceding that the tensions between the colonial rulers and nationalists were inevitable, he asserted that "this was a tension more like the irascibility of a family quarrel than the clash of totally alien one to another".[82] According to his thesis:

> Once British colonial policy makers began to contemplate extensive reform of the system it becomes even more evident that colonial nationalism was not the opposite of, but a necessary function of, the stage of imperialism which had been reached. Given that the imperial government remained, until the very final phase, sovereign over the political system, it was natural that the Colonial Office would increasingly look upon nationalism as a phenomenon to be "managed" as an aspect of overall imperial policy.[83]

Two important points are implied here: First, that nationalism per se was not viewed as an evil but as natural, and "moderate" nationalism was a welcome development. Secondly, nationalism if "managed" properly could provide a useful tool of imperial policy. A close study of the British attitude towards the Uganda nationalists and nationalism in the post-war period tends to confirm this view. The Ugandan case goes even further. It might be argued that if Flint is correct in his assessment the British failure in Uganda could be

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[81]. See John Flint, "Managing Nationalism: the Colonial Office and Nnamde Azikiwe, 1934 – 1943", Seminar paper, history department, Dalhousie University, 1987.

[82]. ibid..

[83]. ibid..

pinpointed to the lack of a coherent, even moderate nationalism.

In this era of rapid social and economic changes, colonial governors were expected not only to preserve but equally to cultivate friendly relations with the emergent "middle class", generally the "revolutionary" or at least progressive class in a colony. The first indications of such British thinking in Uganda came in 1945. A nationalistic pamphlet by a Uganda war veteran sparked off a heated discussion in the Colonial Office. Referring to Sergeant-Major Robert Kakembo, the author of <u>An African Soldier Speaks</u>, an official noted:

> ... does the Ugandan Government intend to do anything to secure that the author's political imagination and energy is harnessed to the Government's machine before time has allowed it to run counter to, and become subversive of, the governmental machine? Men of this calibre are new and few in Uganda, but more are going to be turned out by Makerere as time goes on: where is their niche?[84]

There was little doubt as to what the Colonial Office had in mind. The elite was bound to grow. Its capabilities could be utilized by the colonial system. The best way, and the most practical, was to co-opt them. It was typical of neo-colonial thinking that the intelligentsia should be, could be and must be co-opted. Nationalist movements provided the best opportunity for the colonial rulers to identify and

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[84]. CO 822/118 Minute by C. Rankin, 5 June 1945.

distinguish the "future leaders" from the subversives. These movements tended to draw together the middle class - the chosen instrument of decolonization, and hence made it easier for the British to target them and "manage" them. The tactics adopted in managing nationalism changed as nationalism itself evolved. Manipulation ranged from awarding scholarships to agitators to go abroad to "cool off", "a little propaganda" by the governor at social gatherings, offering jobs in the civil service, creating multi-national social clubs, offering small loans to African business or kulak farmers, dispatching delegations overseas - all expenses paid to be entertained by the British Council or other potential sponsors and reducing colour-bar discrimination. When co-optation failed, coercion was employed. This included suspension of nationalist newspapers, deportation of political figures, banning political movements and imprisonment of politicians. For example when the UNC initiated a three months' trade boycott in an effort to force the revision of the Deportation Ordinance, the party was not banned because it was feared such a move might prove ineffective, merely driving it underground.[85] The Bataka Party and the U.A.F.U. were not considered "constructive" and not useful to the British. They were both banned in 1949. Their leadership had been judged subversive. The degree of tolerance also varied with the

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[85]. CO 822/1150  See Intel no.123, 3 June 1954.

intensity and tone of nationalist agitation. This was evident in the Colonial Office assessment of the possible impact of the Kabaka's return on the nationalist movement in Uganda:

> Nor, perhaps, is it altogether harmful if at present the Buganda tide flows all one way, provided there are constitutional channels for it to flow in. It can reasonably be held that it would be worse if, while the clever young men were campaigning for an all-African Uganda government, the traditionalists were taking refuge in pure tribalism, neo-paganism etc., as they already show signs of doing (note in particular the Bataka schools). If the Kabaka's presence is likely to divert the Baganda traditionalists from something on Kikuyu lines to something on Gold Coast lines, then, however inconvenient Gold Coast type nationalism may be, we should clearly choose it as the lesser evil.[66]

One brand of nationalism was preferable to another. "Extremist" nationalists were treated harshly. "Moderates" were handled with respect. Managing nationalism implied forestalling extremism. The most precise indications of British policy regarding nationalists and nationalism could be found in Cohen's despatches to the Colonial Office outlining the thrust of policy in Uganda:

> It is ironical that the Uganda National Congress, which regards itself and is generally regarded as an opponent of Government, should in fact be one of the forces which I believe is likely to promote the unity of the country. ... The local branches of the Congress in the Districts outside Buganda are mostly unconstructive and parochial in their attitude and some members in the central executive are irresponsible and unreliable. The Congress as a whole has said some extremely wild things. But there are elements in the central body of the Congress ... who take a constructive view, are thoughtful and are not extremists. These people can be worked with and are

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[66]. CO 822/750 Office memo by Mary Fisher, 27 May 1955.

deserving encouragement.[87]

The British had come to recognise nationalism as a positive force which could assist in uniting their artificial creations. This was a significant change from the earlier policy of managing ethnic divisions otherwise known as the "divide and rule policy". Cohen then concluded:

> The activities of political parties generally may on occasion lead to trouble and members of parties must keep the law like everybody else. But political parties are potentially a unifying force in the country, and I believe that Government should do all it properly can to encourage their orderly growth.[88]

Unfortunately, when the nationalist movements failed, so did British policy. The Ugandan nationalists might have felt persecuted but in fact the administration's main concern was the apparent weakness of the political parties. The British would have preferred better organized and more popular parties as allies. Such parties would have been much easier to influence and could be trusted not only to maintain order and stability but also protect British interests.

Conclusion

Uganda's political advance to self-government was unique in East and Central Africa because there was no Ugandan

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[87]. CO 822/1072 Despatch no.2, Sir Andrew Cohen to Secretary of State, 4 January 1957.

[88]. Ibid..

nationalism. Its cotton, coffee, developing mining and industry ensured national prosperity by African standards. There were no European settlers. The land was reserved for African use. Cooperative production and marketing guaranteed a fairer distribution of wealth to the African population than anywhere else in East and Central Africa. Most producers remained peasants. A liberal administration removed political and economic sources of discontent, often the basis of anti-colonial mobilization elsewhere, thereby undermining the development of mass political movements. Immigrants supplied industrial and agricultural labour. Hence the trade union movement was slow to develop and had no significant impact on pre-independence politics. The intelligentsia was absorbed in the colonial administrative system and thus did not provide effective leadership to a national political struggle.

In addition, the traditional leaders and institutions acted as brakes on political developments. They arrested the emergence of nationalist movements. As a result, by 1960 there was no political party to which power could be transferred with any real confidence that that party would be able to hold the country together. The Buganda Lukiiko in particular continually refused to nominate members to the Legislative Council for fear of that body becoming too powerful and too African. Most leading politicians often appeared more concerned with wresting economic control from the Asian minority than preparing for self-government. Undoubtedly, it

was not Uganda nationalism which dominated the Uganda scene in the decade leading to self-government. The centre stage was shared between primary nationalisms and the imperial power as highlighted by the Kabaka crisis and the persistent demands by Buganda for independence separate from the rest of the protectorate. Ironically, in the context of African nationalism, it was the colonial administration, especially under Sir Andrew Cohen, which was trying to develop a modern centralised government and create a sense of national unity. The Baganda nationalists were opposed to such centralization. They feared that in a centralised state under democratic methods of election they would lose their power. This was the Ugandan dilemma. Uganda could not advance to self-government without the cooperation of Buganda, its most advanced province and the centre of its economy. Yet the Baganda leaders were prepared to check constitutional advance to prevent loss of power to modern, representative politicians. The result was the rise of anti-Buganda feelings among the non-Baganda politicians. This was another negative form of nationalism which could not help the unity of the country. Buganda nationalism was dominant. Anti-Buganda sentiment was significant. Uganda nationalism was crippled. The rise of Buganda nationalism was most significant because it distorted Uganda nationalism. Consequently, from 1957 until independence in 1962, the political struggle in Uganda was mainly among the different national groups vying to ensure their status or to

extend their privileges before the British withdrawal. Thus the important question in Uganda was not whether or when the British would leave but rather who would get what when they departed.

The failure of any political party to emerge with a coherent national program to mobilize people against imperial rule not only illustrated a lack of organization but rather a more fundamental problem: the lack of a national consciousness and desire for national unity. The benefits of national unity were not apparent to the general population. The modern nationalists were handicapped and ineffective relative to the primary nationalists. While there were nationalists who advocated self-government for the whole country, there was no Uganda nationalism based on mass popular support.

# CHAPTER SIX

## POST-SCRIPT

### TOWARDS SELF-GOVERNMENT : THE UNRESOLVED ISSUES

Of all the countries once part of the British empire in Africa, there can be little doubt that Uganda has suffered the worst hardships; economic dislocation, political instability and the horrors of cruel dictatorships and civil war. Yet Uganda, upon decolonization was praised as one of the most promising of the new African nations, politically stable and developing economically. It is clear, therefore, that there were fundamental problems which were not addressed in the arrangements under which the British transferred power to Ugandan politicians. This chapter seeks to illuminate what these lacunae were, and whether imperial politicians and bureaucrats in London had any inkling that they remained unsolved. Did colonial officials on the spot, or Ugandan nationalist leaders, warn London of these unresolved problems, and was any account taken of criticisms of decolonization schemes and constitutional changes? Was the sorry history of independent Uganda simply a story of crass mismanagement and worse, or were post independence developments rooted in much deeper failures with a long history behind them? All these questions need to be addressed.

In November 1958 the first direct elections were held for the Legislative Council. These, however, took place in

221

only ten of the fourteen districts outside Buganda. Buganda refused to participate. Karamoja district had been left out in the original proposals. Ankole and Bugisu had opted for indirect elections. This was the first election contested by political parties across the country. Three parties fielded candidates - the UNC, the PP, and the DP. The UNC won four seats and the DP only one. The rest of the elected members were independents. However, immediately following the elections, seven representative members formed a new party, the Uganda People's Union (UPU). The UPU drew its support from the Western Kingdoms and parts of the Eastern province. The formation of the UPU was important in that:

> It was the first party to be formed by non-Baganda. Its leaders all belonged to the Legislative Council; and potentially it represented three-fifths of the whole country, not upon any particular anti-colonial platform, but primarily in opposition to Buganda and its neo-traditionalism in particular.[1]

But the significance of the election was that henceforth the political initiative moved to the African members in the Council. The representative members could now claim a popular mandate and a popular base. They were immediately engaged in a three sided constitutional debate with the Buganda government and the protectorate government. The debate centred on two issues: the pace of constitutional changes, and the concept of a unitary state as stipulated by Cohen in 1953. The

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[1]. D.A. Low, <u>Buganda in Modern History</u>, University of California Press, California and Berkeley, 1971, p.192.

first was handled by the Wild Committee whose report is discussed later in the chapter.

As self government approached, the British recognized that the basic political problem in Uganda was the relationship "between the central government, the legislature of Uganda, and the different tribes and institutions".[2] In the past, the actions of the protectorate government had been based on the assumption that the country was to develop as a unitary state. In 1952 this had been officially confirmed by the British government. The Colonial Office was convinced this was the correct policy. Nevertheless the British were well aware that developing the political institutions of the country under a unitary system would be a daunting task. The main obstacle to a unitary system, Cohen had noted, was "the strong tribalism which has been a marked characteristic of Uganda".[3] The strength of local nationalism made federalism more attractive to most people than the all powerful central government which a unitary state implied. Federalism also provided room for accommodation of traditional rulers and institutions which in some cases were highly valued. The central government, in spite of increased African participation, was still generally regarded as an outside body. This situation applied to the whole country, although

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[2]. CO 822/1072 Letter by Sir Andrew Cohen to Secretary of State, 4 January 1957.

[3]. Ibid..

it was in Buganda that the problem arose in its most acute
form:

> Securing acceptance by the Baganda generally of the
> central government as an institution belonging to the
> country can not obviously be done either easily or
> quickly, and this is something which does not approach
> being in sight yet. It is not even possible to say at
> this stage whether we shall succeed in this task; if not
> it will be much more difficult to establish a unitary
> constitution for the whole country in the future.[4]

The popular opinion in Buganda was that a federal system would
limit the powers over them of a central government in which
their neighbours might predominate.[5] Ironically, some
districts outside Buganda viewed a federal arrangement as a
safeguard against Baganda domination.[6] The UNC and the
Progressive Party publicly favoured a federal structure. The
DP refused to commit itself on the issue arguing that Ugandans
should decide this at the time of independence. Because of the
nature of Uganda nationalism, the political parties tended,
as far as their programmes were concerned, to lead from behind
and to adopt policies which they knew to be favoured by public
opinion.

The initial political institutions of the colonial state
in Uganda, namely, the Native Authorities (local governments),
were developed to coincide with boundaries already separating

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[4]. Ibid..

[5]  The Kabaka of Buganda, Desecration of My Kingdom,
London, 1971, p.149.

[6]. Cohen, op. cit..

the precolonial language groups. Each language group became a district, except Buganda which made up a province. This had an important effect of promoting "district nationalism and separatism" a development which created serious problems at the eve of independence.[7] Having established local governments, the British developed them on the basis of two contradictory policies of Indirect rule and Direct rule. Indirect rule was applied to Buganda. A modified form of indirect rule was applied in the western kingdoms of Bunyoro, Toro and Ankole. In Busoga, Acholi and West Nile, the precolonial chiefdoms were too small to suit the British ideas of what a district should be. Therefore a number of chiefdoms were grouped together to form larger units which were ruled directly from the centre. Direct rule was also practised in those areas which, during the precolonial period, had been characterized by segmentary political systems. Outside Buganda, the British had imposed the Kiganda-type of political institutions, marked by the three-tier hierarchy of county, sub-county, and parish chiefs, and Baganda agents were recruited not only to transfer their institutions to these areas, but also to carry out senior administrative functions there. In their enthusiasm to create the Kiganda system of administration outside Buganda, the British gave the African chiefs extensive powers - powers which even exceeded those the

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[7]. See F.G. Burke, Local Government and Politics in Uganda, Syracuse, 1964, p.14.

Baganda chiefs had exercised in the precolonial days. One
result was that in segmentary and quasi-segmentary societies,
where privileged chieftainship never existed during the
precolonial period, the newly introduced polarization between
the rulers and the subjects provoked a measure of hostility.[8]
It should however be noted that while the peoples in the
chiefly societies rejected Baganda agents, they were very
anxious to operate the Kiganda-type institutions which the
British had bequeathed to them. The traditional elites in
these societies hoped to benefit from those institutions.[9]
Furthermore, as one author observed, "preferential treatment
was accorded to different local governments during the
colonial period, thereby politicizing ethnic cleavages on
which these local institutions were primarily based."[10] This
policy of preferential treatment had two profound effects.
First, it promoted power inequalities among the local
governments. Buganda became the favoured region throughout the

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[8]. See S.R. Karugire, A Political History of Uganda,
Heinemann Educational Books, Nairobi, 1980, pp.124-127.

[9]. The societies which completely rejected Buganda as a
model were in the minority compared to those determined to
operate such institutions. Buganda was therefore never
completely isolated. There was always strong support for her
position. Had all the rest of Uganda ganged up against her,
she would have lost. This partially explained why the
revolutionary change which took place in Kenya never occurred
in Uganda.

[10]. See Jimmy Kazaara Tindigarukayo, "Obstacles to
Establishing Political Order in Uganda", Unpublished Ph.D.
Thesis, Department of Political Science, Dalhousie University,
1986, p.49.

colonial period. Secondly, while the colonial policy of indirect rule prepared Buganda, the western kingdoms and Busoga for a federal system, the policy of direct rule prepared the other local governments, and more particularly the non-kingdom districts, for a unitary type of government. Consequently, the independence constitution was to reflect this anomaly.

The colonial economy also promoted some new types of socio-economic inequalities in Ugandan society. For example the 1900 Buganda Agreement converted precolonial Baganda chiefs and other prominent persons into a class of landlords. Private land titles were not extended to the other areas of the protectorate. When the landed aristocracy consolidated its position as the ruling class in Buganda, its interests and consequently its policies became increasingly separatist. This was the key factor. The Baganda-type political structures created in kingdom and chiefly societies were not supported by such a landed ruling class. This was their greatest weakness, and probably explains why Buganda came to be seen as unique.

Socio-economic inequalities also developed at the regional level. While southern Uganda particularly Buganda, Busoga, Bugisu and Bukedi monopolized the production of export cash crops, northern Uganda was developed essentially as a labour reservoir from which soldiers, police, and workers could be recruited as needed. It is worth noting that parts

of western Uganda, namely Toro, Bunyoro and Kigezi produced very little or no cash crops at all. The disparities in regional economic development partly accounted for Buganda's resistance to a unitary government. At the root of the issue was the question of who would have control over the distribution of the economic surplus from Buganda, the wealthiest of the regions. At the extreme end was Karamoja district which, mainly because of its nomadic life, was largely ignored by successive protectorate governments. The British have often been accused of developing Karamoja as a human zoo."

Another factor which had a significant impact on the political history of Uganda was religion. Religious cleavages were politicized during the colonial period, leading ultimately to religious competition and conflict. For instance, under the 1900 Buganda Agreement, public offices in Buganda were to be allocated on the basis of religious affiliation. According to this settlement, the Kabaka and two of his three ministers were to be Protestants, the third ministry being reserved for a Catholic. Of the twenty county chiefs of Buganda, ten were to be Protestants, eight Catholics and two Muslims. In other words, the 1900 Agreement established religion as a basis of recruitment into the Buganda administration, replacing the merit system on which

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". Karugire, op. cit., p.126.

the Kabaka had always recruited his chiefs in the precolonial period. It should be remembered that the Agreement was signed a few years after the conclusion of the civil wars, sometimes referred to as the "Christian Revolution" in Buganda. It was during these wars that religion was politicized. Significantly, the Catholics who formed the majority of Christians in Buganda were to be the minority in government posts. Catholics were also allocated fewer Sazas and consequently less Mailoland than the protestants. As one historian observed:

> The course of the civil wars decisively proved that the christian chiefs had become the masters of Buganda and that the Kabaka would only rule at their pleasure.... Secondly, and much more important for what was soon to be the Uganda Protectorate, these wars established the principle that religious affiliation would henceforth be the basis of political association and action.[12]

With the help of Baganda missionaries and Baganda agents in spreading Christianity and colonial rule respectively, this pattern of using religious criteria in the allocation of public offices was propagated throughout Uganda.[13] Protestantism spread as the religion of the collaborators, Catholicism as that of resistors. Most chiefly hierarchies throughout Uganda became Protestant, the majority of the

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[12]. Karugire, op. cit., p.62.

[13]. See F.B. Welbourn, Religion and Politics in Uganda 1952 - 1962, Nairobi, E.A.P.H., 1965, passim. Also see Karugire, op. cit., pp. 62-96.

population turned Catholic.[14] Since modern education in Uganda was introduced by missionaries, its development and dissemination was influenced by the politicization of religious cleavages. The unequal distribution of benefits that was associated with the introduction of foreign religion and modern education further divided Uganda society with tragic consequences. The preference the colonial agents gave to Protestants led to the development of what later came to be known as the "Protestant establishment" in Uganda.[15] This caused resentment among other religious denominations, more particularly among Catholics, whose efforts to obtain full recognition within Uganda politics ultimately culminated in the formation of a "Catholic" political party - the DP. Given the politicization of religious differences, it was not surprising that the main national political parties competing for leadership at independence were divided along religious lines - the DP for Catholic interests and the UPC for Protestant interests. Possibly a party based on Catholicism might have united the country with majority support. However, the Protestant chiefly hierarchies beat the "tribal drum" to

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[14] In Acholi for example, the British initially abolished all chiefs. In the 1920s, they appointed non-traditional men. This colonial chiefly hierarchy favoured Protestantism. The traditional chiefs and their supporters turned to the Catholic church. [This point was brought to my notice by Professor J.B.Webster].

[15]. See James Katorobo, Education for Public Service in Uganda, N.Y., Vantage Press, 1982, pp.19-24.

maintain power. This became almost hysterical in its intensity - witness the formation of Kabaka Yekka [Kabaka Alone] in Buganda after DP's victory in the 1961 general election leading to internal self-government. The African colonial elite was determined to hold on to power even if it meant tearing the country apart in the process. At independence the Protestant minority won. But holding on to power meant constant appeal to ethnic particularism. Finally the appeal to ethnic separatism did tear the country apart.

## The Wild Committee Report

The Uganda Constitutional Committee (henceforth the Wild Committee), was set up in February 1959 to consider the question of direct elections on a common roll in 1961, and related constitutional issues. It was composed of J.V.Wild (chairman), A.A.Bearlein, T.B.Bazarabusa, Dr.K.Ingham, H.K. Jaffer, B.K.Kirya, C.B.Katiti, A.M.Obote, Erisa Kironde, G.B.K. Magezi, Balamu Mukasa, W.W.K.Nadiope, C.J.Obwangor, G.Oda, and C.K. Patel. Its secretary was F.K.Kalimuzo.[16] All those on the committee except Kironde and Mukasa were members of the Legislative Council. In fact most of the African members were the leading politicians in their own districts, who had been elected to the Legislative Council by their respective district councils. The members toured all districts

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[16]. Chairman J.V. Wild, Report of the Uganda Constitutional Committee, Kampala, 5 December 1959.

and collected evidence from all interested groups except the Kabaka's government which boycotted the committee. In its report, the committee recommended direct elections in all parts of the country in 1961. There should be no option of indirect elections offered.[17] Representation would be primarily on a population basis, one member representing approximately 90,000 people. The number of seats estimated on this basis was seventy-two.[18] The committee recommended a multi-party system with "at least two or, at the most three parties"; and that Uganda should aim at the Westminster model, that was to say, a cabinet responsible to a fully elected legislature. After the election, the party which gained a clear majority of elected members should be invited to form the government side of the Legislative Council while the reminder should form the opposition.[19] The governor, in consultation with the leader of the majority party, should appoint the Ministers and allocate their portfolios. The Executive Council would become a Council of ministers. To reflect the fundamental change in the character of the council, the name of the Legislative Council would change to National Assembly. Significantly, the Committee also recommended that the Council of Ministers should have collective responsibility to the National Assembly

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17. _Ibid._, p.12.

18. _Ibid._, p.16.

19. _Ibid._, p.36.

and cease to be advisory to the governor. But the governor should have reserve powers to veto the decisions of the Council of Ministers and to legislate over the heads of the National Assembly, if necessary.[20] If accepted, this implied responsible government for Uganda immediately following the election, a step which the Colonial Office was still hesitant to take.

The committee also expressed concern about "the substitution of what appear to be dictatorships, often military, for democratic government in some territories shortly after the achievement of independence".[21] Furthermore, it commended politicians who were seeking to establish and lead political parties on a national basis. They were "performing a vital function in the development of the country's political institutions". It noted the numerous difficulties which faced political leaders. These included lack of opportunity to contest elections, thus losing the chance of gaining responsibility through the normal process of exercising power and a shortage of suitable candidates or personnel to staff the branches of political parties. The politicians were further handicapped by the absence of a lingua franc - making communications with the population

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[20]. Ibid., pp. 40-41.

[21]. Ibid., pp. 33-4.

almost impossible.[22]

On the crucial question of the form of government Uganda should adopt at independence, the committee found that a majority of people in Eastern, Northern and Western Uganda favoured the unitary system. However, the relationship between Buganda and the central government, which appeared to many to be federal, forced people in the other provinces to consider a federal structure for the whole of Uganda "as the most expedient, though not the most desirable, solution". Toro and Acholi produced fairly detailed sets of proposals for the organization of a federal state. In Madi and Acholi in the northern province, there was support for the creation of a Northern Province Assembly, the object being to deal with Buganda on an equal basis. Many people in Acholi and Madi feared that, in some way, the Sudan situation could be reproduced in Uganda whereby the whole of Uganda could be dominated by people from Buganda.[23] But with a central government composed of directly elected representatives from all parts of Uganda, the constituencies being drawn on a population basis, such a prospect was unrealistic. The Toro Rukurato and Ankole Eishengero both favoured the federal system because they saw in it the best means of safeguarding their traditional rulers, and wished the federal system to be

[22]. _Ibid._, p.34.

[23]. _Ibid._, p.42.

on a district basis for this reason. These mutual fears among parts of Uganda would persist for some time, the Report noted, they could not be dispelled successfully merely by constitutional blueprints, however carefully designed.[24] The committee then recommended a relationships conference after the 1961 elections to consider the form of government best suited to Uganda.

Following the publication of the Wild Report the British government announced on the 22 February 1960 major constitutional changes which included a predominantly elected legislature. Direct elections, on a common roll, were to be held throughout the country as early as could be arranged in 1961. A commission was set up, instead of a conference, to study the question of the relationships between the various parts of Uganda with the centre, having regard to the protectorate government's declaration in November 1958, that the prestige and dignity of the hereditary rulers would be preserved in any constitutional framework.

On May 20, 1960, Sir Frederick Crawford addressed a conference of Katikiros and Secretaries-General from all over the country in Kampala. He assured them that the British government supported all efforts to get Uganda "ready as speedily as possible to be independent and self-governing". The conference was an attempt to bring about reconciliation

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[24]. Ibid..

between the traditional and political elements. It was also hoped that exchanging ideas might diminish "tribal" differences of opinion, animosity and tensions. Through these talks, the leaders might recognize their interdependence and discuss their constitutional objectives. Increasingly the British administration was concerned that divisions among the African communities, if not minimised, could make a peaceful transfer of power much more difficult. The governor acknowledged the desire of most people to resolve the outstanding problems before independence. This was crucial for future peace in Uganda. It was therefore clear that Ugandan leaders too recognized the magnitude of the problems ahead, and expressed the wish for the British to deal with them before independence.    Unlike Tanganyika, where there were no kings or agreement states, and only one majority political party, there appeared to be no simple solution for Uganda. Nonetheless, there had to be a compromise solution if independence was not to be delayed. It was therefore in search of this compromise that the Relationships Commission (the Munster Commission) was established in 1960. The Munster Commission was to work against a background of the need to find solutions to two main problems. First, what future system of government for Uganda would in the future best regulate the relations between the various entities of the protectorate and the centre? Second, what was to be done, in accordance with past declarations, to preserve and uphold the status and

dignity of the four hereditary rulers in the so-called agreement states and their traditional institutions?[25]

In June 1960, the Secretary of State, Ian Macleod, and representative members of the Uganda Legislative Council held talks in London. The group of twelve members wanted in particular to express their support for a unitary Uganda. Earlier, the British government had decided to implement only parts of the constitutional reforms suggested in the Wild Report. In August, the Secretary of State held discussions with a Lukiiko delegation led by the Kabaka. The delegation had flown to London to contest the position of the Legislative Council representatives, and to demand a federal arrangement for Buganda. The Colonial Secretary was clearly trying to mediate between the Buganda government and the protectorate's other politicians. In another development, Macleod announced a constitutional conference for Uganda to take place in London in the Summer of 1961.

Later the same year, in a published dispatch to the governor, the secretary of state set out details of the new constitution. The new Legislative Council would have an elected majority; elections throughout the protectorate would be held on a common roll with an extension of the franchise;

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[25]. For terms of reference for the Relationships Commission, see Appendix I, Uganda protectorate; Despatch No.1261 of 14 September, 1960, from the Secretary of State for the Colonies, in connection with the Report of the Constitutional Committee, 1959.

the executive, to be called Council of Ministers, would comprise a majority of non-officials but would continue to be advisory to the Governor. The idea of a Chief Minister was rejected as premature. The common roll elections were held in March, 1961.

## Buganda's Secession Bid

Buganda had throughout the colonial period occupied a special position in Uganda and wished to preserve it even after independence. It had also been for a long time the natural leader among the African societies in Uganda. Now Buganda was opposed to Britain's policy of granting independence to Uganda as a unitary state. The principal political forces in Buganda which were combined in opposition to the British government policy were the Kabaka, his Ministers, the Lukiiko and the chiefs.[26] The Kabaka was the focal point of strong personal loyalty from the Buganda nation, and this loyalty provided the nation's main cohesive force. It had been particularly strong from 1955 when the Kabaka was restored to his throne. By opposing the British government in 1953 and by suffering the martyrdom of exile, he had gained great popularity with his people. His restoration, in spite of previous British pronouncements that

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[26]. Chairman Lord Munster, Report of the Uganda Relationships Commission, Entebbe, 1961. (hereafter the Muster Report), pp.33-36.

his exile was irrevocable, represented a great victory in Baganda eyes. The masses of Buganda and most chiefs supported the Kabaka unquestioningly. Buganda's national loyalty to the Kabaka was, therefore, a vital political force in the country. Under the 1955 Constitution, Article 5, the Kabaka gave a solemn undertaking to be loyal to the British crown as a protecting power and to govern Buganda according to law and to abide by the agreements and the constitution of Buganda. Under this constitution, he had been intended to occupy the position of a constitutional monarch. The realities of his position were different. He still exercised much influence on the Buganda ministers and the Lukiiko "took great trouble to consult" him on all important problems.[27] Mutesa's influence on Buganda affairs was such that the British administration often found itself soliciting his help to get things done. This was confirmed by the last British Resident, Buganda:

> In spite of a British insistence – in the light of their earlier experience of the Kabaka's participation in government affairs – that the 1955 Buganda Agreement should limit the Kabaka's power to hereditary duties and to constitutional functions on the lines of the British monarchy, nevertheless such was his real authority and power among his people that he was called upon by successive Governors to bring his influence to bear whenever stalemate or real difficulty occurred in negotiations between his ministers and the Protectorate Government. ... and without his intermediation during this critical time the task of bringing Buganda back into

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[27]. The Kabaka of Buganda, op. cit., p.148.

the fold might have been well-nigh impossible.[28]

The number of Buganda ministers had been increased from the traditional three to six. The 1955 Agreement provided for three additional ministers: the ministers of Education, Health and Natural Resources to take charge of functions then transferred by the protectorate government to the Buganda government. From 1955 the Katikiro was elected by the Lukiiko, subject to the governor's approval. The other ministers were chosen by the Katikiro from a list of fifteen nominees selected by the Lukiiko, subject to the governor's consent. The Kabaka then formally appointed them. The theory of the 1955 constitution was that they were responsible to the Lukiiko rather than the Kabaka. Originally the "Great Lukiiko" was merely a council of chiefs, advising the Kabaka as absolute monarch. But it was transformed, largely with British encouragement, into a national parliament of Buganda with considerable power. Subject to the governor's approval, the Lukiiko had general law-making power under the 1955 constitution, which provided that "the Kabaka may, with the advice and consent of the Lukiiko, make laws binding upon Africans in Buganda..." (Article 26) The constitutional centre had subsequently shifted to the Lukiiko. The Kabaka could still rely on his ministers and nominees, and also on the

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[28]. See R.E. Stone, "The District Commissioner as the Man in the Middle: East Africa", in A.H.M. Kirk-Greene (ed.), The Transfer of Power: The Colonial Administrator in the Age of Decolonisation, Oxford, 1978, p.120.

loyalty of the county chiefs and, usually, the county representatives to influence the Lukiiko. The higher chiefs (county and sub-county) were bound to the Kabaka in many ways. Traditionally, they were his officers, and they passed down his government's orders to the people. They were the backbone of the administration, and they possessed considerable but ill-defined powers. The county chiefs, being _ex officio_ members of the Lukiiko also wielded political influence. In earlier times, when the British used the Kabaka as an instrument of government under the threat of withdrawing recognition, there was often tension between the Kabaka and his people. Thus the Ministers were usually in a dilemma, when faced with a request from the protectorate government to carry out some policy which was unpopular. From 1955, the Kabaka to a great extent was free to follow his own policy. He had greatly improved his position in Buganda by being at liberty to ally himself with his own people. He and his ministers and the Lukiiko had welded themselves into a strong unit. This aggravated Buganda's nationalism. The theory of the 1955 constitution was that the Kabaka was a constitutional monarch, not responsible for his government's policy, and not liable to account for any conflict with the protectorate government, provided he professed loyalty to the protectorate. Hence the Kabaka retained much of his power, but had shed almost all of his responsibility. In these circumstances, the old technique of indirect rule was no longer applicable.

Until 1944 Buganda was governed like the rest of Uganda, through provincial and district commissioners, working directly through chiefs. The Dundas reforms of 1944 altered this policy. Henceforth the Kabaka's government were merely to receive advice from the resident and his staff. This gave the Kabaka's government more responsibility, as was believed to be due to it under the 1900 Agreement. The riots of 1949 had resulted in a temporary reassertion of British authority. The 1955 constitution granted Buganda greater autonomy in return for its acceptance to participate in the Legislative Council. But it should be emphasized that Buganda had never willingly accepted representation in the Legislative Council, and its undertaking to do so in 1955 was given merely as the price of securing the Kabaka's return from exile. For a short while, Buganda observed this undertaking but then making a pretext of the appointment of a speaker and the abolition of the governor's power to vote, it refused to elect its members in 1958. The Buganda government then proceeded to boycott the Wild committee of 1959 and the registration of electors in 1960. It was demanding assurance that it would have federal status in any new constitution. British policy was to act firmly and proceed with the 1961 elections, the appointment of the Relationships Commission, and the constitutional conference in London - a programme aimed at bringing Uganda to independence by stages within a few years. Having reached a deadlock, Buganda proclaimed its secession by resolution of

the Lukiiko with effect from January 1, 1961. The protectorate maintained that the resolutions of the Lukiiko were null and void since they had not been approved by the governor.

Thus, Buganda's desire for autonomy had by 1961 caused a crisis. An acute conflict had arisen between Uganda and Buganda policies. Behind lay the deeper antagonism between democracy and Buganda nationalism.[29] Uganda was an artificial country with many variations of race, nationality and language, so that there was every temptation for its peoples to cultivate an exclusive national mentality. Buganda had always regarded itself, and rightly so, as a distinct country. It regarded its neighbours as linked with it merely for administrative reasons devised by the Britain and carried into force without it being consulted. In its simplest form, Buganda's argument was that, having placed itself under British protection in 1894, it expected to regain its integrity if this protection was now to cease:

> The sole purpose of these talks [with the Secretary of State] had been for Buganda to receive back the powers exercised by Her Majesty's Representative under the Agreements before Uganda attained

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[29]. The issues were complicated further by the internal changes within Buganda. The changeover to political parties promoted by modern politicians meant ushering in a new system of legitimacy. The chiefs were resisting it because it meant the end of their power. The effect of a representative principle would make them subordinate to a political government in Buganda based on a majority party, or a coalition of parties in the Lukiiko. The Buganda government was supporting constitutional monarchy as a means of preserving the autocratic principle in theory while in practice continuing to allow the chiefs themselves to govern. See D. Apter, The Political Kingdom in Uganda, p.349.

> independence. The treaty relationship between
> Buganda and Britain demand that Her Majesty's
> Government could not surrender its powers under the
> Agreements to a new Government with which Buganda
> had not concluded an Agreement.[30]

Buganda denied that Britain had the right to deliver it over
to other peoples with whom it felt no affinity. But this was
only part of the story. The other crucial factor was Buganda's
rooted opposition to the democratic political system which
Britain sought to introduce in Uganda. Traditional forces in
Buganda had always foreseen and opposed the development of
political parties on which the British system must be based.
Buganda's system of government was founded on the Baganda
community and loyalty to the Kabaka. They feared that despite
their professions the political parties would be hostile to
the traditional rulers. They pointed to the example of the
Asantehene and to the eclipse of many of the princes of India.
The traditionalists in Buganda were for many reasons
suspicious of a thorough-going democratic system, at any rate
if it was not to be administered under Britain's restraining
influence.[31]

A substantial transfer of power had taken place before
Buganda had reconciled itself to full participation in the
Legislative Council, or to modifying its demand for

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[30]. "A memorandum to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II
submitted by members of the Lukiiko of the Kingdom of
Buganda...", p.6.

[31]. See Munster Report, p.38.

independence, which dated back to the Kabaka crisis. This constituted one of the major problems which faced the Uganda government in 1961. Formerly under the 1900 Agreement, the ultimate weapon against Buganda was to withdraw recognition from the Kabaka, as was done in 1953. Under the 1955 Agreement the governor's ultimate sanction was dismissal of the ministers under Articles 39 and 40. The object of this change was to put the Kabaka above politics, so as to avoid a recurrence of the 1953 events. But this was a weapon of last resort and too drastic for normal use. A further difficulty was that it did not strike at the right point: the power lay mainly in the hands of the Kabaka and the Lukiiko, and if they were together resolved on a policy it did little good to dismiss the ministers, who were responsible to the Lukiiko and also, in reality to the Kabaka. Thus the Governor was left with no effective weapon for countering Buganda's policy of secession. British control was based on historical and administrative reasons, which to some extent the Baganda leaders still accepted, rather than on effective powers.[32] On major political issues, it was clear the protectorate government had lost its power to control the Kabaka's government policy.

Buganda's policy spelt disaster both for Uganda and for itself. Buganda was the metropolitan province, containing the

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[32]. Ibid., p.37.

capital at Kampala and the seat of government at Entebbe; the loss of territory by secession would remove the heart from the country.[33] There was strong opposition to secession, not only in the rest of the country but also among the more progressive Baganda. The Buganda government's desire, in fact, was to put history precisely into reverse. For over sixty years Buganda had been part of Uganda, which indeed it had helped Britain to pacify and organize, and to which its own system of administration had been extended.[34] Its independence would have meant the disintegration of the protectorate into a number of tiny states. The other alternative, which would have required long negotiations, would have been to grant Buganda independence and amalgamate the rest of the protectorate with either Kenya or Tanzania. But as already noted, British policy was opposed to breaking up a territorial unit in the process of decolonization.[35]

## The Munster Report

The Munster Commission recommended "a single democratic state with a strong government at the centre and with local governments on the existing basis".[36] The exceptions were

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[33]. Ibid., p.40.

[34]. See Lukiiko memorandum op cit., p.4.

[35] See chapter III above.

[36]. Munster Report, op. cit., p.55.

Buganda and the other three kingdoms, whose rulers insisted on federalism.[37] The Commission supported a federal arrangement for Buganda because it had virtually attained that position, and a semi-federal relationship for the the three kingdoms, in order to preserve their traditional characteristics. The three western kingdoms would have substantial elements of federalism for their own internal purposes, but in relation to the central government they would be roughly in the same position as the other districts. The picture which emerged, therefore, was one of a composite state comprising a single federal state (Buganda) in association with the rest of the country which would be governed unitarily. The Commission itself was not pleased with its own recommendations:

> This cannot be said to be an ideal balance of forces, since it gives a unique position to Buganda, at present a disruptive element in the country. On the other hand, the union of the rest of the country will be a powerful force to offset Buganda's powers and privileges, and to hold in check her inherent bias towards secession, so long as it may last.[38]

This was hardly a solution. The arrangement simply reinforced Buganda's sense of nationalism, perpetuating the source of constant friction between it and the rest of Uganda. It was more than likely, and this was Buganda's ultimate fear, that a politician from a non-kingdom region of Uganda might be less tolerant with Buganda's claim of superior institutions and

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[37]. _Ibid._, p.45.

[38]. _Ibid._.

would be tempted to crush its traditional powers and privileges. As one former missionary in Uganda noted, this would prove detrimental to the whole country:

> In considering this situation it is well to realize that the Baganda hold the strategic centre of the protectorate, where they could hold the country to ransom, and from which it would be impossible to overrule them, short of civil war. Educationally, economically, politically, geographically, and numerically, Buganda is in a unique position, one far superior to that held by the Ashanti in Ghana in their loosely-built inland confederacy.[30]

It could be argued that a future confrontation between Buganda primary nationalism and modern African nationalism was perhaps inevitable in a unitary state. Federalism or a modified form of federalism _for all Uganda_ was the only possible solution if the country was to enjoy a peaceful independence. Clearly, the British underestimated the uniqueness of Uganda in British Africa.

The three Kingdoms of Ankole, Toro and Bunyoro had also signed formal agreements with the British Crown, but less elaborate than those of Buganda. They were therefore governed more directly as districts within the same framework as the other parts of the country, whether kingdoms or not. Toro, Ankole and Bunyoro were native states in the sense that they possessed hereditary ruler with their own councils; but their councils counted as ordinary district councils. They therefore occupied an ambiguous position, being neither full "native

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30. See Canon H.M.Grace, "British Blunders in Uganda", letter to editor, _East Africa and Rhodesia_, 8 September 1960.

states" nor yet ordinary local authorities. Toro (pop. 350,000), Ankole (pop. 500,000), and Bunyoro (pop. 125,000) were, taken together, smaller than Buganda (pop. 1,800,000) according to the 1959 census. Their three hereditary rulers strongly supported a united Uganda. They advocated a federal form of government as being a safeguard for each district's customs and traditional institutions, and as providing the best means of clear demarcation between central and local powers.[40] It was plain that the three rulers were principally concerned with the preservation of traditional institutions and their kingdoms. The Relationships Commission suggested a semi-federal relationship for the three western kingdoms. It rejected the idea of a federal system, pointing out that it would be too weak and expensive for the these kingdoms. In Toro, which displayed a strong national consciousness similar to that of Buganda, there was a demand for a constitution like that given to Buganda. But the Munster Commission was not persuaded that Toro's size and status justified making it into "another Buganda".[41]   Well over half of Uganda consisted of districts without traditional rulers and not governed under formal agreements of any kind. These were Busoga, Bukedi, Bugisu, Teso, Kigezi, Lango, Acholi, Karamoja, Mbale township, West Nile and Madi. These districts formed units of local

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[40]. See the Munster Report, op. cit., pp. 48-51.

[41]. Ibid..

government each with its district council formed under the
Ordinance of 1949 or that of 1955. But these councils were
correspondingly weaker, and commanded no historical loyalty
from the people.[42] These district councils were not the
traditional parliaments of native states, but were "imported"
local government authorities in a relatively early stage of
development. The effective force of government was supplied
by the protectorate, with provincial and district
commissioners and their teams of specialist officers, mostly
European. Thus the district councils were in no sense federal
assemblies in embryo. Furthermore, as recent creations, they
were of questionable strength. Therefore, the Commission
recommended a strong central government as opposed to a
federal system.

Another major source of antagonism was internal boundary
disputes. Basically these arose from the arrangement of the
colonial administrative districts. Potentially the boundary
quarrels were disruptive to the new constitution. The
Relationships Commission perceived this clearly and pleaded
that:

> Everything possible should be done to reduce the
> sources of serious unrest before Uganda is launched
> into independence.
> A number of these disputes do not look very serious
> now. But it must be remembered that an artificial peace
> has been maintained under British power, that the country
> lacks a sense of nationality, and that disputes which are

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[42]. Ibid., p.52.

now quiescent could quickly be fanned into flame.[a]

Most of the boundary squabbles were ethnic in character. One of them was in a class by itself, the "lost counties" of Bunyoro. The lost counties formed a long-standing source of conflict between Bunyoro and Buganda, attributable partly to the wars of the 1890s and partly, to the haphazard manner in which the administrative districts of the country were originally drawn. The disputed area comprised of the three counties of Mubende district (Buyaga, Bugangazi and Buwekula), the whole of the counties of Buruli, Bugerere, and parts of Singo and Bulemezi. Incorporated into Buganda by the 1900 Agreement, they had been either part of Bunyoro or subject to its rule, and it had never relinquished its claim to them.

When the British arrived in the 1890s Bunyoro, which had been an empire extending far beyond the British-demarcated borders, was on the wane and the power of Buganda, its traditional rival, was on the rise. When Buganda allied itself with the British, its enemies became Britain's enemies. In the wars which followed, Bunyoro, then ruled by its turbulent King Kabalega, suffered defeat. One of the penalties inflicted upon him and his kingdom was the award to Buganda of the "lost counties" when the territorial boundaries of Buganda were settled by the 1900 Agreement. The dispute was kept alive by the strength of local feelings and traditions. For example,

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[a]. Ibid., p.88.

the lost territories contained a number of graves of former Kings of Bunyoro, to which great importance was attached. Another aggravating cause was the failure of Buganda to assimilate the alien population from Bunyoro. None of the important chieftainships in the area had been given to Banyoro, and in general the Banyoro were the exception to the rule which enabled a great many non-Baganda to live contentedly in Buganda.[44] But it is important to point out that unlike the immigrants who settled in Buganda, the Banyoro were a conquered peuple, with a keen sense of nationality, who had never wished to be assimilated. The "lost counties" was a pressing problem because Bunyoro had never accepted its dismemberment. While feelings remained unchanged, the fracas was likely to make it impossible for Buganda and Bunyoro to co-exist amicably.

The Munster Commission appealed for a determined effort by all parties concerned, to work out a solution to the lost counties dispute before the end of the protectorate. It suggested a referendum to be held in the two counties where the strength of Bunyoro's claims was unquestionable, and to extend it to one more county selected by Bunyoro. The preparatory work and the referendum, if it could be held, were to take place during the protectorate while impartial supervision was available. The handover to Bunyoro, in so far

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[44]. See Munster Report, op. cit., p.89.

as it might be successful in the referendum, should proceed simultaneously with independence.[45]

There were a number of other awkward problems connected with the arrangement of administrative districts. Essentially they were local in character, but always capable of frustrating the government. First was the dispute over Mbale township. The confused position of the town had proved an insoluble question for decades. The town was claimed by Bugisu and Bukedi. Second were the Sebei. These occupy the northeastern corner of Bugisu on the northern slopes of Mount Elgon. Their grievance was that they were a permanent minority in Bugisu district, and were allowed no say in its affairs. The same complaint was voiced by the Baamba-Bakonjo in Toro district on the slopes of Mount Rwenzori in Western Uganda. There were also demands for separate districts from East Acholi and the Jonam in West Nile district.[46]

## British policy

Britain had followed two inconsistent policies promoting democracy for the country as a whole but at the same time building up the power of the Lukiiko and the Kabaka's government – traditional institutions which were always likely to resist democracy. Perhaps this conflict was inevitable.

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[45]. _Ibid._, p.91.

[46]. _Ibid._, pp. 91-92.

After the arrival of Europeans native governments could not
be left to stagnate: they either had to be suppressed, or
encouraged. Precolonial nationalism had long been the
strongest force in Uganda, and to suppress it would have meant
a bloody confrontation requiring more manpower and higher
costs than Britain was willing to meet. British policy was to
utilize the native institutions. Britain used its influence
to make native governments more representative, by increasing
the number of elected members, and more efficient by seconding
officers and giving administrative advice. The turning point
in the relations between Uganda and Britain was when Andrew
Cohen exiled the Kabaka between 1953 - 1955. By first
banishing and then restoring the Kabaka, Britain put an end
to the era when the Kabaka could be used as an agent for the
execution of British policy. Even if that era was bound to end
in any case, the Kabaka's deportation undoubtedly did much to
solidify Buganda's opposition to Britain, and to encourage it
to suppose that it could challenge Britain successfully.

Repeatedly British policy was queried in the Legislative
Council by African members. The most dramatic was in May 1958,
when in a reasoned but vigorous attack on the recognition of
special status for Buganda, Milton Obote raised the crucial
issue. Arguing that the development of the Kabaka's government
as a provincial rather than a local government was
inconsistent with the growth of a unitary state, he asked:

> If the government is going to develop this country
> on a unitary basis how on earth can (it) develop

another state within a state? Does the government really think that when self government comes to this country the state of Buganda will willingly give up the powers it has got now to join with other outlying districts or provinces? I do not think so. Already we have got troubles about the position of the Buganda government. It is a state within a state and the government must therefore make it perfectly clear that this country is not going to be developed on a unitary but a federal basis."

Possibly if more time had been available this policy might well have succeeded, even with Buganda. The growth of national political parties could have undermined the extreme forms of local nationalism. The Munster Commission observed:

The essence of the present crisis is time. Uganda's constitutional progress cannot proceed in the leisurely style of Britain's. A constitutional conference is to assemble within a few months and a realistic plan must be made now. Yet this is the most awkward juncture, when the strength of Buganda's tribal government is at its zenith, and the democratic system imported by Britain is relatively new and inexperienced. This is one of the many problems caused by the great speed of constitutional change in Africa. If the only consideration were what would be best for Uganda (including Buganda), we would certainly recommend slowing down the operation so that the conflicting forces would be given time to resolve themselves.[48]

On the contrary, the pace towards self-government increased. With the benefit of hindsight, a former British official in Uganda has concurred that more time was perhaps needed:

The root of the trouble perhaps lay in the speed of the moves towards self-government in Uganda. Tutelage over a long period was probably needed as a background for

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[47]. Quoted in C. Gertzel, "Kingdoms, Districts, and the Unitary state: Uganda 1945 - 1962", in D.A. Low and Allison Smith (eds.), History of East Africa, vol. III, Oxford, 1968, p.92.

[48]. Munster Report, op. cit., p.42.

success for such radical changes in forms of government, but time did not allow for this. Some effort was in fact made by the Protectorate Government at a national level to explain and teach the realities, practices and virtues of a democratic form of government, but I very much doubt whether this had much effect on the political parties, the real leaders of which, in any event, impelled by nationalism sometimes of an extreme form, had no interest whatever in any scheme of tuition in constitutional change advanced by the Protectorate Government...[*]

Instead of trying to find concrete and satisfactory solutions to the problems of the protectorate, the British and some Ugandan politicians merely shelved them hoping that they would solve themselves. Ugandan rulers clamoured for constitutional guarantees to be inserted in the independence Constitution but unfortunately these alone could not reconcile the differences created over the decades by incompatible policies.

## The London Constitutional Conferences

The first constitutional conference on the future of Uganda was held in London from 18 September to 10 October 1961. It was attended by delegates from all local governments in Uganda, and representatives of the two leading political parties, the UPC and the DP. It was chaired by Ian Macleod, the Secretary of State for the colonies. The basis of the discussions was the report of the Uganda Relationships Commission. The conference was to decide whether to adopt the report as the constitution for Uganda's self government. The report had proposed that while Uganda should for the most part

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[*]. See Stone, op. cit., p.115.

be a unitary state, Buganda's relations with the central government should be federal, and that there should be special provisions to secure the traditional monarchial institutions of the three western kingdoms of Bunyoro, Toro and Ankole as well. This, with minor amendments, was accepted. However disagreements arose on two major issues. The first was over Buganda's constitutional right to opt for an indirect method of electing its representatives to the national parliament. Benedicto Kiwanuka, leader of the DP and Chief Minister of Uganda at the time, protested strongly against this recommendation.[30] But the Buganda position was supported by Milton Obote, the leader of the UPC, thus the recommendation was accepted. This was contrary to the Wild Report of 1959 which had recommended that in 1961, and on subsequent occasions, direct elections should be held throughout the country and that no options should be offered to any part of the country. Obote's stand was surprising since the majority of the Wild Committee were the same leaders of UPC attending this London conference. Generally, UPC's support for Buganda's position appeared opportunistic. It sought Buganda's alliance in the bid for power. But there was a logical explanation for this rather dramatic change. The UPC mainly represented the Protestant elites outside Buganda. The

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[30]. Ibingira, The Forging of an African Nation; The Political and Constitutional Evolution of Uganda from Colonial Rule to Independence, 1894-1962, New York, 1973, pp. 210-212.

Buganda oligarchy was predominantly Protestant. As noted earlier, DP's electoral victory in the 1961 had shaken the Protestant establishment to the core. A DP victory in the elections leading to independence would have amounted to a political and social revolution in Uganda. Thus the Protestant elites across the country were forced to form an alliance in order to retain power. The other main issue over which disagreement arose was the dispute between Buganda and Bunyoro over the lost counties. The Baganda delegates were vehemently opposed to the recommendation that a referendum should be held in the disputed area. On the other hand, delegates from Bunyoro insisted that since the problem was created by the British, it was their responsibility to solve it before Uganda's independence. The Secretary of State promised a Commission of Privy Councillors to study and provide a comprehensive report on the question.[51]

The second constitutional conference was held in London in June 1962. It was attended by delegates representing the same political groups as before. The main aim of this conference was to seek solutions to the remaining constitutional problems and to draft the independence constitution for Uganda. This conference was dominated by three major issues: the demand for a federal status by the

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[51]. For an insight on question of the lost counties, see some of the memoranda submitted by Bunyoro to the British authorities over the decades in Appendices 1 & 2, in Karugire, op. cit..

three kingdoms of western Uganda; the demand for more power
by Buganda; and the dispute between Buganda and Bunyoro over
the lost counties. Dissatisfied with the semi-federal status
which they had been accorded, the western kingdoms charged
that it was inferior to that of Buganda. Also demanding a
federal status was the ruler of Busoga district (the
Kyabazinga). During the conference, therefore, the delegates
from Busoga and the three kingdoms of western Uganda were
demanding equal status with Buganda.[32] Unfortunately, the
constitutional conference did not solve any of these basic
problems. A Commission of Privy Councillors, under the
chairmanship of Lord Molson, had recommended that the two
counties of Buyaga and Bugangazi should be transferred from
Buganda to Bunyoro before Uganda's independence.[33] But at the
constitutional conference:

> It was agreed that there should be a referendum in
> not less than three years, if the Prime Minister
> wished it. The Banyoro were not pleased. We [Buganda
> delegates] were not pleased. Obote, who had wanted
> the difficulty settled without involving him, was
> not pleased. It was the best that could be done, and
> with the problem yet again deferred we could go on
> to other topics.[34]

Thus the independence Constitution left unresolved this old

conflict between Bunyoro and Buganda, a problem which

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[32]. See Ibingira, op. cit., p.276.

[33]. Uganda Protectorate, Report of the Commission of Privy
Councillors on a Dispute Between Buganda and Bunyoro, Entebbe,
Govt. Printer, May 1962.

[34]. The Kabaka, op. cit., p.165.

had the potential to create political instability in independent Uganda. Of course more could have been done. The Colonial Office should have settled the "lost counties" issue in accordance with either the recommendations of the Munster Report or the Molson Report, or both. Buganda would have resisted, but British fairness and firmness, perhaps with a show of force if necessary, could have witnessed a more peaceful end to this problem. Undoubtedly the British would have earned Baganda hatred, but with fewer consequences for Uganda. But as it turned out, the British handed over this explosive problem to an inexperienced African government. The only logical explanation for the British shunning their responsibilities is that they were reluctant to tangle with Buganda which had proved itself a formidable opponent. Elsewhere, Busoga was accorded the title of Territory, and granted semi-federal status. The claims of Sebei for a separate district of their own, apart from Bugisu, was accepted, whereas the Baamba-Bakonjo demand for a separate district was rejected, thus leaving a source of serious conflict with the future central government.

## Conclusion

In the political sphere, the problem of integration was critical. All the post-war reforms and the constitutional conferences left unresolved a number of fundamental political problems most prominent of which were: Buganda's privileged

status, in the defence of which the Kabaka had been deported to England in 1953, and the Buganda government sought to secede in 1960; the ethnic-based local governments which still remained a main arenas of political organization; and trouble spots around the country resulting from emotional boundary claims. Because of contradictory British policies, Uganda was to emerge not as one state, but as two separate "states", Buganda and Uganda - each with separately defined powers. Buganda's size and dominant political and economic position created obstacles to its easy incorporation into a single Ugandan state. The British government in its strange aberration that the protectorate must develop on a unitary basis had consistently withstood all demands of the Baganda for a federal form of government. As a result, in order to force the protectorate government into some action, the Baganda leaders made some impossible rather demands and in turn alienated many of the other ethnic groups, who in part to thwart Buganda, then insisted on a completely centralised form of government. The British had missed the opportunity in 1955 when the Kabaka returned from exile to work out a modified form of federal government which would have been acceptable to a majority of Ugandans. On the one hand was the absolute determination of Buganda to take no chances, while on the other hand were the fears of most of the African communities that the Baganda wanted domination. The constitutional crisis was further complicated by the internal

struggle over constitutionalism which was taking place within Buganda. The democratic system of government: universal suffrage, direct elections and party politics threatened the status quo in Buganda. Just as this struggle was going on, the position of Buganda as a state became insecure. Even though some of the more highly educated Baganda recognized the need for unity of U( \da, there was little doubt that the greater majority of the Baganda were determined to prevent the submergence of their kingdom under a rigid central government. The problem was that with representative government displacing the colonial regime at the centre, special treatment for one of the constituent parts of Uganda was obviously impossible.

The lack of a uniform institutional structure at the local government level constituted another major constitutional problem on the eve of Uganda's independence. Far from redressing pre-existing power inequalities among the ethnic-based local governments, the independence settlement provided them with legal recognition (witness the federal and the semi-federal status granted to Buganda and the western Kingdoms respectively), thereby promoting potential constitutional conflicts among the sub-national groups in the country. Undeniably, on the eve of independence nationalism was still a less powerful force in Uganda than local loyalties.

Furthermore, the independence constitution left unsolved the long standing feud between Buganda and Bunyoro over the

lost counties, a problem which would in all probability lead to political instability in independent Uganda. Lastly, instead of neutralizing cultural cleavages as a measure to promote political accommodation among the different Ugandan societies, political parties which developed in Uganda made these cleavages the basis of their organization.

It was also clear to all groups concerned that there were difficult problems ahead. Some were historical, others a result of British policies over time, and yet others inevitable because of the stage of development. The political difficulties were compounded by the wide disparities in social and economic development especially between Buganda and the rest of the protectorate. Evidently, the colonial officials on the spot, some British observers, and many leading Ugandan politicians tried unsuccessfully to warn London that a premature independence was not in the interest of the country. Equally apparent was the British determination to withdraw in an orderly manner and as peacefully as possible, premature though this might be. Experiences elsewhere had taught them that it was better to leave too early than too late. Therefore, in the last resort, the British were more interested in patching up a settlement among the Africans which would enable the country to go forward to independence peacefully, no matter how short-lived that peace might be. This, it could be argued, involved gross irresponsibility on the part of the British.

Last but not least, Uganda politicians, having failed to develop a nationalist movement on the basis of which a measure of political accommodation could be promoted, were mainly concerned with the acquisition of political power as an end in itself. The alliance between the UPC and KY, whose respective leaders had widely divergent views on almost every conceivable policy, was a clear demonstration of political opportunism of a type which could only lead to shifting alliances and political instability. In this respect, the Ugandan politicians bear some responsibility for the political chaos which followed independence.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## CONCLUSION

The period 1940 - 1956 was the most important phase in
the political evolution of Uganda as a modern state. In 1940
when the country was called upon to contribute to the war
effort, there were no signs of Uganda-wide nationalism. In
1945 the first Africans were appointed to the Legislative
Council. By 1956, Africans made up half the membership of the
council. Preparations were being made to facilitate a smooth
transfer of power to a set of African leaders. Uganda was on
the verge of attaining self-government. Yet Ugandan
nationalism was still in its infancy. The main thrust of this
study is that the origins of decolonisation in Uganda lay
primarily with the Colonial Office and the British
administration in Uganda but the pace and timing were
influenced by both imperial and local considerations. Whereas
1945 was an important landmark in the devolution of power to
Africans, the Kabaka crisis of 1953-55 was the turning point
in the history of decolonization. The crisis, in addition to
the 1945 and 1949 protests, was taken by the Colonial Office
to indicate an acute need for political and constitutional
change. The study argues that Uganda's progress to self-
government was unique in British Africa, marked by the
weakness of Ugandan nationalism and the failure of populist
nationalism. Thus modern nationalism played a very limited

265

role in the decolonization process. On the other hand, primary nationalism was dominant. This being the case, Sir Andrew Cohen played a most important role in the transfer of power in Uganda. Furthermore, the study clearly demonstrates that while trying to retain the initiative, the colonial administration propelled the Colonial Office along the road to self-government at a pace faster than London wished to. This suggests that occasionally the colonial services played an important role in decolonization in Africa. The study affirms that the causes of the political instability and anarchy which have characterised independent Uganda were deeply rooted in precolonial and colonial history. Therefore the British and the Ugandan leaders must share the blame for not having sought more satisfactory and permanent solutions to the host of problems which were already apparent on the eve of self-government. Lastly, it is argued that political integration was the greatest problem which haunted both the British and Uganda leaders from the 1940s to independence in 1962.

The imperial government in London had long admitted the goal of eventual self-government of her African colonies, although this did not necessarily mean independence. The pace of progress towards this goal gradually increased after the Second World War. The independence of India and Ceylon (Sri Lanka) and their entry into the Commonwealth transformed the formerly white organization into a multi-cultural one. This

opened the door for African nations to join and provided a convenient means for Britain to end classic colonialism. Before that imperial reformers had been unsure as to what could be substituted for the old colonial status. Britain could now replace formal with informal control. The British hoped that their interests in the Commonwealth would be cemented by common sentiment and an economic network of investments.

Following the outbreak of the Second World War, Uganda's human and material resources were mobilised to meet imperial and the allied powers' defence requirements. On the other hand, even before the war, the British government had acknowledged the need to ameliorate the living ~~    ~ons of colonial people in order to retain their support. The passing of the Colonial Development and Welfare Act of 1940 was undoubtedly a major landmark in the development of British policy towards her colonial empire particularly in Africa. The war effort delayed the implementation of the social and welfare schemes as stipulated by the CD&WA. The war economic problems led to a virtual suspension of spending under it. It was only after the war had turned in favour of Britain at the end of 1942 and early 1943 that the new Colonial Secretary Oliver Stanley reactivated the spending under CDW. Constitutional reforms had also been shelved. However the war conditions aggravated the need for colonial reforms. Thus, at the conclusion of the war, the Colonial Office hurried to

develop the social and economic infrastructures of its African dependencies in order to stimulate production. Significantly the CDW act was vastly expanded in 1945.

During the conflict the British economic structure was virtually destroyed. Industrial production was concentrated on war materials. Overseas investments were depleted. International trade declined. With the emergence of an acute dollar problem after the ending of lend-lease abruptly by the Americans, the needs of the British economy began to influence colonial economic policies. Increasing demands for foodstuffs, dollar earning and dollar saving raw materials prompted the imperial government to accelerate its program to improve colonial agricultural and mineral production and marketing. Gradually the imperial planners recognised that the development of colonial economies was crucial to the reconstruction and recovery of the British economy. Development planning became the main feature of the new system of centralised economic control by the metropole. Rapidly Uganda was integrated into the imperial economic system. In the absence of dollars or large sterling surpluses to invest in the colonies, marketing boards and price policies were seen as means to accumulate local capital for economic and social development which could be supplemented by the CDW funds.

The emphasis placed on the development of social services, hitherto lacking, was another clear indication of the change in colonial policy. In Uganda the rapid expansion

of the economy and social services resulted in a dramatic expansion of the African educated and commercial elites. These groups then sought political representation and greater economic opportunities, culminating in the 1945 and 1949 disturbances. This study contends that the construction of the new economic empire forced the British to abandon their earlier policy of divide and rule and attempt to create a more unified and united Uganda. Larger and modern structures were required in order to build an economically viable modern state. The small, disjointed, administrative units based on precolonial societies were considered archaic. The Colonial Office therefore took the initiative to improve the social conditions, to modernize the economy and to reform the local government system. The desire to create larger markets by amalgamating the small precolonial entities partly explained the Colonial Office's renewed interest in federations in East and Central Africa.

In the era of colonial reform which characterised Labour's term of office after 1945, the Colonial Office sought to co-opt the African educated elite as the new collaborators, and move away from the traditional elite. In Uganda where the traditional and new elite closely overlapped, the shift was less dramatic than in British West Africa. This was an important factor in the slow development of modern nationalism. The same class which in West Africa swelled the ranks of radicals and "agitators", in Uganda sprung from the

old ruling families and was usually contented to serve in the local and protectorate administration. Thus until the early 1950s, the new elite did not seriously view British rule as a hinderance to their social, economic and political advance.

It has been argued that the Accra riots of 1948 triggered the process of decolonization in Africa[1] but the Colonial Office, while recognizing the urgency of colonial reform, was still adamant that the pace of political development of each individual colony should be judged on the basis of local circumstances. Thus it was anathema to draw up a master timetable for decolonization in Africa. There is no convincing evidence of any long-considered plan for decolonization in either Uganda or East Africa. It was rather that political concessions were seen as desirable, though at a rhythm slow enough to ensure continued British control over many years ahead. After the second World War, the British indicated their willingness to withdraw from the empire if in the course of time - probably a very long time - they could find convenient successors. Preferably these would be "moderate" nationalists. The decolonisation process was therefore meant to be gradual, measured and controlled. Thus there was talk of the development of an African middle class which would guarantee progress and democracy on the principles of the British

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[1] See Peter Emudong, "The Evolution of a New British Colonial Policy in the Gold Coast, 1938 - 1948: Origins of 'Planned Decolonization' or 'Neo-colonialism'", Unpublished Ph.D. Thesis, History, Dalhousie University, 1981, pp.96-109.

parliamentary system. There was also an assumption of continuity of government, though with power passing from an autocratic colonial administration to African politicians elected on the British system. Increasingly the colonial administration saw itself as a trustee - what was awaited were "suitable" successors.

Realising that there was no sense of national loyalty and that it would be difficult to devolve power in the absence of Uganda-wide nationalism, the Protectorate administration set out to induce it. Therefore after 1945, the British sought to draw Africans into Uganda-wide institutions, even East African institutions, in anticipation of early devolution of power. Gradually, the colonial administration tried to forge a national consciousness around a strong central government. Through a hierarchy of representative councils, the British hoped that eventually Africans could be brought into the central institutions. This process would also draw the educated elites into the national political structures. National institutions, it was hoped, would promote a national spirit and destroy local particularism, a particularism which colonial policies had hitherto enhanced. The policy, however, had the opposite effects to those intended. Devolution of responsibility to local governments reinforced primary nationalisms which in turn hindered the development of Uganda-wide national loyalties. Tragically, the shift towards centralization set the protectorate government on a collision

course with Buganda nationalism personified in the Kabaka. The result was a political and constitutional deadlock which came to be known as the "Kabaka Crisis of 1953".

Prior to the Kabaka crisis of 1953 - 1955, the protectorate administration supported the imperial view that political progress would proceed pari passu with economic and social development. It was also assumed that the colonial administration could control the pace of political development of the country. The British plan collapsed in the wake of the Kabaka crisis. During the crisis, the Colonial Office lost the "initiative", not to Uganda nationalists but to primary nationalists. Thereafter the pace of political development quickened and most of the British initiatives were aimed at securing a peaceful transfer of power to African nationalists if they could be found. The constitutional reforms recommended by the Namirembe Conference chaired by Sir Keith Hancock constituted an accelerated program for the devolution of power to Africans. Hancock had advocated a dramatic shift in the balance of power at the centre in order to demonstrate the genuineness of British intentions about granting self-government and thus regain African confidence in British rule. In this he was strongly supported by the governor. Reluctantly, the Colonial Office was forced to agree to a big constitutional advance at the centre. The 1955 Buganda Agreement which was signed to end the crisis, promised direct elections to the Legislative Council and a constitutional

review by 1961. In the reformed Council, African members were to constitute half the total membership. As part of the 1955 reforms, Cohen introduced a ministerial system in which for the first time Africans were given executive power at the centre. The transfer of power was clearly under way. As Ronald Robinson has eloquently argued, constitution mongering had a significant impact on the growth of nationalism in Africa. In Uganda as elsewhere it forced the patriots to mobilise the African masses behind them. The mushrooming of political parties between 1952 and 1960 attested to this. Significantly the Kabaka crisis marked the breakdown of the bipartisan colonial policy forged during the war. The motion of censure tabled by the Labour Party against the Conservative Colonial Secretary for his handling of colonial affairs was the breaking point. In Uganda the crisis signalled the end of the close collaboration between the British and the Baganda oligarchs. It stimulated anti-colonialism which the UNC exploited to boost its support particularly in Buganda. The impact of this crisis on the speed and timing of decolonization in Uganda is indisputable.

Cohen's governorship ushered in a period of rapid constitutional development. He had sought to anticipate nationalist demands before they became vocal. By this strategy, he hoped to control and "manage" the growth and development of Uganda nationalism. He believed that local government reform was the key to efficient government, and

representative government had to begin there. He also believed that only by increasing African participation at the centre would the colonial administration be able transform the protectorate into a modern state. He encouraged the Kabaka to democratize the Buganda Lukiiko. He appointed more Africans to the Legislative Council. He brought Africans into the Executive Council well before the nationalists demanded it. Energetically, he pushed forward the economic development program. Unfortunately Cohen's efforts undermined the growth of national political movements based on the Ugandan state. The liberal economic and political reforms introduced by his administration removed the common sources of discontent around which the patriots could have mobilized popular support. Single handedly, Cohen achieved for Uganda what nationalists elsewhere in Africa fought for for decades. Without a cause which was national in nature, the would-be nationalists championed local causes. As a result, the nationalist leaders failed to formulate a national agenda or to secure a mass following. Arguably Cohen had succeeded in preventing the growth of radical nationalism. But the absence of a powerful nationalist movement created another basic problem. If power was to be transferred, there had to be a group capable of governing the whole country. The failure of the African middle class, the designated successor to the colonial regime, to form a strong national movement meant that the whole process of decolonization was bound to fail. Cohen had clearly failed

to induce Uganda nationalism and consequently to secure new collaborators.

Andrew Cohen was convinced that because of her small size and undeveloped economy, Uganda was unsuited for a federal system of government. He therefore initiated and pursued policies aimed at creating a unitary state, but factors rooted in precolonial and colonial history made it impossible to achieve his goals. He found himself opposed by a large section of Ugandans led by the powerful Buganda oligarchy. Cohen's idea about a unitary Uganda was not new. The first British Commissioner in Uganda had wanted to rule the country on a unitary basis. Writing about Sir Harry Johnston's experience, Uzoigwe noted:

> Finding himself negotiating with a group of astute and self confident Baganda oligarchy of chiefs who were determined to consolidate their position, he quickly lost his temper. Therefore, he could not push through the proposals he had brought with him from England which aimed at ruling Uganda as a unitary state. The Agreement that was eventually adopted was a victory for the chiefs.[2]

Uzoigwe could as well have been describing the events of 1953-55. Cohen's attempt to correct the anomaly created by Johnston was a total failure. Buganda emerged out of the Kabaka crisis more confident and more autonomous than ever before, and the chances of achieving a unitary Uganda became more remote. Even the "King of Africa" proved a paper tiger in the face of

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[2]. See introduction, Uzoigwe (ed.), Uganda: The Dilemma of Nationhood, 1982.

Buganda primary nationalism which he had inadvertently inflamed by deporting Mutesa II. Therefore like Sir Harry Johnston, the first British Commissioner in Uganda, Cohen grossly underestimated the task confronting him. It is interesting to note that while Cohen strongly believed that strong central rule was the shortest way to progress, the British were experimenting on something quite the opposite in Nigeria, where they were moving away from administration too tightly drawn towards a looser system in which, it was hoped, units of different a character would "chafe less upon each other". It is suggested that given the contradictory colonial policies pursued over a long period and the enormous disagreements and differences among the Ugandan societies on the eve of independence, the most suitable form of government would have been a uniform federal system. A unitary government could only be maintained by force. Inevitably, the unitary system was greatly compromised by the independence constitution which created semi-federal and quasi-federal states within a unitary state of Uganda.

This study suggests that lack of a national spirit was the most important legacy of colonialism in Uganda. Colonial policies and historical factors contributed to the slow development of a Uganda-wide consciousness. Among other reasons, the policy of indirect rule and the use of Baganda agents in the establishment of colonial rule aroused both primary nationalism and ethnic suspicion which put a break on

national integration. The uneven economic development of the country and the politicisation of social cleavages such as religion further divided the people of Uganda. The privileged classes, whether the powerful Buganda oligarchy or the Uganda-wide protestant elite, devoid of Uganda-wide nationalism, beat the "tribal drums" to protect their position. Ethnicity was inflated. This hampered the development of national unity. Ugandan society became so divided that by the late 1950s it was feared the transfer of power might be delayed by lack of agreement on part of the disparate African interests.

Surprisingly, in the decolonisation schemes under which British Africa attained independence, the role of the African army as a political factor was not seriously discussed. But in independent Africa the professional armies have became so central that one historian has referred to them as "a chronic source of instability, confusion, and anarchy".[3] According to Boahen, African armies "are the greatest millstones around the necks of African leaders".[4] That the Colonial Office, the Colonial Service, British observers and African nationalists spent so much time trying to fashion political systems and constitutions, with the assumption that these arrangements were permanent, and yet ignored such an important organ of power is, to say the least, baffling.

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[3]. Adu A. Boahen, African Perspectives on Colonialism, Baltimore & London, 1987, pp. 98-9.

[4]. Ibid..

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