# Modes of British Imperial Control of Africa
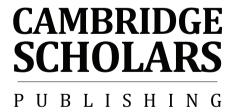
# Modes of British Imperial Control of Africa: A Case Study of Uganda, c.1890-1990

By

Onek C. Adyanga

**CAMBRIDGE SCHOLARS**

P U B L I S H I N G

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

# INTRODUCTION

At the beginning of the twentieth century, with minimal manpower, Britain asserted juridical and political control over large and prized territories of Africa. The circumstances surrounding Britain's imperial control of territories that it was interested in for economic resources and geo-strategic considerations have been debated by numerous scholars of different ideological persuasions. By far the most cogent treatment of the issue by mainstream scholars is to be found in the classic *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (1981) by Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher,[1] which expanded on their earlier article titled "Imperialism of Free Trade" (1953).[2] The thesis of their scholarship states that, in the nineteenth century, Britain exercised informal control where possible and formal rule only where and when necessary.[3] This book sets out to test whether and how the two models of control highlighted by Robinson and Gallagher can be used to understand British control of Uganda during the colonial and post-colonial periods.

The issue of control in Uganda was obscured temporarily in the early 1960s with the granting of juridical independence to African nationalists by Britain. For many Africans, the granting of formal independence was construed to signal the resumption of sovereignty and popular engagement by African people in the political processes of their particular colonially-fashioned states. Robust democratic participation during the first few years of independence created the facade of a revival of Africans' autonomous control over their affairs, making the question of external control not particularly relevant at the time. However, with the onset of

---

[1] Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, (with Alice Denny) *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (Doubleday & Company, Inc: Garden City, New York, 1981).

[2] Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, "Imperialism of Free Trade," *Economic History Review* 6 (1953): 13.

[3] Robinson and Gallagher observed that British informal and formal control was determined by the relative success of attracting indigenous collaborators and mediators in protectorates, condominiums, mandates, and colonies. But once Britain intervened to protect its interests, formal control was imposed. Thus, the timing, scope, and character of control - informal and formal - depended upon the relative success of attracting local collaborators and mediators in the empire.

many crises in Africa beginning around the mid-1960s, coupled with the introduction of "Structural Adjustment Programs" by the World Bank (WB) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in the 1980s, the issue of imperial control of Africa became topical.

Many theories have been advanced to explain the prevalence of endemic crises on the African continent. They highlight the broader crises engendered by modernization,[4] psychoses of power,[5] familiarity syndrome,[6] personal rule,[7] state-society relations,[8] and collapsed states,[9] to micro-perspectives such as prebendal politics[10] and the weaknesses of civil

---

[4] Samuel P. Huntington, *Political Order in Changing Societies* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968), advocates institutionalization and the imposition of political order, which has a strong authoritarian ambiance.

[5] Samuel Decalo, *Psychoses of Power: African Personal Dictatorships* (Boulder Colorado: Westview Press, 1998); Samuel Decalo, *Civil-Military Relations in Africa* (Gainesville: Florida Academic Press, 1998), 204, departs from analyses that emphasize the social, economic, and structural causes of military coups, military rule, and personal dictatorships. Instead, he argues that the personal and careerist motivations of the coup leaders influence the character of their rule. He concludes that western states disenchanted with Africa "not be wholly averse to a bout of "responsible developmental dictatorship."

[6] Amii Omara-Otunnu, *Politics and the Military in Uganda, 1890-1985* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), where the familiarity syndrome is introduced to explain the psychological change among less educated African soldiers to participate in military coups.

[7] Robert H. Jackson and Carl G. Rosberg, *Personal Rule in Black Africa: Prince, Autocrat, Prophet, Tyrant* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), argue that African political systems are instances of "personal rule" arising from weak of institutions created by colonial rule.

[8] Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1988), argues that African states are constrained by the power of traditional institutions that threaten the governance of central state elite.

[9] I. William Zartman, (ed.), *Collapsed States: The Disintegration and Restoration of Legitimate Authority* (Boulder, Colorado: L. Reiner Publishers, 1995), argues that state collapse is like a "long -term degenerative disease" rather than a sudden calamity that needed a centralized leadership vested in strongmen for state reconstruction.

[10] Richard Joseph, *Democracy and Prebendal Politics in Nigeria: The Rise of the Second Republic* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), describes a form of patron-client relationship in which many officeholders in Nigeria feel entitled to appropriate revenues of the Nigerian state to benefit themselves, their constituents, and kin groups.

society.[11] These theories have been constructed from varying philosophical perspectives. A major problem with most of the theories is that they are not historical, and therefore fail to trace the evolution of the crises. Significantly, in addition, they do not make distinctions between formal and informal modes of control adopted by imperial powers.

However, one other theory that resembles Robinson and Gallagher's informal control is neo-colonialism. Kwame Nkrumah, in his *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*, describes neo-colonialism in the following manner:

> The essence of neo-colonialism is that the State which is subject to it is, in theory, independent and has all the outward trappings of international sovereignty. In reality, its economic system and thus political policy is directed from outside… Neo-colonialism is also the worst form of imperialism. For those who practise it, it means power without responsibility and for those who suffer from it, it means exploitation without redress.[12]

In analyzing the modes of control in Uganda's post-colonial set-up by the former British imperial power, this study considers the extent to which Nkrumah's theory of neo-colonialism is tenable. For the colonial period, it examines how the formal doctrine of indirect rule, which was developed for the administration of British colonial territories in Africa, functioned. It argues that in terms of internal administration during the colonial period, indirect rule can best be understood and characterized as a mode of neo-colonial control. The argument takes into account the various perspectives of scholars of African history who have examined the purposes, nature, and effects of the doctrine of indirect rule.[13]

---

[11] Civil Society advocates argue that a strong civil organization would counter the powers of the state and perform empowering, educating, and advocacy functions necessary for effective democratization. However, critics such as Samuel Decalo counter that the reliance on civil society misleads the struggle for democratization. In his *Civil-Military Relations in Africa*, Decalo criticizes western academics and international organizations that present civil society as a bulwark to democratization. He points out that they are more likely to become agents of virulent sub-nationalism and renewed clientelism, rather than of democratization and state reconstruction.

[12] Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism* (New York: International Publishers, 1965), ix-xi.

[13] H.F. Morris and James S. Read, *Indirect Rule and the Search for Justice: Essays in East African Legal History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972); Barber James, *Imperial Frontiers: A Study of Relations Between the British and Pastoral Tribes of Northeastern Uganda* (Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1968); A.E.

Mahmood Mamdani provides a recent and refreshing analysis in *Citizens and Subjects: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (1996). He argues that because the principle concern of British colonial authorities was how to devise effective mechanisms to control Africans, they came up with different organizations of power in rural and urban arenas under a single central hegemonic authority. In the rural areas where the majority of Africans lived, state power was organized under indirect rule mediated by "traditional" chiefs. These chiefs exercised customary authority restrained by the "repugnancy clause,"[14] a provision in the warrant of authority for their appointment. The customary authority was enforced through a native administration, which was constituted by a treasury, a council, and a court. The main functions of the native authorities were to collect taxes, pass local ordinances, and determine punishments for violations of colonial laws. To the peasants, the chiefs who carried out the local administration were absolute and authoritarian. However, to the British, they were restricted to the terms of the warrant that spelled out the scope of their authority. They could be demoted, transferred, and dismissed for non-compliance with colonial policy. The result of colonially-appointed chiefs running the affairs of local communities was the undermining of popular authority that anchored traditional democratic methods of selecting and legitimising chiefs. This process of undermining popular authority and clan legitimacy led Mamdani to define indirect rule as "decentralized despotism."[15]

In urban areas, by contrast, minority Europeans and educated Africans lived under the direct rule of the colonial administration, but were differentiated in the enjoyment and exercise of rights and privileges based on race. Europeans enjoyed civil rights, the rights of association, and political representation in the colonial legislature. On the other hand, educated Africans were denied those same civil rights due to their race, in spite of their collaboration with colonial authorities and experience at high-level administrative posts. The racial discrimination of educated Africans was a major factor that pushed them to agitate for civil rights in

---

Afigbo, *The Warrant Chiefs: Indirect Rule in Southeastern Nigeria, 1891-1929* (London: Longman, 1972); Peter Tosh, *Clan Leaders and Colonial Chiefs in Lango* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978); D. A. Low, and R. C. Pratt, *Buganda and British Overrule: Two Studies* (London: Oxford University Press, 1960).

[14] The "repugnancy clause" empowers the colonial officer to determine unilaterally if a customary practice was contrary to western morality. It was a means of social control.

[15] Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, N. J: Princeton University Press, 1996), 43.

post-World War II period.[16] These educated Africans directed their struggles at transcending the racism of the civil society and destroying the rural power of traditional African chiefs.

Mamdani terms the dichotomized and differentiated colonial treatment of races in urban and rural areas as the bifurcation of African states. The nationalist reform of the bifurcated state upon independence led to the consolidation of diffused and concentrated power in the executive[17] and the strengthening of a decentralised despotism under traditional chiefs.[18] Mamdani's argument raises fundamental questions about the organization of power and governance in colonial and contemporary Africa, which this book discusses.

This study examines how Britain, as a colonial power, organized and exercised control in colonial and contemporary Uganda. It argues that at the international and domestic levels, a principle concern of Britain was to protect its interests rather than those of Ugandans. The research combines archival primary sources with secondary materials to illuminate modes of imperial control from 1890 to 1990. Primary sources have been derived from official documents such as colonial correspondences, annual reports, intelligence reports, historical surveys, touring notes, assessments of ethnographic notes and reports, and reports of military expeditions; and the private papers of colonial officials such as letters, diaries, memoirs, memoranda, and reports. These sources are supplemented with secondary materials drawn from the fields of history, political science, sociology, and anthropology. These source materials include journal articles, newspapers, academic manuscripts, and books.

While this book is by no means an exhaustive study of the various modes of British imperial control that functioned in Uganda since the inception of the territorial state up to the period of juridical independence in 1962, it aims to make a contribution to the scholarship in three areas. First, it attempts to shed some light on the combined influence of racist ideology, class, and politics in perpetuating British informal control of Uganda. Second, it tries to show that the more Britain solidified informal control of the country, the more Uganda looked overseas for external legitimacy.[19] This suggests that African leaders not supported by external powers may be delegitimized externally, and their position made untenable.

---

[16] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 19.

[17] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 108.

[18] Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, 106-7

[19] Oliver Furley, "Britain and Uganda from Amin to Museveni: Blind Eye Diplomacy," in Kumar Rupeshinghe, (ed.), *Conflict Resolution in Uganda* (London: James Currey, 1989).

Third, it endeavours to demonstrate that by removing incentives for internal legitimacy, the informal control of Africans constructed by external powers encourages violations of human rights because African leaders need not obtain the consent of their own people in order to remain in power. Furthermore, it advances the argument that democracy, the rule of law, and human rights can be achieved in Africa if its leaders are granted internal legitimacy by the people. Although this book is organized chronologically, the first chapter is devoted to a review of ideological modes of imperial control.

Chapter One will focus on the ideological control of Africans through western Christian educational structures. Because education was monopolized by European Christian missionaries during the colonial period, the chapter examines the curriculum adopted for inculcating certain values into Africans admitted to missionary schools. On the one hand, the missionary curricula were replete with deliberate attempts to denigrate traditional African values, which were characterized as barbaric, heathen, and savage.[20] The negative description of traditional values tended to make Africans feel ashamed of their indigenous identities. On the other hand, the curricula defined western values as constituting civilization. This system tended to encourage Africans to identify with the values of the imperial power, which contributed to the creation of African Anglophile elite. It must be remembered that in order to obtain any gainful employment in the colonial system, an African had to demonstrate not simply rote knowledge of the Bible, but also a sense of loyalty to the colonial order, and thus, a western system of values. Over time, some Africans who were educated in missionary schools, although generally caricatures of Europeans, nonetheless became useful linchpins of the colonial system. Here lies the significance of education as a mode of imperial control. It is for this reason that this book argues that juridical independence in Uganda, just as in most African countries, simply transferred simply political power to a newly-created indigenous elite who shared the economic, political, and social values of the departing colonial authorities. For the most part, the new African elite perpetuated informal British imperial paramountcy and control. In this circumstance, it is

---

[20] Edward H. Berman, *African Reactions to the Missionary Education* (New York and London: Columbia University, 1940), xi-xiv; Herbert G. Jones, *Uganda in Transformation 1876-1926* (London: The Church Missionary Society, 1926), 191; Charles W. Hattersley, *The Baganda at Home* (London: Frank and Cass, Ltd., 1968), 178.

difficult to regard juridical independence as marking a fundamental break with overarching European interests and control.[21]

Chapter Two examines the establishment of the colonial administration and demonstrates that from the outset, this new form of government was geared to support structures and individuals that enhanced colonial control. The analysis of this chapter is carried out against the backdrop of the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885 and the partitioning and military conquests of Africa in the 1890s. The issues discussed in this chapter are: the reasons for, and *modus operandi* of, colonial acquisition and control of territories in East Africa; the deposition of independent-minded African leaders such as Omukama (King) Kabarega, Kabaka (King) Mwanga, etc.; the protracted resistance to British colonial conquest by African societies; and the promotion of African rulers who were amenable to facilitating British colonial control. The chapter argues that, by replacing African leaders who had the support of their people with those who owed their position to the warrant of appointment by the British colonial administration, the legitimacy to govern African societies was externalized. This relationship resulted in promoting autocratic leaders who acted more to safeguard the interests of British imperialism than to govern African communities responsibly. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the policy of indirect rule as popularized by Lord Frederick Dealtry Lugard, a former British military officer regarded as the architect of indirect rule policy in East Africa.

Chapter Three examines colonial paternalism and white oligarchy from 1920 to 1945. During this time, three major interrelated developments – political, ideological, and economic – solidified colonial paternalism and white oligarchy as a means of colonial control. Political development was marked by the establishment of the Uganda Legislative Council in 1921. As in other colonial territories on the continent, the Uganda Legislative Council performed merely advisory functions for the colonial governor, who could ignore opinions offered to him on any legislation. In theory, black Africans should have had a seat on the Legislative Council, but in practice, no Africans were allowed a seat, even though they were the majority in Uganda. The minority white Europeans controlled all but one seat, which was occupied by an Indian.[22] The chapter also examines the

---

[21] Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism: The Last Stage of Imperialism*. Colin Leys, *Underdevelopment in Kenya: The Political Economy of Neo-colonialism, 1964-1971* (Berkeley: University of California, 1974); Giovanni Arrighi, *The Political Economy of Rhodesia* (The Hague: Mouton, 1967).

[22] The word Indian or Asian is used interchangeably to include people whose ancestry is from the Indian sub-continent.

reasons why there was no African representation on the Legislative Council and other colonial bodies. The extant sources indicate that racial paternalism was a major reason for excluding Africans because the British colonial authorities regarded them as children who needed the guidance of white people.[23] Racial paternalism functioned on the assumption that white missionaries and administrative officers knew best what was beneficial for Africans. This colonial thinking was perhaps well expressed by Sir Donald Cameron,[24] who was the Governor of Tanganyika from 1925 to 1931:

> I do not by any means regard the large body of natives as being altogether unrepresented on the council. Their interests are directly in the hands of the Secretary for Native Affairs, the Chief Secretary and the Governor himself.[25]

Although this remark concerned the neighbouring territory of Tanganyika, it applied with equal force to Uganda. This racial paternalism was so dominant in the interwar period that even though the Uganda Legislative Council was established in 1921, it was not until 1945 that the first African was allowed to join the body. Before 1945, whenever politically conscious and educated Africans complained about the lack of African representation on the Legislative Council, when compared for example with Indian representation dating back to the establishment of the council, colonial officials ridiculed them for being too eager to run before they could walk.[26]

Arguably the paternalistic ideological development began with the 1923 Duke of Devonshire Declaration of African Paramountcy. Despite its declared objective of protecting the interests of Africans in the event of racial conflict with the immigrant communities, the goal of the African paramountcy policy appears to have been developed to alleviate a British economic crisis. The Colonial Development and Welfare Policies of 1929, 1940, and 1945, which focused on meeting British economic needs rather than those of Africans, illustrate this new paternalistic approach. In terms

---

[23] H.F. Morris and James S. Read, *Indirect Rule and the Search for Justice*.

[24] Sir Donald Cameron, *My Tanganyika Service and Some Nigeria* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1935), developed a concept of government authority and responsibility upon British Africa more firmly than Lord F.D. Lugard. His most lasting contribution was the redefinition of indirect rule and its application to Tanganyika and later on in reorganizing the government of Nigeria.

[25] Cameron, *My Tanganyika Service,* 7-8.

[26] Dent Ocaya-Lakidi, "Black Attitudes to the Brown and White Colonizers of East Africa," in Michael Twaddle, (ed.), *The Expulsion of a Minority: Essays on Ugandan Asians* (London: The Athlone Press, 1975), 93.

of economic development, Africans were excluded from participating as entrepreneurs in the colonial economy, but were kept as wage labourers on immigrant farms. Africans struggled against the paternalistic economic exclusion and exploitation, leading to the founding of cooperative movements from which the first political party in Uganda would later emerge.

Chapter Four analyzes organized African pressure to change British policies and the resulting colonial reforms from 1946 to 1960. This chapter examines the various agitations by African people in Uganda against institutional racism, which had underpinned the doctrine of indirect rule. African agitations resonated with the global community because World War II was fought for and against the idea of Nazi racial supremacy, which discredited racism in general. In the progressive post-war climate, the coming to power of the British Labour Party and the upsurge of pan-Africanism increased the pace of decolonization and dented the myth of racial inferiority of black people. The chapter also appraises the major events and the nature of racial politics of the period, including the African boycott of Asian businesses in 1945 and 1949, the response of the colonial authorities to the boycott, the racial position of Asians and their control of key sectors of commerce, and the change of indirect rule to local administration. The main focus of the chapter is the reforms implemented under the governorship of Sir Andrew Cohen, the agitation for Africanization, and the progressive increase of African representation in the Legislative Council and the appointment of a handful of Africans on the Executive Council. In hindsight, all of these reforms represented new modes of controlling Africans within the context of African nationalist agitation for self-government. The inclusion of Africans in both local and central administrations opened up the hitherto closed white European colonial oligarchy without inaugurating a dramatic change in power relations in the country.

Chapter Five, covering the nationalist liberal era from 1961 to 1965, examines how neo-colonial relations were constructed between Britain and Uganda in the immediate aftermath of the granting of political independence to Uganda on October 9, 1962. Uganda joined the British Commonwealth of Nations, an organization that disguised and maintained British control over the new state. The Ugandan leaders of the neo-colonial state were committed to anchoring their legitimacy on liberal politics, constitutionalism, and the rule of law. Unfortunately, their commitment was tested by two constitutional developments. The first constitutional development was the Munster Commission, which was to determine the nature of relationships between the native administrations

and the central government. The Munster Commission granted Buganda
Kingdom a semi-federal status, thus externalizing the legitimacy of Buganda
Kingdom within a unitary Ugandan state.[27] It was not surprising that the
Kabaka Yekka (KY) Party,[28] which drew its membership predominantly
from Buganda monarchists, was formed with the political objective of
protecting Buganda's semi-federal status. Without country-wide appeal,
KY maintained an ethno-nationalist platform, weakening national unity.
The second constitutional problem was the Molson Commission, which
was organized to adjudicate the thorny territorial issue of the Lost-
Counties. It recommended that the issue of the Lost-Counties be resolved
by a referendum, which was to be carried out within two years of
independence.[29]

Prime Minister Apollo Milton Obote, leader of the independent
Ugandan state, sought to carry out the referendum in 1964 against intense
opposition by the Buganda Parliament. This division hastened the collapse
of the political marriage of convenience between the KY and the Uganda
People's Congress (UPC)[30] that had been stitched together to win a
national democratic election. The outcome of the election gave the Office
of the Presidency to Kabaka Edward Mutesa and the Office of the Prime
Minister to Apollo Milton Obote in October 1962. The hope that the KY-
UPC alliance would preserve liberalism, constitutionalism, and the rule of
law soon collapsed. Mutesa, as the President of Uganda, was an ethno-
nationalist who focused more on Buganda's special position within the
country than on constitutionalism and the rule of law. He refused to sign
into law the Parliamentary bill for a referendum, and after the completion
of the referendum exercise in 1964, he tried to block the transfer of the

---

[27] Uganda Protectorate, *Report of the Uganda Relationships Commission* [The
Munster Commission] (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Service, 1961).

[28] Kabaka Yekka (King Alone) is a neo-traditionalist political party that emerged
in Buganda to defend the special position of the *Kabaka* and Buganda's interest in
Uganda. Its members were mostly Baganda monarchists.

[29] Great Britain, Colonial Office, *Cmd 1717 Uganda: Report of a Commission of
Privy Counsellors on a Dispute Between Buganda and Bunyoro*, (1962), 1. The
Lost-Counties, which comprise Buyaga, Bugangazzi, and Buwekula, was a
longstanding source of grievance between Bunyoro and Buganda. These counties
were given to Buganda by Colonel Colville as rewards for helping the British
defeat Bunyoro. In 1900, Special Commissioner Sir Harry Johnston signed the
1900 agreement with Buganda including these counties as *de facto* and *de jure*
territories of Buganda.

[30] The Uganda People's Congress (UPC) under the leadership of Apollo Milton
Obote is a national political party that formed a government with Kabaka Yekka
(KY) on October 9, 1962.

Lost-Counties to Bunyoro. The refusal of President Mutesa to discharge his constitutional obligation contributed to the collapse of the KY-UPC alliance. Left without the KY alliance, Obote enticed the Democratic Party (DP)[31] Members of Parliament to join the UPC. At the same time, Obote continued to engage Parliament to implement the Molson Commission recommendation for a referendum in the Lost-Counties. The Parliamentary debates reflected the desire to resolve historic injustices that tested the commitment to national unity, constitutionalism, and the rule of law in the newly-independent state. During this period of political contestation, the mass media remained vibrant, the rule of law reigned supreme, and there was respect for human rights and a commitment to constitutionalism. After the referendum, this golden era of Ugandan politics degenerated into a violent challenge in which the external legitimizing of power became significant.

Chapter Six examines the decline of populist politics between 1966 and 1967, which dramatically drew the military into political processes, with the result that the military became the source of internal legitimacy. Mutesa's challenge to the constitutional resolution of the Lost-Counties affected liberalism, the rule of law, and constitutional politics profoundly. It also attempted to assert a new form of superiority - that of his Kingdom - over the rest of Uganda. This led to the unconstitutional contestation for power for which Mutesa sought external support in order to govern. The chapter also analyzes the brief but tragic episode in Ugandan politics, which marked a turning point in the way governance was conducted, and was to deal a negative blow to liberalism and constitutionalism. The discussion analyses the re-organization of the army, Kabaka Mutesa's attempt to outflank the government, and President Obote's carrot-and-stick approach to national politics. Mutesa attempted to invite British intervention, raising the significance of external legitimization of political power. The chapter notes that Britain influenced internal politics in Uganda by taking sides covertly, in order to protect its own economic interests.

Chapter Seven, covering the emergence of one-party authoritarian rule from 1967 to 1970, traces the rise of military authoritarianism justified by invoking African interests. It also examines the influence of the 1966 crisis and regional political developments toward the creation of one-party states and provides a context for understanding the challenges to the new nation. The context illustrates the general pattern of the politics of unity in Africa,

---

[31] The Democratic Party (DP) is a national political party that was founded in 1954. Its first leader, Benedicto Kiwanuka, led Uganda to self-government in March 1961.

and situates Uganda within the trajectory of African development. The politics of unity takes into consideration the fact that the colonial state was an administrative and authoritarian state in which African interests were simply coincidental to European economic interests. The colonial state had cultivated no notion of democracy, the rule of law, respect for human rights, nationalism, or internal legitimacy. African leaders believed that a centralized administration offered the best way forward for unity, economic development, and modernization.[32] In 1969, President Obote introduced the Common Man's Charter with the aim of establishing a firmer basis of internal legitimacy, national unity, self-sufficiency, and economic development.[33] In particular, the nationalization policy of the Common Man's Charter unsettled the British government, as it threatened Britain's control of the economy. The Common Man's Charter was not implemented because of Major-General Idi Amin's military coup in 1971. However, Obote's approach in formulating the Common Man's Charter demonstrated a tendency for authoritarian rather than democratic pluralism. The chapter examines how the Common Man's Charter might have established a more solid basis for internal legitimacy, while at the same time threatening British neo-colonial control of Uganda.

Chapter Eight discusses the military rule of Uganda from 1971 to 1990, and examines how external powers attempted to protect their economic interests in Uganda. President Obote's Common Man's Charter had alienated many external economic interests. First, the nationalization of key enterprises in the country affected British investments. Second, the regional geo-strategic conflict between Israel and the Sudan spilled over to influence Ugandan politics. Israel was supporting rebels opposed to the Sudanese government. Uganda sided with the Sudan and voted against Israel in the United Nations General Assembly to occupy Arab lands. However, the issue of immediate conflict between President Obote and British Prime Minister Edward Heath was due to the latter's insistence on selling arms to South Africa in violation of the resolutions of the United Nations.[34] President Obote threatened to pull out of the British Commonwealth of Nations, following the lead of Ghana and Tanzania.

---

[32] Peter Willetts, "The Politics of Uganda as a One-Party State," *African Affairs*, 74, No. 296 (July 1975): 278-279; S. Finer, "The One-Party Regimes in Africa: Reconsiderations" *Government and Opposition,* II, (1967): 491-509; D. McRae, "Nkrumahism: Past and Future Ideology" *Government and Opposition,* I (1965/1966):535-545.

[33] A.M. Obote, *The Common Man's Charter with Appendices* (Entebbe: Government Printer, 1970).

[34] *Washington Post*, 24 February 1978.

While in Singapore for a Commonwealth meeting, Obote was overthrown by Major-General Idi Amin, who had the support of foreign governments.[35] From 1971 onward, external legitimacy gained prominence in Ugandan politics as Britain, the United States of America, and Israel supported the rise of Major-General Idi Amin to power. The overthrow of President Amin in 1979 also came through the external intervention of Tanzania, thus confirming the significance of external factors to legitimizing internal Ugandan governance. In fact, the immediate post-Amin era was conducted under the external legitimacy of Tanzania. The chapter concludes with a review of developments in Uganda since the ouster of the military dictator Idi Amin. In particular, it discusses how the National Resistance Movement (NRM) of Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, the current strongman of Uganda, has built up internal mechanisms to control the population on behalf of his external sponsors who provide him with financial and public relations support. A critical examination of the post-Idi Amin period indicates that external legitimacy continues to serve as an effective mode of imperial control of African states.

The concluding Chapter Nine brings together the arguments developed in the preceding chapters, and lends support to the theses advanced by Robinson and Gallagher, and Nkrumah that the various modes of control constructed by former colonial masters over post-colonial African states serve not to protect African interests, but to safeguard and promote European interests.

---

[35] William Stevenson, *90 Minutes at Entebbe* (New York: Bantams, 1976); *Africa Research Bulletin* (January 1-31, 1971), 1993-1997. Y. Ofer, *Operation Thunder: The Entebbe Raid: The Israeli's Own Story* (London, 1976).

CHAPTER ONE

A REVIEW OF IDEOLOGICAL METHODS
OF CONTROL

## Introduction

British colonial rule over Uganda lasted for about sixty years. During this period, the colonial authorities devised many different methods of controlling the country and its population. These methods ranged from demonstration of military might, political and economic domination, to ideological indoctrination. The latter of these methods, ideological indoctrination, was achieved mostly through Christian missionary churches and schools established to denude Africans of traditional spirituality and knowledge systems. The combination of churches and schools made Africans highly amenable to foreign control and domination, as Christian missionaries were the dominant agents of spiritual indoctrination of Africans for consolidating British colonial rule. This chapter sets out to examine the establishment of churches and schools in Uganda in the first decades of the twentieth century. The primary purpose is to analyze the objectives and content of colonial education in Uganda.

This chapter will explore the evolution of British colonial education policy in Uganda by examining the following: [a] Christian missionary education and its limitations for Africans; [b] the rise of the Protectorate government's official interest in education; [c] the influence of the Phelps-Stokes Commission Report on Education on British colonial education policy; [d] African response to the limitations of colonial education; and [e] the ramification of colonial education policy and practices on Africans. It shows that the partnership between the British government and Christian missionaries was motivated at best by colonial paternalism, which justified spiritual and political control as necessary for African development. Churches and schools anchored spiritual control under white clerical authority while treaties and military force maintained political control under colonial administrators. Thus, the partnership between missionaries and colonial administrators perpetuated dual forms of political and

religious control. The relative success of western spiritual and political imperialism, under whose spell Ugandan nationalists were subjected, ushered neo-colonial control after independence.

## Christian Missionary Education and Policy

The first European Christian missionaries who arrived in Uganda in 1877 were members of the Protestant Church Missionary Society (CMS) from England. Two years later, the French Roman Catholic Missionaries (RCM), in particular, the Mill Hill Fathers, followed. From 1877 to 1894, attempts by European missionaries to get a foothold in Uganda suffered severe setbacks due to the political upheavals at the royal court of the King of Buganda, Kabaka Mutesa. Their difficulty in gaining a foothold arose primarily because Kabaka Mutesa had foreseen the danger of the intrusion of a foreign religion to his authority, having experienced the disobedience of Baganda Muslim pages at his court. The presence of the two Christian missionary groups – the Church Missionary Society (CMS) and the Roman Catholic Missionary (RCM) - exasperated the Kabaka, particularly when the white missionaries clashed openly at his court over Church theology in competing for his favour.[1] Mutesa grew disinterested in both groups and never converted to a foreign religion until the time of his death in 1884. When Mwanga succeeded Mutesa, he inherited a faction-ridden court of followers of Baganda traditionalism, Zanzibari Muslim, French Catholicism, and English Protestantism. The Christian rivalries led to the 1892 Battle of Mengo between the Protestants and Catholics.

During the conflict, Captain (later Sir) Frederick Dealtry Lugard, a British army officer employed by the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) as an administrator, allied with the English Protestant faction (*Wa-Ingreza*) against the French Catholics (*Wa-Franza*). Lugard supported the English Protestants in the war because he did not "wish to deal a heavy blow to" [his] "own creed."[2] Lugard disarmed the French Catholics and their followers while issuing arms to the English Protestants and their Baganda allies, and threw his weight behind them with the Maxim gun. Lugard's support tilted the outcome of the Battle of Mengo in favour of the English Protestants. When a truce was reached between the

---

[1] John Rowe, "Mutesa & the Missionaries: Church and State in Pre-Colonial Buganda" in Holger Bernt Hansen & Michael Twaddle, (eds.), *Christian Missionaries & the State in the Third World* (Oxford: James Currey, 2002), 54-56.

[2] Captain Frederick Dealtry Lugard, *Diaries,* Vol. II, entry of 28 February and 5 March 1891. Originals in Rhodes House Library.

Protestant and Catholic religious factions in 1892, the English Protestants, who were in the minority in Buganda, became the ruling class.

With Buganda as a rear base, the Protestants' and Catholics' missionary work radiated to cover most parts of Uganda under the watchful eye of the Protectorate administration. These missionaries were spurred on by Eurocentric and anthropological misperceptions of Africans as depraved creatures, sadly lacking God, living in dreadful degradation, and reveling in physical excesses.[3] Their misconceptions influenced them to presume that Christian life and virtues were a solution to African problems.[4] These European missionaries were determined, according to D. Westermann in *Africa and Christianity* (1937), to exterminate inexorably everything connected with African religion in order to create room for Christianity to flourish.[5] Their entrenched belief was that "African paganism" had less to lose in comparison to Christianity; therefore, evangelizing Africans would include them in membership of a higher social class.[6]

The strong conviction among Christian missionaries that African religious values were inferior motivated them to try by all means to purge Africans of their spiritual grounding in the first decades of the twentieth century. They attempted to achieve their objective by following a classic and favoured conversion paradigm that dates back to the nineteenth century. This strategy was known as "concentration versus diffusion."[7] Proponents of the concentration paradigm worked from the perspective

---

[3] Philip Curtin, *Images of Africa: British Ideas and Action, 1780-1850* (Madison, 1964), 216; R. Moffat, *Missionary Labours and Scenes in South Africa* (London, 1843), 168; W.A. Elmslie, *Among the Wild Ngoni, Being Some Chapters in the History of the Livingstonia Mission of Central Africa* (Third Edition, London, 1970, first published, 1899), 53-60; H. W. Mobley, *The Ghanaian Image of the Missionary* (Leiden: Brill, 1970).

[4] See also, J.F.A. Ajayi, *Christian Missionaries in Nigeria, 1841-1891* (London: Longmans, 1965), 261-62; M. Jarrett-Kerr, *Patterns of Christian Acceptance* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), 7; D.A. McGavran, *Understanding Church Growth* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans, 1970), 77-78.

[5] D. Westermann, *Africa and Christianity* (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 134-135.

[6] Westermann, *Africa and Christianity,* vii.

[7] Louis George Mylne, *Missions for Hindu: a Contribution to the Study of Missionary Methods* (London: Longmans, Green, 1908); D.R Heise. "Prefatory Findings in the Sociology of Missions" *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 6 (1967); D.A. McGavran, *The Bridges of God: A Study in the Strategy of Missions* (London: World Dominion Press, 1955). They contrasted concentrated and diffuse missions, relating their attributes to theories of conversion, theology, finance and size.

that they needed to isolate and protect converts from backsliding to their traditional belief systems. They viewed their work as being a gradual yet sure means to the establishment of a coherent Christian community.[8] Those advocating the diffusion paradigm emphasized the dispersal of missionaries among the indigenous people. They pointed out that the concentration paradigm would produce static, overstaffed stations, which would blend social services such as teaching and medical aid with the proper missionary duty of evangelization.[9]

The practices of European missionaries in Africa in the early decades of the twentieth century indicate that they preferred to establish exclusive settlements to maintain close control of African converts, and to ensure that the converts remained faithful and wedded to the Christian theological ethics.[10] In East Africa in general, and in Uganda in particular, Christian missionaries adopted the concentration model. For this purpose, they built churches, denominational elementary and industrial schools. The main aim of the schools was to create an institutional environment that was conducive to winning converts, initially among sons and relatives of chiefs from the Kingdoms of Buganda, Ankole, Bunyoro, and Toro, and to train African catechists and workers.[11] These schools provided Christian education, which was indispensable in promoting religious work and training African catechists as an effective indigenous face in spreading the Gospel in local languages.

The European Christian missionaries established a number of denominational schools in Buganda, which they regarded as the heartland of the new colonial administration in Uganda. In 1901, a Catholic Order known as the Mill Hill Fathers opened the first elementary school in Namilyango, located between Kampala and Jinja. Three years later, the rival Protestant CMS founded Mengo High School for boys on February

---

[8] Heise, "Prefatory Findings," 51-52.

[9] McGavran, *The Bridges of God*, 56-58; Allen R., and T. Cochrane. *Missionary Surveys as an Aid to Intelligent Co-operation in Foreign Missions* (London: Longmans, Greens 1920), 2-3, 10-11. They agree that providing social services like schools and medical aid divert the energy and funds from evangelism and make missions vulnerable to government control.

[10] Robert I. Rotberg, "Missionaries as Chiefs and Entrepreneurs: Northern Rhodesia, 1882-1924." Butler J. (ed.), *Boston University Papers in African History* (Boston: Boston University Press, 1964); Robert I. Rotberg, *Christian Missionaries and the Creation of Northern Rhodesia* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965).

[11] Lyold A. Fallers, (ed.), *All the Kings Men* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1972), 146.

22, 1904, situated near the administrative headquarters of the Kabaka.[12] Two years later, in 1906, they established King College Budo for boys and Gayaza High School for girls, both of which became the leading boarding schools in the country. To attend these schools, students were required to pay £6.13s.4d. as a contribution to a dormitory and £2.10s.8d. in other fees. By the monetary standard of the time, this was an exorbitant amount of money to extract from Africans.[13]

The school curricula emphasized obedience to the Christian faith and colonial authorities. The CMS ensured that "Christian truth is made the basis of all that is taught, and Christian morals the basis of discipline."[14] Industrial subjects such as carpentry, joinery, woodturning, printing, bookbinding, brick making, bricklaying, and house building were only taught when African pupils had demonstrated competency in the basic tenets of Christian discipline and morals. At Mengo Industrial Mission, founded in 1899, industrial instruction was carried out under the leadership of Superintendant Kristen E. Borup and his assistant. Borup was not especially qualified for this position, but his business experiences in Europe and America were taken as sufficient qualifications for conducting the training. His apprentices lived on the school premises and received practical training on building dwelling houses, workshops, public halls, and cathedrals. The industrial training was made available to Africans because the small white European population in Uganda did not compete in industrial occupations. This enabled the European Christian missionaries to train Africans so that they would become cheap sources of industrial labour. Reverend Martin J. Hall presented the curriculum of Mengo Industrial School in a letter to the *Church Missionary Intelligencer*, in 1901.[15]

---

[12] Herbert G. Jones, *Uganda in Transformation 1876-1926* (London: The Church Missionary Society, 1926), 187. He observed that the standard of the high schools was equivalent to that of lower elementary schools in England.

[13] C.W. Hattersley, *The Baganda at Home* (London: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd, 1968), 162.

[14] Great Britain, *Cd.2379 Special Reports on Educational Subjects*, 248.

[15] Great Britain, *Cd.2379 Special Reports on Educational Subjects,* 194-195.

**Table I: Timetable of Work at Mengo Industrial School**

| |
|---|
| 6:00. a.m. The big drum beats and all the hands must turn out of bed, cook their breakfast - and eat it. |
| 7:30. a.m. They assemble in the class-rooms and have a writing lesson till 8:15 a.m. (*45 minutes*) |
| 8:15. a.m. till 12: 00 noon. Manual training in the workshop (*3 hours 45 minutes*) |
| 12:00 noon till 1:15 p.m. Interval (*1hour 15 minutes*) |
| 1:15 p.m. till 2:00 p.m. Arithmetic classes (*45 minutes*) |
| 2:00 p.m. to 5:00. p.m. (Except on Saturdays, which half-holiday) Work in the shops (*3 hours*) |
| 5:00 p.m. to 7:45 p.m. Interval for cooking and eating the evening meal, etc (*2 hours 45 minutes*) |
| 7:45 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Bible class (*2 hours 15 minutes*) |

Source: Great Britain, *Cd. 2379 Special Reports on Educational Subjects, 14: Educational Systems of the Crown Colonies and Possessions of the British Empire, including Reports on the Training of Native Races* London: HMSO, (1905), 245.

As can be seen from the timetable, the curriculum devoted more time to industrial education than to academics in order to fulfill the menial manpower needs of missionaries and the colonial administration. At this incipient stage in the development of the missionary enterprise in Uganda, the Christian missionaries gave priority to building churches, which also served as schools, as opposed to providing academic education to Africans. Within this context, evangelizing Africans was a secondary goal of the missionary schools.

In order to qualify for baptism, Africans were expected to demonstrate basic competency in the Bible by reading persuasively at least two Gospels; and for confirmation, a higher Bible literacy standard was to be achieved. Those qualified to become catechist leaders "trained for a period of one year in Gospel, three of four Epistles, and some selected books of the Old Testament,…in the Prayer Books, Thirty-nine Articles, and in necessary secular subjects."[16] Arguably, the fundamental focus of the missionary schools was disconnected from addressing the real challenges of African development. However, it is not clear whether this was a purposeful or unintentional omission in the early twentieth century. Nonetheless, Christian piety was emphasized by disparaging African

---

[16] Great Britain, *Cd 2378 Special Education Reports on Educational Subjects 13: Part II. West Africa, Basuto, Southern Rhodesia, East African Protectorate, Uganda, Mauritius, Seychelles* (London: HMSO, 1905), 196-197.

traditional beliefs and customary practices. In fact, the priority placed on
Christian piety, religious life, and industrial training over academic
education was so intense that African converts who did not conform to the
religious principles were regarded as deviant and risked excommunication.[17]

The systemic religious indoctrination of African pupils was so strong
that when younger converts completed their school term, they were often
not permitted to go home for vacation. Missionaries often justified
excluding African converts from their villages on the grounds that if they
returned home, they would be exposed to evil influences embedded in
African culture and homes, thus diluting Christian influences. The
missionaries adopted two approaches that advanced the separation of
African pupils from their cultures.[18] The first required students to live with
chiefs who were loyal to the Church and pious in their Christian faith, thus
co-opting chiefs to assume more lay pastoral work. The second obligated
students to attend camps run by missionaries. Both approaches allowed for
close monitoring, supervision, and control of the daily lives of African
converts. Such a total control of converts, according to Bengt Sundkler,
created "'Christian villages'" on "a theocratic ideal, where Christians
...could form a new tribe of Christ under the missionary or the African
catechist as chief."[19] A principal purpose of such intensely religious
control by the missionaries was the expectation that when the African
pupils became chiefs or functionaries of the colonial system in the future,
they would perform their expected jobs dutifully. As chiefs, they would
live piously and in turn facilitate the evangelization of young African
converts who would be discouraged from paying attention to traditional
religions and belief systems.[20] This indoctrination of Africans amounted to
a cultural engineering, to fashion new and obedient Africans.

These "indoctrinated Africans" became the indigenous Christian
evangelists who disparaged their African traditional religions and belief
systems in their community. C.W. Hattersley, a white CMS missionary,
observed that when a young chief from a district in Busoga went home for
Christmas holidays, he was welcomed with great rejoicing, feasting, and
dancing. But the young chief, who had received his Christian training at
Mengo, rejected the traditional African celebrations immediately as being

---

[17] Hattersley, *The Baganda at Home,* 182-183.
[18] Edward H. Berman, *African Reactions to Missionary Education* (New York and
London: Teachers College Press, 1975), xv.
[19] Bengt Sundkler, *The Christian Ministry in Africa* (Uppsala: Swedish Institute of
Missionary Research, 1960), 98-99.
[20] John B. Purvis, *Through Uganda to Mount of Elgon* (New York: American Tract
Society, 1935), 207.

obscene.[21] The disdain of African traditional practices shown by recruited indigenous catechists appeared to the missionaries as a remarkable indication that the influence of Christianity was gaining ground among young African leaders. In the early twentieth century Christian movement in Uganda, indigenous catechists became instruments to spread Christianity to areas contiguous to Buganda. Their evangelizing role was so important that "in most of the new districts the missionaries came to consolidate bands of neophytes already gathered by unordained and often unbaptized, African enthusiasts, who had been in contact with Christian teachings at the older centers (Buganda)."[22] Celebrated "African envangelists" such as "the saintly Apolo Kivebulaya …Tomasi Semfuma, who worked in Koki, and afterwards alone in Bunyoro, and Firipo and Andereya who converted the King and the Prime Minister of Ankole to Christianity" deserve mention.[23] The efforts of Semfuma's work in evangelizing Bunyoro rippled to the contiguous communities of Acholi, Lango, Teso, Alur, and southern Sudan.[24]

These indigenous catechist enthusiasts, having attained basic Bible literacy, were poorly trained but effective in converting the indigenous populations to Christianity. CMS Reverend H.W. Tergat wrote of these catechists in Acholi that they were weak in understanding the concept of sin and how sin was remitted, and lacked knowledge of the Gospel.[25] Their inadequate training encouraged them to look to white Christian missionaries for leadership and spiritual guidance, creating a form of clerical dependence. As clerical authorities, white Christian missionaries led the infant indigenous Churches, which were the principal agents producing and sending many young African catechists to facilitate evangelization and western spiritual control of their own people.[26] As the twentieth century wore on, Christian missionary schools would also train clerks to serve in the expanding colonial bureaucracy, hence institutionalizing both religious and political control of Ugandans.

---

[21] Hattersley, *The Baganda at Home,* 180-181.

[22] Roland Oliver, *Missionary Factor in Africa* (London: Longmans, 1952), 182-3.

[23] Oliver, *Missionary Factor in Africa*, 193.

[24] Oliver, *Missionary Factor in East Africa*, observes that in East Africa, the white European missionaries followed the initiatives of black catechists. Pirouet, *Black Evangelists*, 39-169, shows how the initiative of black catechists spread Christianity from its center in Buganda to cover the rest of the country.

[25] Pirouet, *Black Evangelists*, 161.

[26] L. A. Coser, *Greedy Institutions* (New York: Free Press, 1974), 67-88.

# The Rise of the Protectorate Government's
# Official Interest

The gradual increase in British official interest in the colonial administration of African education dates back to 1902, when an Order-in-Council defining Uganda as a single entity was issued in London. This was also the year in which the colonial administration in Uganda assumed an appreciable measure of responsibility in the field of formal education. As early as 1902, the Foreign Office instructed the British Commissioner to Uganda, Lieutenant-Colonel James Hayes Sadler, as to what the purpose of Christian missionary education would be in the country. In a circular dated June 28, the Foreign Office stated that education was "to a degree to enable the natives to take part in European administration of the Protectorate." Although the political administration of the country was carried out by colonial officers, the task of education "must, for the present, devolve largely on the various missions established in the country."[27] In this endeavor, the Christian missionaries were often ready and willing to support the colonial government because they shared a common position on education in a colonial setting.[28] The cooperation between the colonial administration and white missionaries in this early part of the twentieth century broadened the scope of missionary education.

Commissioner Sadler spelled out that the main objective of missionary education was to prepare Africans for subordinate staff positions in the colonial administration. By 1906, Commissioner Sadler acknowledged the valuable work of Christian missionary schools in educating indigenous Africans by commenting that they had "afforded the administration" a "civilizing and progressive influence."[29] Yet, in spite of the critical role of missionary education in the colonial enterprise, by 1907 the grants-in-aid amounted to a mere £150. This was a paltry sum considering the fact that in that same year, the Protestant Church Missionary Society was supporting 58 schools with 12,878 children enrolled. During the same period, the Catholic White Fathers ran 52 schools with 6,380 students, while the Mill Hill missionaries ran 13 schools with 1,091 students.[30]

---

[27] Great Britain, *Cd. 910 Africa No.2 (1902) Instructions to Lieutenant-Colonel J. H. Sadler on Appointment as His Majesty's Commissioner and Consul-General in the Uganda Protectorate* (1902), lxix.995, 3.

[28] Great Britain, *Cd. 910. Africa No.2 (1902).*

[29] Great Britain, *Cd.2684-13 Colonial Report. Annual No. 467, Uganda Report for 1904-5*, (1906).lxxv.893, 18.

[30] Great Britain, *Cd. 3729-22 Colonial Report. Annual No.558 Uganda Protectorate Report for 1906-7.* (June 1908).lxix.1013, 17.