

Elite African Political Craft in Buganda:  
The Kabula Generation, 1888-1927

A thesis

submitted by

William F. FitzSimons

In partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of

Master of Arts

in

History

TUFTS UNIVERSITY

August 31<sup>st</sup>, 2013

© 2013, William FitzSimons

Adviser: Dr. Jeanne Marie Penvenne

## **Abstract**

This master's thesis explores how a small group of African political elites played an outsized role in Buganda's political and economic life between 1888 and 1927, and simultaneously questions common assumptions about the importance of British colonial officials as historical actors. It addresses certain key developments, including the introduction of freehold "mailo" tenure, the Uganda Agreement of 1900, the rise of a cotton economy, and the institutional development of the Lukiiko "native" parliament. In each case, the guiding hand behind these developments was a particular group of elite Africans chiefs, led by Buganda's long-serving Prime Minister Apolo Kagwa, rather than colonial administrators. This thesis concludes by arguing that this period in Buganda is best viewed not as "early colonialism," but as a distinct political era of African origin which was guided by political principles espoused by these elite African politicians who ruled Buganda for thirty-seven consecutive years.

**\*\*\* Special thanks to Dr. Jeanne Marie Penvenne and Dr. Elizabeth Foster of Tufts University for their unwavering support, thoroughly helpful critiques and assistance navigating the requirements of the M. A. degree even through the major interruptions of my deployment to Afghanistan, marriage, and move across the country. This thesis and the master's degree to which it is applied would not have been possible without both of them.**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

GLOSSARY	v
MAP OF BUGANDA	ix
<b><u>INTRODUCTION – DEFINING AN ERA</u></b>	<b>2</b>
THE “KABULA GENERATION”	3
THE LUKIIKO ARCHIVES	7
STRUCTURE OF THESIS	12
<b><u>CHAPTER 1 – RISE OF AN OLIGARCHY, 1888-1900</u></b>	<b>16</b>
NINETEENTH CENTURY BACKGROUND	19
THE OLIGARCHICAL REVOLUTION	27
THREE “POWER PLAYS”: THE LUKIIKO SYSTEM, SIMILITUDE, AND SUB-IMPERIALISM	34
<b><u>CHAPTER 2 – AN ARISTOCRACY EMERGES, 1900-1902</u></b>	<b>48</b>
NEGOTIATING THE UGANDA AGREEMENT	50
FREEHOLD: AN OLIGARCHY BECOMES AN ARISTOCRACY	62
<b><u>CHAPTER 3 – BUILDING AN AFRICAN STATE, 1902-1919</u></b>	<b>74</b>
TAXES AND LABOR	75
COTTON AND THE KINGDOM OF BUGANDA	81
INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF THE LUKIIKO	89
<b><u>CHAPTER 4 – THE EDIFICE CRUMBLES, 1919-1927</u></b>	<b>100</b>
NEW PRINCIPLES OF GANDA POLITICS	101
APOLO KAGWA LOSES GANDA SUPPORT	103
APOLO KAGWA LOSES BRITISH SUPPORT	108
THE END OF AN ERA	112
<b><u>CONCLUSION – THE KABULA GENERATION LEGACY</u></b>	<b>114</b>
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	119

## GLOSSARY OF SELECTED TERMS, PEOPLE, AND PLACES

### *Terms:*

- Baganda.** People of Buganda (sg. Muganda).
- Bakopi.** Peasant, or lower class (sg. Mukopi).
- Bakungu.** Chiefs whose authority derives from Kabaka (e.g. *saza* chiefs, ministers); used in this thesis to signify the class of chiefs to which the Kabula Generation generally belonged.
- Balozi.** British Governor; also used for other high-ranking colonial officials
- Baraza.** Public gathering of chiefs, Kabaka, and British officials; fell out of use and replaced by Lukiiko in early 1900s.
- Bataka.** Totemic clan chiefs.
- Batongole.** Chiefs whose authority derived from special appointment by the Kabaka or a *bakungu* chiefs; often fulfilled special roles, including military leadership positions.
- BCGA.** British Cotton Growing Association; British trade organization; helped introduce cotton.
- Bitongole.** Standing armies created by Mwanga in 1880s; led by Apolo Kagwa and Henry Nyontinono.
- Bulange.** Building and main chamber which housed the Lukiiko in Mengo.
- Busulu.** Land rent in twentieth century; originally labor tribute owed by *mukopi* to chief who managed his land.
- Butaka.** Clan lands marked by special meaning (e.g. ancestral burial sites).
- CMS.** Church Missionary Society; Anglican mission group in Buganda since 1870s.
- Gombolola.** Administrative sub-division of *saza* in use under Lukiiko System.
- IBEAC.** Imperial British East Africa Company; signed first “protection” treaty with Buganda in 1890
- Kabaka.** King of Buganda; also used to refer to kings of Buganda’s neighbors.
- Kangawo.** Chief of Bulemezi *saza*; position held by Samwiri Mukasa for majority of period studied.
- Kasanvu.** Colonial labor obligation c. 1920.
- Katikiro.** Prime Minister of Buganda; position held by Apolo Kagwa for thirty seven years.
- Kimbugwe.** Second highest rank in pre-colonial Buganda; position held by Semei Kakungulu and Zakary Kizito; fell out of use after 1900.
- Lubaale.** Kiganda animist spirits.

**Lukiiko.** Gathering of *bakungu* and *batongole* chiefs together with Kabaka; later revamped by Apolo Kagwa and turned into bureaucratic native parliament; little to no colonial oversight. (cf. *baraza*)

**Mailo.** Mispronunciation of “mile,” designated one square mile of freehold land after 1900.

**Matooke.** Banana (or plantain); staple of Ganda diet and full of starch.

**Muluka.** Subdivision of *gombolola*; smallest administrative district run by a chief under the Lukiiko System.

**Mugema.** Saza chief of oldest and most central saza, Busiro; ritual clan “father” of the Kabaka; position held by Joswa Kate during most of period studied.

**Mukama.** King of Bunyoro.

**Namasole.** Queen Mother of Buganda.

**Nvujo.** Land rent in twentieth century; originally material tribute owed by *mukopi* to chief who managed his land

**Mugabe.** King of Ankole.

**Omulamuzi.** Chief Justice of Buganda under Lukiiko System; position held by Stanislus Mugwanya while he was Regent.

**Omuwanika.** Treasurer of Lukiiko; position occupied by Zakary Kizito while he was also Regent.

**Regent.** One of three chiefs who acted on behalf of Kabaka Daudi Chwa during his childhood from 1897 to 1914; position held for entire duration by Apolo Kagwa, Stanislus Mugwanya, and Zakary Kizito.

**Saza.** Province; administration sub-division of Buganda; twenty total during twentieth century.

**Sabataka.** “Father of all the clans”; Kabaka’s position within totemic clan structure.

**Second Katikiro.** Also, “co-*katikiro*”; position held by Stanislus Mugwanya from 1893-1897.

**Uganda Agreement.** Foundational treaty negotiated between Apolo Kagwa and Sir Harry Johnston in 1900; applies strictly to Buganda.

**White Fathers.** French Catholic mission group in Buganda since 1870s.

*People:*

**Apolo Kagwa.** *Katikiro* (Prime Minister) of Buganda from 1889-1926; Regent; Protestant leader of Kabula Generation.

**Daudi Chwa.** Kabaka 1897-1939; son of Mwanga II.

**Frederick Jackson.** British second-in-command with Lugard 1890-1893; returned as protectorate governor, 1911-18, lifelong friend of Apolo Kagwa.

**Frederick Lugard.** British IBEAC “resident” in Uganda; first (unofficial) colonial treaty with Buganda.

**George Wilson.** British Colonial Officer; friend of Semei Kakungulu; officer in charge of Bunyoro.

**Gerald Portal.** British Special Commissioner to Uganda in 1893; signed first official government treaty with Buganda.

**Henry Nyontinono.** Catholic leader of Kabula Generation; killed in battle 1889.

**Ham Mukasa.** Confidant and assistant to Apolo Kagwa. Protestant member of Kabula Generation.

**Harry Johnston.** British Special Commissioner for Uganda 1900-1901; negotiator of Uganda Agreement.

**Jemusi Miti.** Prime Minister of Bunyoro during Anglo-Ganda occupation; Leader of Federation of the Bataka; Catholic member of Kabula Generation.

**Joswa Kate.** *Mugema*, or *saza* chief of Busiro; Leader of Federation of the Bataka; Protestant member of Kabula Generation.

**Kabalega.** Nineteenth century king of Bunyoro; fierce resistor of British imperialism; arrested and deported by Semei Kakungulu in 1899.

**Mbaguta.** Prime Minister of Ankole; friend of Buganda and Kabula Generation.

**Mutesa I.** Kabaka 1854-84; father of Mwanga II.

**Mwanga II.** Kabaka 1884-88 & 1889-97; son of Mutesa I; father of Daudi Chwa.

**Ntare IV.** *Mugabe* (king) of Ankole; allowed Kabula Generation to stay in Ankole in 1888.

**Samwiri Mukasa.** *Saza* Chief of Bulemezi; cotton advocate; Protestant member of Kabula Generation.

**Semei Kakungulu.** Superb military tactician; conqueror and/or ruler of Teso, Bukedi, Busoga; Protestant member of Kabula Generation; rival of Apolo Kagwa; founder of Judaic sect in Uganda.

**Stanislus Mugwanyanya.** Chief Justice of Buganda; Regent; Catholic leader of Kabula Generation.

**Zachary Kizito.** Also known as Kisingiri; treasurer of Lukiiko and Regent; Protestant member of Kabula Generation.

*Places:*

**Ankole.** Also Nkore; historic kingdom to southwest of Buganda; subject to Ankole Agreement.

**Buddu.** Frontier *saza* of Buganda to southwest; geographically largest *saza*.

**Buganda.** Pre-colonial, colonial, and post-colonial kingdom on northern shore of Lake Victoria.

**Bukedi.** Eastern district of Uganda Protectorate; ruled by Semei Kakungulu, 1902-06.

**Bulemezi.** Saza to north of Busiro.

**Bunyoro.** Historic kingdom to north of Buganda; nineteenth century strategic rival to Buganda.

**Busiro.** Oldest, most central saza of Buganda; location of Mengo.

**Busoga.** Eastern Province of Uganda Protectorate; ruled by Semei Kakungulu, 1906-1911.

**Entebbe.** Town on shore of Lake Victoria; seat of colonial government.

**Kabula.** Region in northern frontier of Ankole; residence in exile of Kabula generation in 1888-89.

**Kampala.** Hill next to Mengo; seat of British provincial commissioner in Buganda after 1891.

**Mengo.** Capital of Buganda since reign of Mutesa I; seat of Lukiiko.

**Teso.** Northern district of Uganda Protectorate; conquered by Semei Kakungulu, 1900-02.

**Toro.** Region to northwest of Buganda; refers to both historic kingdom (“Toro Proper”) and larger area (“Greater Toro”); subject to Toro Agreement with Britain.

**Uganda.** Name of British protectorate, derived from Swahili mistranslation of “Buganda”; used by British officials interchangeably with “Buganda” until 1920s.





Source: A. B. Fisher, "Western Uganda," *Geographical Journal*, 24, 3 (1904), p. 263

**Elite African Political Craft in Buganda:  
The Kabula Generation, 1888-1927**

## *Introduction – Defining an Era*

The ultimate goal of this thesis is to define the elite political history of Buganda between 1888 and 1927 as the “Kabula Generation Era.” This era is so-named after an unusually powerful and influential group of men led by the dominant figure Apolo Kagwa. Lasting nearly four decades, from 1888 to 1927, this era was defined by oligarchic and bureaucratic government under a weakened monarchy, the maintenance of limited but real political autonomy in the face of British colonialism, a cash-crop farming economy accompanied by a rising basic standard of living as well as growing economic inequality, the breakdown of earlier cultural sanctions regarding a chief’s obligations to his peasants, and the diminishing power of traditional institutions linked to the ancient clan system and to Kiganda animism. As an era it was a mixed bag, for sure, and my intent is not to write a hagiography of Kagwa or his comrades, who could be rapacious, disingenuous and unprincipled. It is instead to argue that, good, bad or both, this was an era in Ganda high

politics that had repercussions for many years after, that it was an historic era in its own right, and that it began before imperialism and therefore is not adequately defined as a “reaction to” imperialism. Finally, the time has come to write the elite political history of this remarkable African epoch, and of its most remarkable individuals.

### **The “Kabula Generation” and Apolo Kagwa**

In the late months of 1888, six years before the beginning of British colonial rule, a number of the Buganda Kingdom’s leading young men gathered in exile outside the village of Kabula, on the northwestern frontier of the Kingdom of Ankole.<sup>1</sup> During a tripartite civil war spawned by a military coup against the despotic young king, or Kabaka, these men had been forced out of their native homes in Buganda and had fled to Kabula in order to regroup and develop a new strategy. Following a series of unsuccessful incursions back into Buganda the top two leaders, Henry Nyonintono and Apolo Kagwa, decided to pursue an alliance with the same Kabaka whom they had helped oust a year earlier. Nyonintono and Kagwa were both converts to Christianity, having been exposed to missionary explorers at a young age, and the exiled bands which they led claimed the mantle of Catholicism and Protestantism, respectively. Their enemies in contrast generally defined their party by adherence to Islam, which had been introduced to Buganda by Arab traders in the 1850s. The Christians agreed to assist in restoring their erstwhile enemy, the Kabaka, to his throne, but they sought to acquire the kingdom’s top ministerial posts for themselves and their closest comrades in exchange for their military support.

Nyonintono was killed in battle in 1889, leaving Apolo Kagwa as the senior leader among the band of exiled twenty and thirty year old Christian Baganda that consisted of sons of clan chiefs, former military commanders, and former royal pages, among others.

---

<sup>1</sup> The Kingdom of Buganda is an historical entity dating back at least to the 15<sup>th</sup> century, centered on the northern shore of Lake Victoria. It is also the name of an administrative kingdom within the current government of Uganda. In the nineteenth century, the Kingdom of Ankole, to Buganda’s southwest, was also referred to as Nkore.

Second in command after Kagwa was Nyonintono's successor as leader of the Catholic faction, Stanislus Mugwanya. Another leading Catholic was the military-minded Jemusi Miti. Leading Protestants included the former page Zachary Kizito, the extraordinary tactician Semei Kakungulu, and Kagwa's close personal friend Ham Mukasa. Also present were the Protestant descendent of clan chiefs Samwiri Mukasa, a devout follower of strict Anglican theology, and the rising administrator Joswa Kate, who blended Protestant religion with Kiganda practices and a suspicion of western influence.

Kagwa, Mugwanya, Miti, Kizito, Kakungulu, Ham Mukasa, Samwiri Mukasa, and Kate - together, these men went on to play a remarkable role in the history of the Kingdom of Buganda and in the development of early colonial Uganda.<sup>2</sup> Between 1889, when they restored Mwanga to his throne, and 1927 when their leading figure Apolo Kagwa finally faded from the political stage, the same members of the Kabula Generation played key roles over and over again at critical junctures in history. The introduction of British colonial rule, the development of the influential Lukiiko (or "native" parliament), the second deposition of Mwanga in 1897 and subsequent regency of his infant son, the negotiation of the foundational Uganda Agreement between Buganda and Britain, the creation of a freehold land tenure system and cotton export economy, and the conquest of neighboring kingdoms and the expansion of Buganda's regional influence are only highlights of the major historical events in which some or all of those exiled in Kabula in 1888 played a leading role over the next forty years.

Yet, there is no published biography of Apolo Kagwa, and there are almost no historical works written to keep this generation chronologically intact.<sup>3</sup> Undoubtedly, the lack of sufficient historical attention to this cohort is due in part to Eurocentric tendencies

---

<sup>2</sup> Throughout their political careers, the names by which some of these men were known changed. Most notably, in the twentieth century Zakari Kizito was referred to almost exclusively by his nickname, Kisingiri, and Joswa Kate by his honorific title *mugema*. Others were commonly but not exclusively referred to by titles, such as Kagwa who was called *katikiro* (prime minister) and "Sir Apolo" by the British once he received a knighthood, Mugwanya who was *omulamuzi* (chief justice), and Kizito/Kisingiri who was called *omuwanika* (treasurer). Samwiri Mukasa was also called by his title of *kangawo*. Others anglicized their names – for example Jemusi Miti sometimes went by "James" Miti. For the sake of consistency and ease of reading, they will all be referred to throughout this paper by the names they used while exiled in Kabula, with clarifying notes included where necessary.

<sup>3</sup> The one important exception is Michael Twaddle's 1993 book, *Kakungulu and the Creation of Uganda* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1993)

of many earlier historians who focused more attention on and attributed more influence to colonial officials than was warranted by reality. Additionally, the absence of chronologically intact histories of these men is partly a result of the once common practice of dividing African history into categories of “pre-colonial,” “colonial,” and “post-colonial,” – a practice which is now being discarded by more and more historians in theory, if it still remains somewhat present in fact.<sup>4</sup> The timeline of Apolo Kagwa’s career, with his two feet planted chronologically on either side of the advent of British political rule, is a clear-cut example of the inadequacies of that old approach to studying many important African characters.

Moreover, figures like Kagwa represent a challenge for another brand of historian because he was both a strong African who exhibited independent “agency,” but he also was a “collaborator” who was allied most of the time with British Imperialists.<sup>5</sup> He therefore does not fit neatly into Independence-era inspired narratives where Africans responded to the menace of external rule by being passive victims, heroic resisters, or unfaithful collaborators. The consequence is that the Kabula Generation members are often dealt with schizophrenically depending on the timeframe being studied. It is common to see Kagwa and his allies portrayed as a religious and idealistic courtiers in pre-colonial Buganda, as unsentimental collaborators in the dawn of colonialism, as aristocratic bullies in the WWI era, and as hapless victims of British callousness in the 1920s. What is not as common to see is serious recognition that each of these characters are in fact the same people from one time period to another.

Lastly, one often-overlooked factor which may contribute to the apparent historical neglect of these personalities is that Apolo Kagwa and his colleagues were

---

<sup>4</sup> Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2005) 33-55 & J. F. Ade Ajayi, “The Continuity of African Institutions under Colonialism,” in Terence Ranger, ed., *Emerging Themes in African History* (London: Heinemann, 1968) 189-100.

<sup>5</sup> For Example: Ronald Robinson, “Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration,” in Owen and Sutcliffe, eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London: Longmans, 1972), 132-37; Evanson Wamagatta, “African Collaborators and their Quest for Power in Pre-Colonial Kenya,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 41, 2 (2008), 295-314. , Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), 43-48; Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (Washington, DC: Howard University Press, 1972), 28 & Ramkrishna Mukherjee, *Uganda: An Historical Accident? Class, Nation, State Formation* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1985).

elites in every sense of the word other than skin color. They were powerful chiefs in a very hierarchical society, they were men in a patriarchal society, and they were major landowners in an economy built on agriculture. Concurrent with the growth and maturation of African history as an academic subject in the 1960s was the recognition across disciplines that “subaltern” elements of society had been unjustifiably neglected.<sup>6</sup> Historians across regional and chronological specialties rightly began to emphasize the historical agency and voice of the previously voiceless: the poor, the uneducated, those lacking civic access, members of under-privileged races, women, sexual minorities and the like. Historians brilliantly inverted and subverted elite sources, such as government and business records, to reach into the lives of the subaltern who had not left behind records of her own.<sup>7</sup> History would no longer be just the study of generals, politicians, and businessmen. The historical problem for Africa is that by the time historians were finally studying Africa without a Euro-centric lens, elites such as the Kabula Generation, chiefs who were great military, political, and economic leaders, were no longer on the radar.

Thus we are in a curious position where although important, deep, and fascinating historical work has been done on Uganda’s past, and our collective understanding of the social landscape and day-to-day political economy is vast and still improving, there is still little serious scholarship on many of the Africans who played an undeniably influential role as leaders. Post-modernism may have shown us that the elite and mighty are not as powerful or relevant as we once thought, but common-sense tells us that they are still historically significant. In Uganda, as with much of Africa, we have already moved beyond the study of powerful men, military conquest and moneyed interests without ever sufficiently studying those things to begin with! The true big-picture danger in this is that for *most people*, especially outside of academia, history is still thought of as the stories of war, politics, and business. If we are ever to truly defeat the

---

<sup>6</sup> Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 141-145 for “subaltern.”

<sup>7</sup> Sean Hanretta, *Islam and Social Change in French West Africa: History of An Emancipatory Community* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-22.

old notion that Africans are a people “without a history,” I would argue, we need to take seriously the brilliant military tactics of the Muganda general Semei Kakungulu, the visionary economic policies championed by Samwiri Mukasa, and the unrivalled political acuity of Apolo Kagwa.

The chief aim of this paper, then, is to approach the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries of Ganda history with a chronological frame built around the tenure in power of Buganda’s most important African leaders. By eschewing the framing of “pre-colonial” or “early colonial” history, one can instead imagine “The Kagwa Era” or the “Kabula Generation Era” in the same way that western histories are often written to include the timeframe of a particularly influential monarch, president, or reigning oligarchy. If, as this paper will argue, the individuals who won the 1888-89 Ganda civil war had an outsized effect in shaping the contours of Buganda for the next forty years, then such a chronological frame would be a productive departure both the “pre-colonial” and “colonial” paradigms. It would also serve as a welcome addition to a more recent historiography which has addressed the cultural, social, agricultural and economic history of the era without adequately addressing the overarching elite political system within which these other histories took place.

### **The Lukiiko Archives**

Now is an opportune time to revisit Apolo Kagwa and the others because of the re-emergence of a source which has lain dormant for more than fifty years. In 2003, the Center for Research Libraries in Chicago was given written records from the Lukiiko, colonial Buganda’s legislative assembly, dating from the early twentieth century. The donation came from retiring Northwestern University professor John Rowe, whose own heroics in acquiring and maintaining these copies after the originals were destroyed under Idi Amin are detailed in the article “Phoenix from the Ashes: Rediscovery of the



Lost Lukiiko Archives” published by the African Studies Association in 2005.<sup>8</sup> The Lukiiko was an institution of enormous importance in understanding the Kabula Generation, because it was their main vehicle of political (and consequently economic) power for nearly three decades, and also because it stood at the apex of an entire Lukiiko System through which Buganda’s politics were molded over time into Apolo Kagwa’s bureaucratic vision.

The first and so far only major publication to use the records as a source was Holly Hanson’s 2003 book *Landed Obligation: The Practice of Power in Buganda*.<sup>9</sup> In *Landed Obligation*, Hanson masterfully demonstrates the role that the provision of land has played throughout Buganda’s history as a fount for social and political power, and how the granting and receipt of land generated reciprocal obligations between social classes. She also shows how the arrival of colonialism and “freehold” tenure in the early twentieth century disrupted old ways of negotiated power and reciprocal social and labor obligations built on “usufructury” tenure and the Kiganda clan system.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, it was their keen and unmatched understanding of the cultural significance, economic opportunities and political leverage afforded to land owners under the new freehold system which allowed the Kabula Generation to grow simultaneously wealthy and powerful as the major landowners in a new aristocratic class which they were also instrumental in designing.

In her research, Hanson skillfully trekked through the Lukiiko records to glean valuable information about the changing nature of land tenure under colonialism, and the social and political obligations that derive from land ownership. By “reading between the

---

<sup>8</sup> John Rowe and Michael Tuck. “Phoenix from the Ashes: Rediscovery of the Lost Lukiiko Archives” *History in Africa*, vol. 32, 2005, pp. 403-414.

<sup>9</sup> Holly Hanson, *Landed Obligation: The Practice of Power in Buganda* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003)

<sup>10</sup> Parker Shipton, “Sand and Gold: Some Property History Theory,” in Shipton, *Mortgaging the Ancestors: Ideologies of Attachment in Africa* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009), 23 - 59. The words “freehold” and “usufructury” are commonly used to describe two different concepts of land ownership. In the former, the permanent rights to a piece of land are held by an individual or family on the authority of a title, deed, moral claim, or some other socially recognized instrument, whether or not the land is being used. In the latter, permanent rights to land are held by society at large or its government, and any claim to control land is only socially recognized insofar as the individual or family making the claim is using the land in a way which is productive for society. While it is an exaggeration to say that colonialism caused usufructury tenure to be replaced by freehold tenure throughout Africa, it is certainly true that the introduction of European notions of land ownership shifted the concept of tenure in that direction.

lines” she uncovered the hitherto silent voices of regular Baganda who met in the Lukiiko to dispute rival’s land claims, defend themselves against accusations of sloth and criminality, charge their own clan leadership with failing to provide needed material support, and to address a myriad of other issues ranging from mundane land transactions to nefarious murder plots and adulterous conspiracies. Her tactic was used with great success, and our understanding of Buganda’s relationship with land and social position has truly been revolutionized through Hanson’s work.

The recovered Lukiiko records provide more than a window into Buganda’s early colonial society, however. They also provide critical insight into the Lukiiko itself, which was an unusually powerful and historically significant African-run legislative body that operated in contest with, instead of subordination to, the British protectorate regime. In terms of land, the Lukiiko archives open a window into the political machinations inspired by Kagwa’s unwavering commitment to maintain control of the freehold land system within the Lukiiko. We can see his consistent efforts to restrict land ownership as much as possible to bureaucratic chiefs who supported his Lukiiko System and to exclude all others, be they Europeans, non-Baganda Africans, or Baganda from rival classes or institutions. The recovery and publication of these records is a reminder of what the Lukiiko means to Uganda’s history, and what it meant to the generation of African oligarchs who constructed and then dominated the Lukiiko from its inception in the late nineteenth century until Kagwa’s loss of power in the mid-1920s.<sup>11</sup>

In its day the Lukiiko was recognized by Bugandans, British Protectorate officials, and the British colonial office as one of the most significant institutions in Ugandan political life. In its first few years, the Lukiiko made an impression on British officials and, it appears, also made one internationally. In 1905, for example, the Lukiiko secretary recorded that:

---

<sup>11</sup> D. A Low, *Buganda in Modern History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971), 33. “Oligarch” here is a reference to D. A. Low’s concept of the oligarchical revolution which overturned royal power in the late nineteenth century and was led by many of the same people who later controlled the Lukiiko. In this paper it will be used to refer to those members of the Kabula generation who dominated the Lukiiko for decades – namely Kagwa, Mugwanya, Kizito, both Mukasas, and Kate until c. 1916.

There have come two Europeans [sic] whose names are Dean and Tunity who *came to see what the Lukiiko was like*. They told us that they were Africans like ourselves. But they and their fathers had been in America for 273 years.<sup>12</sup> (my italics)

Two years after African-Americans Dean and Tunity visited the Lukiiko, Winston Churchill attended in his role as Colonial Secretary and shared a soda with the Lukiiko's leadership.<sup>13</sup> As the African chiefs who administered the Lukiiko continued to consolidate social and economic power in Buganda and spread their influence throughout the rest of Uganda, the Lukiiko grew in importance. By 1920, the Lukiiko was powerful enough that British planters, who had once patronizingly encouraged the emerging Lukiiko as an example of Britain's "civilizing" influence, instead considered it an existential threat to their livelihood. In closed meetings they railed against the Lukiiko's *ex-officio* president: Buganda's *katikiro* (or prime minister), Apolo Kagwa.<sup>14</sup> They were wise to do so, for as historian Kenneth Ingham notes, the Lukiiko played an instrumental role in preventing European planters from buying freehold land from African farmers:

"(Lord Milner, Colonial Secretary) accepted the principle of voluntary alienation of African-owned land... but even this decision... had to be revoked. For, the Buganda Lukiiko... expressed disapproval of any sale of land to non-Africans. Faced with the Lukiiko's decision, the Colonial Secretary... decided to make no further moves to enable Europeans to buy land from Africans."<sup>15</sup>

Thus, even in Whitehall, the Lukiiko carried enough clout to change the mind of a Colonial Secretary.

As powerful and sophisticated as Lukiiko was, it was not an institution that represented all Baganda, or even one that facilitated true democracy among the landed elite. The British Chief Justice of Uganda Sir William Carter, for example, accused the

---

<sup>12</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, pg. 52, 15 Aug. 1905

<sup>13</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, pg. 93, 20 Nov. 1907

<sup>14</sup> Ingham, *The Making of Modern Uganda* (London, George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1958), 148

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, 145. This passage holds particular resonance because it comes from a book written in 1958 by a pre-independence historian, who was generally supportive of the colonial project and had a very Euro-centric approach that often discounted the role played by African politicians. Additionally, Lord Milner did approve the long-term lease of freehold land to Europeans with the consent of the Lukiiko, but since better tenure options were available in Kenya, this was still seen to discourage a planter economy in Uganda.

Lukiiko of operating as a self-interested class in opposing land sales to Europeans, arguing that “the only group which actually supported the proposed restrictions was to be found among the Buganda landowners, who saw in them an opportunity to buy up land... at a favorable price.”<sup>16</sup> Whether they supported such restrictions because they feared the impact of white-owned plantations on their country or because they wanted to drop land prices by legally blocking competition is impossible to know, although it was probably a combination of both. The Lukiiko was controlled by a small cabal of its most prominent members, and it governed in the interests of the estate-owning elite, often at the expense of Buganda’s *bakopi* (peasantry), and *bataka* (traditional clan leadership), but also at the expense of British settlers and non-Baganda peoples in the rest of the protectorate.

The top chiefs routinely challenged the authority of their nominal “native” ruler the Kabaka, as well as that of their British sovereigns. Yet, despite having aggrieved or challenged all these different elements of Ugandan society, the Lukiiko stayed in power for decades. Ultimately, they were swept out of power by the force of generational change in the 1920s, and not by any single interest group. A new generation of young emerging middle-class Baganda accused the old generation of “lagging behind the times” and being “old men” who had “outlived [their] appointment.”<sup>17</sup> The infant Kabaka for whom Kagwa, Mugwanya, and Kizito served regents for seventeen years slowly but surely came into his own, becoming more assertive, and he turned thirty the same year Kagwa was forced out. Among British colonial officials, even, the generational change was palpable. Old Uganda hands who had cut their teeth as soldier-explorers fighting and governing alongside the Kabula Generation retired home to England and were replaced by educated civil servants. These new administrators saw in Kagwa an anachronistic relic blocking fair and efficient administration, rather than a towering historical figure owed deference and respect. Ultimately the one factor the Kabula Generation, at one time defined by their youth and new ideas, could not overcome was the passage of time and the emergence of another new generation.

---

<sup>16</sup> Ingham (1958), 144

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, 148

But, how they fell is not as important to the arguments of this paper as how they rose and then how they stayed in power long enough to transform their country and help shape colonial rule. This thesis will address some of the key decisions Kagwa and his colleagues made to increase and preserve their own political power and wealth, as well as to preserve the integrity and prestige of the Buganda kingdom as they understood it. Some of these decisions had momentous historical importance for Buganda at the time, and some still reverberate in Uganda today.

### **Structure of Thesis**

Chapter One includes a short background of Buganda prior to the Civil War of 1888, and then traces the Kabula Generation from its early days in exile to the end of the nineteenth century. This chapter introduces two important themes identified by past historians: first, the “oligarchical revolution” – a phrase with which D. A. Low describes the ascension of Kagwa and his cohort; and second, “sub-imperialism,” – a term historian A. D. Roberts has coined to describe the process by which the Baganda, led by Semei Kakungulu and Jemusi Miti, subjugated many of their neighbors throughout the Uganda protectorate, and administered these territories in a quasi-imperial fashion on behalf of the British.<sup>18</sup> Chapter One argues that Sub-Imperialism was one of three successful long-term “power plays” made by the Kabula Generation in that decade, along with “similitude” (displayed cultural affinity) to manipulate the British Imperialists and the timely resurrection of the historical Lukiiko assembly.<sup>19</sup> Together, these three factors set conditions which enabled them to solidify internal gains made in the oligarchical revolution, as well as to achieve regional hegemony and limited autonomy for colonial Buganda.

---

<sup>18</sup> Low (1971), 33 & A. D. Roberts, “The Sub-Imperialism of the Baganda,” *Journal of African History*, 3, 3 (1962) 435-450

<sup>19</sup> Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008) 18. Prestholdt coins the term “similitude” in his book in a section about an Indian Ocean island known as Nzwani, but the principle can be borrowed and applied in this context.

Chapter Two opens with the Uganda Agreement negotiations, which were held over a period of three months in the beginning of 1900, principally between Apolo Kagwa and Sir Harry Johnston, Special Commissioner for Uganda, on behalf of Britain. If negotiations involve a winner and loser, then in this case Kagwa was the clear-cut winner. The final agreement preserved in writing many of the temporary domestic gains Kagwa had made over the previous decade, while also limiting future British encroachment on Buganda's land rights and reinforcing through legal treaty the relatively robust political autonomy already enjoyed by the kingdom of Buganda in its relationship with Britain as her imperial vassal. An in-depth focus on the treaty and its aftermath provides a useful look at the seemingly contradictory power relationship between Buganda and Great Britain. It showcases the combination of disorganization, lack of a cohesive vision, low official prioritization, cultural ignorance, and above all parsimoniousness that defined the British colonial administration in the early twentieth century, and which Kagwa was able to take advantage of for many years. Chapter Two also argues that Kagwa successfully used the freehold land allocations provided for in the agreement to purchase buy-in from nearly four thousand notable Baganda into his new bureaucratic Lukiiko System. The Lukiiko System upended much of Buganda's authoritarian and despotic political heritage, supplanting a virtually unconstrained dictatorship with a merit-based oligarchy under a ceremonial monarch. When combined with the introduction of a freehold land tenure system where average holdings among the top four thousand chiefs were measured by the square mile, Kagwa managed to create in two quick steps a land-owning aristocracy where one had no precedent, and to ensure that he and his closest comrades were placed at its pinnacle.

Chapter Three addresses the most challenging period that the early Lukiiko faced, when after the initial social disruption caused by the introduction of freehold tenure had settled down, colonial demands for taxes and conscripted African labor began to wear heavily on the Ganda population. Between 1902 and 1907, residual turmoil from the introduction of freehold, onerous labor demands, impossible tax obligations and a

growing sleeping sickness epidemic pushed Buganda to the precipice of a crisis. Symptoms included emigration, rising crime and violence, malnutrition, rising mortality, and family discord. To every group's short-term material benefit, the crises abated when the economic possibilities of cotton as a cash crop became a reality during the steep rise in its export between 1907 and 1911. Chapter Three argues that the role of the Lukiiko in encouraging cotton production has been greatly underestimated by past historians who focused uncritically on British mercantilist motivations as its driver. In its last section, Chapter Three takes a law passed by the Lukiiko to combat the aforementioned sleeping sickness epidemic as the starting point to discuss the institutional growth and development of the Lukiiko throughout its first two decades. Using the recovered Lukiiko archives as a major source, this section looks at the inner workings of Apolo Kagwa's primary organ of governance to see how the Lukiiko operated over these years, and how it grew more refined over time. One can also trace the gradual expansion of Lukiiko authority over dominions previously overseen either by the colonial administration or by other elements of Ganda society such as traditional clan leaders. Lastly this section examines how priorities were set within the ruling aristocracy, where Ganda sovereignty and justice were important, but where maintaining the freehold land system upon which aristocratic wealth and privilege were founded garnered the most serious consideration.

To end, Chapter Four addresses the circumstances leading to the Kabula Generation's loss of influence during the 1920s. This short chapter argues that the end of the Kabula Generation Era can be denoted by the dissolution of its fundamental political principles during the mid-1920s. The emergence of a new Baganda and colonial generation, combined with the re-ignition of old challenges from the Kabaka and traditionalist *bataka* clan chiefs served to undermine Apolo Kagwa's authority in this period. This section argues that, despite winning tactical political battles and staving off reforms in the short term, the Lukiiko's aging aristocrats contributed to the marginalization they were already facing as generations and society changed. The chapter ends in 1927, when Apolo Kagwa died after having been forced to resign as from politics a year earlier.

Following his retirement, the Lukiiko lost much of its independent authority, the Kabaka became a more important figure in the colonial regime, and a series of laws was passed which undercut the economic supremacy of the Kabula Generation's top chiefs. Though an undeniable legacy would still remain, the era of Apolo Kagwa had given way to a new era with new political ideas.



## *Chapter 1 – Rise of an Oligarchy, 1888-1900*

This chapter has three purposes. First, it provides relevant historical background on the Kingdom of Buganda before 1888, the date which marks the beginning of the Kabula Generation “Era” in Ganda politics. Second, it describes the “oligarchical revolution” in which Apolo Kagwa and other leading chiefs slowly wrested power from the Kabaka (or king) of Buganda between 1888 and 1897. Third, it showcases three political strategies used by these chiefs that were effective in reinforcing their political gains with respect to both internal and external rivals. Overall, this chapter argues that elite politics in the period 1888 to 1900 are defined primarily by the rise of the Kabula Generation of chiefs who, led by Apolo Kagwa, gained political power through a slow and methodical encroachment on the Kabaka’s royal authority. In contrast, the inauguration of British colonial rule in Uganda between 1891 and 1893, long considered the seminal moment in late nineteenth century Buganda politics, is actually better understood as one important development which Kagwa harnessed to stimulate the oligarchical revolution that was already in underway.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Buganda was a wealthy, administratively sophisticated, and regionally powerful state. Social power was expressed through a dual political system which included lineage-based totemic clan chiefs and merit-based appointed administrative chiefs. At the apex of both power conduits was the Kabaka – a position occupied from 1854 to 1884 by a ruthless and effective autocrat named Mutesa I. During Mutesa’s reign, Buganda’s diplomatic contact with the outside world increased sharply, and foreign religions including Islam, Protestantism, and Catholicism gained adherents among the upper stratum of Ganda society. Mutesa’s son Mwanga II succeeded his father after Mutesa’s death in 1884, but he was not as strong or experienced and Mwanga was soon overthrown in 1888 through a joint effort by young Muslim and Christian military leaders.<sup>1</sup>

The soldiers and leaders who formed the Christian half of this revolutionary party were the core members of the Kabula Generation, and would come to dominate Buganda’s elite politics for the next thirty eight years. After a falling out with their Muslim allies, the Christian leaders joined forces with the ousted Kabaka, Mwanga II, and restored him to his throne. After doing so, however, this Christian bloc demanded an increased say in government and laid claim to the top ministerial posts. Beginning with this pivotal moment, the unconstrained autocracy of the Kabaka that had been the norm in Buganda began to be transformed into an oligarchy where the weakened monarch ruled in consultation with his ministers. Chief among his ministers in this case was Apolo Kagwa.

Historian D. A. Low has labeled the events of 1888 an “oligarchical revolution.” This chapter accepts his terminology, but argues that the revolution cut more deeply and took place over a longer period of time than Low’s historical framing of the event allows.<sup>2</sup> The “Oligarchical Revolution,” as contended in this chapter, was a slow, simmering series of events that occurred between 1888 and 1897, when Apolo Kagwa and two other top

---

<sup>1</sup> Richard Reid, *Political Power in Pre-Colonial Buganda: Economy, Society and Welfare in the Nineteenth Century* (Athens, OH: University of Ohio Press, 2002) & John Rowe, *Revolution in Buganda, 1856-1900: Part One: The Reign of Kabaka Mukabya Mutesa, 1856-1884* (PhD Dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1966). Reid and Rowe both write comprehensive overviews of this period.

<sup>2</sup> D. A. Low, *Buganda in Modern History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971) 33

ministers achieved royal power in the name of an infant king after Mwanga abdicated. This slow revolution was characterized by continuous and cautious encroachment upon Mwanga's royal authority by the top ministers, who took advantage of every opportunity to increase their share of governmental power.

The greatest such opportunity came with the arrival of the first British imperialist agents in the last days of 1890. Between 1891 and 1897, the aspiring Ganda oligarchs engaged with and manipulated numerous British officials in order to harness imperial power to help fulfill their own internal political ambitions. Kagwa showed political acumen by recognizing early on the power of written agreements in the new colonial Africa. He took advantage of successive British treaties to cement in writing his political gains with respect to the Kabaka while also guarding Buganda's limited autonomy within the colonial system. By the time Mwanga abdicated in a violent revolt against his chief ministers in 1897, Kagwa and his political allies easily took control of the government in the name of Mwanga's one-year-old son, establishing an oligarchy run by three regents.

The last section of this chapter addresses three distinct strategies that the newly empowered oligarchs used to mutually reinforce their political gains with respect to both old and new rivals. First, they sought to alter the structure of political institutions in Buganda. By cultivating a more bureaucratic government centered on a revived and newly empowered legislative council known as the "Lukiiko," the Regents succeeded in moving the locus of power away from both lineage clan chiefs and the Kabaka. Second, the Regents engaged in a campaign of obsequious flattery, mutually-interested collaboration, and overt cultural affinity with their British rulers to gain material support and to protect Buganda from imperial overreach. This section borrows the term "similitude" from historian Jeremy Prestholdt to describe how chiefs received tangible benefit in exchange for intangible aesthetic imitation.<sup>3</sup> Third, the Regents leveraged access to British power in order to establish strategic superiority with respect to Buganda's neighbors. In a project named "sub-imperialism" by historian A. D. Roberts,

---

<sup>3</sup> Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization*, (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008) 27-31

Ganda soldiers and administrators took control of numerous neighboring peoples through outright military force or political persuasion, thereby eliminating regional strategic threats that had plagued Mutesa and Mwanga in the past.<sup>4</sup>

After a decade-long “oligarchical revolution” and the successful employment of these three political strategies, Apolo Kagwa and the other top chiefs were poised to establish unrivaled domestic power and achieve a remarkable degree of political autonomy with the negotiation and implementation of the Uganda Agreement, which is discussed in detail in Chapter Two.

### **Nineteenth Century Background**

Colonial rule in Uganda technically began in 1893, when British diplomat Gerald Portal concluded a treaty with Mwanga II, *Kabaka* (king) of Buganda, and his *katikiro* (prime minister) Apolo Kagwa.<sup>5</sup> The treaty explicitly traded Buganda’s official suzerainty for British military and political assistance, and replaced a more ambiguous agreement with the profit-seeking Imperial British East Africa Company that had been arranged by Captain Fredrick Lugard in late 1890. Prior to Lugard’s arrival in 1890, European influence in Buganda had been limited to a small number of French Catholic and English Protestant missionaries along with occasional explorers and arms-traders. The onset of early colonial rule in Uganda followed a pattern that was repeated elsewhere on the continent during the late nineteenth century: European governments formalized their political sovereignty in Africa wherever and whenever a coalescence of missionary and commercial interests had gained enough political pull – often alongside the governments’ concerns about regional strategic rivalries – to convince them that the military and financial expenditure of colonialism was worth it.<sup>6</sup> But the rise of the Kabula Generation

---

<sup>4</sup> A. D. Roberts, “The Sub-Imperialism of the Baganda,” *Journal of African History*, 3, 3 (1962) 435-450

<sup>5</sup> Gerald Portal, *The British Mission to Uganda in 1893*. (London: Edward Arnold, 1894);

<sup>6</sup> In this case the Prime Minister William Gladstone only considered the project to be worth it after intensive lobbying efforts by the Church Missionary Society and members of his own cabinet. See: D. A. Low, “British Public Opinion and the ‘Uganda Question,’ October – December, 1892,” *Buganda in Modern History* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971) 55-83 for the best description of Britain’s decision to colonize Uganda.

began in 1888, before colonial rule, and had direct antecedents dating to the succession of Mutesa I, Mwanga II's father, to be Kabaka in 1857. A short history of these antecedents is therefore necessary.

In the middle of the nineteenth century, Buganda was the ascendant military and economic lacustrine power.<sup>7</sup> By mid-century three of her neighbors, to the west Toro, to the southwest Ankole, and to the east Busoga, had lost territory to or been reduced to subordinate status by Ganda armies. Only Bunyoro to the north had stood firm against Ganda incursions. Oversize war canoes helped Buganda dominate the northwestern shore of Lake Victoria and control waterborne trade with peoples on the lake's far southern shores.<sup>8</sup> A strong central government allowed Buganda to quickly raise, resource, and employ armies, but it did not have standing professional armies until 1886, when Mwanga II created four youthful *bitongole* armies based on a successful model imported from Bunyoro.<sup>9</sup>

The Ganda economy was based on subsistence agriculture. Moderately fertile soil allowed the *bakopi* (peasants) to cultivate plantains and sweet potatoes, although throughout the kingdom soil was diverse enough to also grow coffee, maize, sorghum, and other crops.<sup>10</sup> Agriculture was supplemented by fishing, husbandry of goats and cattle, and hunting. In addition to food, a number of trade goods were produced in Buganda. The most important of these was barkcloth, which was produced by many peasant households to generate monetized income. Other goods included iron tools (smelted by famously skilled Ganda blacksmiths, who reproduced weapons parts so well that British soldiers thought they were original), animal skins, and ivory, the latter of which became Uganda's main export as international markets opened in the later nineteenth century. Ganda military control of northern Lake Victoria meant that Buganda had

---

For overall analyses of British colonial motivations see: P. J. Cain and A. G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: 1688-2000* (London: Pearson Education Ltd., 2002) 303-335 & Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: the Climax of Imperialism on the Dark Continent* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961), 1-27.

<sup>7</sup> Lacustrine referring here to Africa's Great Lakes region, or the area in and around Lake Victoria, Lake Albert, Lake Edward, Lake Kivu and Lake Kyoga, including today's nations of Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, northern Tanzania, and western Kenya.

<sup>8</sup> Richard Reid, "The Ganda on Lake Victoria: A Nineteenth Century East African Imperialism," *Journal of African History*, 39, 3 (1999) 349-363

<sup>9</sup> Reid (2002), 225, for Ganda historical armies; Low (2009), 128-133, for Bunyoro model.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 23

something of a monopoly on the import of specialized foreign goods, such as copper products, from the south and east. The currency widely used throughout Buganda during this time period was cowrie shells, as was true in much of the region.

Islam, Anglicanism, and Roman Catholicism were introduced to Buganda in that order during the mid-nineteenth century. Islam came mostly from Zanzibari coastal traders, Anglicanism from the British Church Missionary Society (CMS) and individual English explorers, and Catholicism from the French White Fathers and later the English Mill Hill Fathers.<sup>11</sup> All three monotheistic religions were very successful at gaining early converts, and all three are still significantly present in Buganda today, co-existing alongside some religious practices that retain elements from Kiganda animist beliefs.<sup>12</sup> Weighing the temporal versus spiritual motivations of individual converts a century after the fact is not feasible, but political fault lines did grow to be closely correlated with religious belief by the end of Mutesa's reign. The terms Muslim, Protestant and Catholic came to be labels delineating political factions strongly corresponding with their eponymous religious faiths. Individual members of European missionary groups, especially the CMS, were notable bit players in and detailed chroniclers of the elite political history of Buganda, and they developed personal relationships with many of the Kabaka's courtiers, including members of the Kabula Generation. However, neither they nor the other missionaries directly determined the course of high level politics.

Politically, Buganda had a very complicated and sophisticated structure, which impressed to the point of incredulity Europeans who witnessed it.<sup>13</sup> J. H. Speke, who in 1861 became the earliest European visitor to Buganda, was immediately impressed by

---

<sup>11</sup> Aylward Shorter, *Cross and Flag in Africa: The "White Fathers" during the Colonial Scramble* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006); Jean and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa, Vol. I* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991). For the best details and recent treatment of both Catholic and Protestant missionaries in Uganda during this time, Shorter's book is excellent. The Comaroffs' seminal work on colonial religion informs much of the treatment of missionary work in this paper.

<sup>12</sup> During a 2008 visit to a small village called Ddegeya, in what was once called Buddu saza, I visited a Catholic church, protestant church, mosque, and witnessed Kiganda amulets in people's homes.

<sup>13</sup> Portal, 185. Gerald Portal was convinced the explanation was a dab of superior "Abyssinian" blood that produced "the curious mixture of negro coarseness of feature with slight traces of higher refinement, of African cunning with real intelligence."

the centralization of power in the hands of the autocrat Kabaka Mutesa I.<sup>14</sup> In fact, he had happened upon Buganda at a time in its history when the *Kabaka* held more political power than had been true for many years, following the string of military successes and political purges orchestrated by Mutesa's father and grandfather.<sup>15</sup>

Political power in Buganda generally flowed downhill through two separate channels with the Kabaka at the apex of both. In his role as territorial ruler, the Kabaka controlled a bureaucracy of appointed officials known as *bakungu* chiefs. Most prominent among the *bakungu* was the *katikiro*, or the Kabaka's chief advisor, and the *kimbugwe*, or second leading man. Underneath the *katikiro* and *kimbugwe* were *saza* (county) chiefs who were charged with maintaining the territorial integrity and security of their *saza*, raising armies for the kabaka, and maintaining order.<sup>16</sup> There were also less powerful *batongole* chiefs appointed by the Kabaka or his ministers to specific offices for specific purposes (e.g. royal elephant hunter, commander of war canoes, etc.).

However, the Kabaka was also the *sabataka* or "Father of all the Clans."<sup>17</sup> In this position he was the first among the *bataka* chiefs, whose positions were inherited through a complicated clan lineage structure. Clans were identified by totems, such as the Nsene (grasshopper) clan to which Apolo Kagwa belonged, and they played many important roles in society.<sup>18</sup> Because the *bataka* were born into their positions, the Kabaka had less control over them than he did the *batongole* and *bakungu* whom he appointed based on merit and loyalty.<sup>19</sup> Nearly everyone in Buganda fell into one of these two power structures, and land distribution occurred through both channels, with the majority

---

<sup>14</sup> D. A. Low, *Fabrication of Empire: The British and the Uganda Kingdoms, 1890-1902* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 33

<sup>15</sup> Christopher Wrigley, *Kingship and State: The Buganda Dynasty* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 219

<sup>16</sup> D. A. Low & R. C. Pratt, *Buganda and British Overrule: Two Studies* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1960) 46; By the late nineteenth century, the term *bakungu* was used to refer to all appointed chiefs, including those who did not control territory. In the early twentieth century, neither term was commonly used. Following the usage of D. A. Low, this paper will use "*bakungu*" to refer to both the *batongole* and *bakungu* classes of chief except when otherwise specified.

<sup>17</sup> George Marcus, Land Tenure and Elite Formation in the Neotraditional Monarchies of Tonga and Buganda, *American Ethnologist*, 5, 3 (1978), 512; David Apter, *The Political Kingdom in Uganda: A Study in Bureaucratic Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 102-107. Also see: Neil Kodesh, *Beyond the Royal Gaze: Clanship and Public Healing in Buganda* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 7-14.

<sup>18</sup> John Roscoe, *The Baganda: Their Customs and Beliefs* (London, Frank, Cass & Co., 1911) 133-135 for introduction and explanation of clans from an early anthropological point of view.

<sup>19</sup> For a class-conscious description of this past, see: Ramkrishna Mukherjee, *Uganda: An Historical Accident? Class, Nation, State Formation* (Trenton, NJ: African World Press, 1985) 89-91

peasant class, called the *bakopi*, working for either a *batongole* or *bataka* minor chief on “his” land. Important exceptions could be the Kabaka’s mother (or *namasole*), who maintained an estate outside of his control and certain *lubaale* animist priests who lived off of estates whose locations were determined by spiritual considerations.<sup>20</sup>

The Kabaka had more control over the distribution of *bakungu* and *batongole* land, and could appropriate and distribute it with impunity – giving these chiefs a strong incentive to please him. In contrast, *bataka* land, known as *butaka*, usually passed through the clan system, and it was considered inappropriate for the Kabaka to seize and distribute *butaka* on his own, although it did happen occasionally.<sup>21</sup>

*Bakopi* were generally free to work for whomever they wished. For a chief having more *bakopi* led to more wealth, influence and prestige, so the labor market generally favored the *bakopi*, as chiefs from both classes competed with each other to entice *bakopi* to work on their lands. Competitive incentives to entice *bakopi* included lowering expected *nvujo* (share of production given as tribute to chiefs – reimagined as rent in the twentieth century), or *busulu* (free labor for the chief), or larger plots of land. Chiefs had many forms of power over their *bakopi*, but also an incentive to treat them well, as *bakopi* were able to vote with their feet by leaving if their situation was too bad.<sup>22</sup>

Kabaka Mutesa presided over an expansion in the number and power of the *batongole* chiefs that began under his grandfather.<sup>23</sup> Nineteenth century Buganda was expansionist and as more territories were conquered, more *bakungu* and *batongole* chiefs were appointed by the Kabaka to govern conquered peoples and lands. Mutesa’s reign was therefore a time when the relative position of *bataka* chiefs was threatened by the rising power and number of *bakungu* and *batongole* chiefs. Mutesa was a strong and undeniably clever ruler. Outward looking and gracious towards Arabs and European foreigners such as Speke and later H. M. Stanley, he was at times ruthless in his efforts

---

<sup>20</sup> Holly Hanson, “Queen Mothers and Good Government in Buganda: The Loss of Women’s Political Power in Nineteenth-Century East Africa,” *Women in African Colonial Histories* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2002), 22.

<sup>21</sup> Margaret C. Fallers, *The Eastern Lacustrine Bantu: Ganda and Soga* (London: International African Institute, 1968) 33-36

<sup>22</sup> John Rowe, “Land and Politics in Uganda,” *Makerere Journal*, 10 (1964) 1-3

<sup>23</sup> Wrigley (1996), 22



to quash internal dissent and maintain his personal hold on power.<sup>24</sup> He fired or executed Ganda chiefs who got too powerful, and was adept at playing court factions against each other.

When monotheistic faiths came to Buganda, Mutesa encouraged his subjects' conversion in a strategy aimed at undermining his traditionalist *bataka* adversaries. He deftly maneuvered through the growth of rival religious factions within the chiefly hierarchy by remaining tantalizingly out of the reach of any religion's embrace, while pitting each religion's new adherents against the others in a bid to secure more power for himself.<sup>25</sup> Mutesa used the influx of foreign religions as an opportunity to fracture political alliances within his court, weaken the traditional power of the *bataka* and animist priests, and obtain foreign aid against regional neighbors. Mutesa embraced outside contact, sending delegates to Zanzibar, Anglo-Egyptian Sudan, and even London seeking trading and military relations. For example, Mutesa sought an alliance with English general Charles Gordon of Khartoum against Buganda's longtime enemy Bunyoro, writing to him (in English) "[I]f you want to fight put ships in the river Nile take west and north and I will take east and south and let us put Wanyoro in the middle and fight against them [sic]..."<sup>26</sup> From its earliest moment the relationship between Britain and Buganda was collaborative and not acrimonious, a precedent that would help the Kabula Generation secure British cooperation later in the century.<sup>27</sup>

As Mutesa's reign came to an end in the 1880s, some of his power had already started to ebb. *Saza* chiefs were pushing back against demands for labor, military recruits and taxation. Neighboring client-kings were recalcitrant in providing tribute and homage to Mutesa, and military campaigns suffered setbacks from mismanagement and

---

<sup>24</sup> H. M. Stanley, *Through the Dark Continent Vol. I* (New York, George Newnes, LTD, 1899), 299

<sup>25</sup> Jane Brierly & Thomas Spear, "Mutesa, the Missionaries, and Christian Conversion in Buganda," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 21, 4 (1988) 601-618.

<sup>26</sup> Mutesa I to Gen. Gordon, Feb. 6<sup>th</sup>, 1876, as cited in Low (2009) 44; nothing came of the offer, and General Gordon was famously besieged and killed by the Mahdi in Khartoum the following decade.

<sup>27</sup> Low (2009), 36. Mutesa's diplomatic entreaties created a "British mindset, which was never substantially altered, in which Buganda generally figured positively."

over-commitment of forces on Buganda's frontiers.<sup>28</sup> By the early 1880s, ambitious young courtiers loyal to new religious factions were kept in check only by respect for and fear of a physically ailing Mutesa.<sup>29</sup> When the Kabaka died in 1884 and his nineteen-year-old son Mwanga II took the throne, different factions of chiefs jockeyed for power and influence, while Mwanga vacillated between these groups rather than remaining aloof like his father had.<sup>30</sup>

During the first four years of his reign Mwanga infuriated all classes of chiefs with a litany of unpopular acts: he purged first the Christians, and then the animists, from his court; he ordered the murder of a visiting Anglican bishop; he massacred nearly eighty young Christian pages in his court;<sup>31</sup> and he humiliated the *saza* chiefs by forcing them to personally dig an artificial lake outside of his palace in Mengo. Early on Mwanga became resentful of the influence and insubordination of the elder advisers and *saza* chiefs left over from his father's reign, many of whom practiced Kiganda animism. He fired or executed most of them and replaced them with young Muslims and Christians, including the men who would later lead the Kabula Generation.<sup>32</sup>

Apolo Kagwa and Henry Nyonintono had already only barely survived Mwanga's brutal purge of Christian pages in 1886, but in 1887 Mwanga gave them both, along with two other Muslims, command of the four *bitongole* standing armies he had created to enforce his rule throughout the Ganda countryside.<sup>33</sup> In 1888, fearing that Mwanga would turn against them (for a second time in the Christians' case) and hearing rumors of plans to exile the Christian and Muslim leaders to an island to starve, the four leaders of the *bitongole* armies decided to strike first and launched a coup that install the Kabaka's

---

<sup>28</sup> Reid (2002), 198. The decline of Ganda power amid a series of military and social crises that occurred towards the end of Mutesa's reign is a key argument made by Richard Reid.

<sup>29</sup> Brierly & Spear (1988), 603

<sup>30</sup> John M. Gray, "The Year of the Three Kings of Buganda, Mwanga – Kiwewa – Kalema, 1888-1890," *The Uganda Journal*, 11, 1 (1950) 38. "To steer a straight course through a time when such radical changes were taking place needed a man of strong character, a firm will and wide vision. Those characteristics Mwanga did not possess."

<sup>31</sup> John Rowe, "The Purge of Christians at Mwanga's Court: A Reassessment of this Episode in Buganda History," *Journal of African History*, 5, 1, (1964), 55-71. Nyonintono was made a eunuch during the purge.

<sup>32</sup> M. S. M. Kiwanuka, *A History of Buganda from the Founding of the Kingdom to 1900* (New York: African Publishing Corporation, 1972) 197. Kiwanuka offers the best explanation of the underlying causes for Mwanga's resentment as well as chronicling the events of these years.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, 199. After losing a battle to Bunyoro, Mwanga directed his armies to turn inward, where the *bitongole* armies behaved, in Kiwanuka's language, like the red guards employed by Mao during the cultural revolution.

younger brother on the throne.<sup>34</sup> Mwanga dramatically fled his Mengo palace in a hail of gunfire, secured a canoe and, accompanied by a small retinue of loyal pages, traveled to German East Africa (now Tanzania). After less than two months of sharing government, the Christian and Muslim factions turned on each other, with the Muslims gaining the initial upper hand and forcing the Christians to disperse across the region.

The splintered Christian leadership, headed by the Catholic Henry Nyonintono and the Protestant Apolo Kagwa, appealed to the *mugabe* (king) of Ankole, Ntare IV, for safe harbor in his lands near the border with Buganda. According to tradition, the physically imposing Kagwa impressed Ntare greatly by besting an Ankole champion in a wrestling match.<sup>35</sup> One of Kagwa's deputies, Zakary Kizito, gained favor with Ntare through his fluency in the Runyankole language and old friendship with a court advisor named Mbaguta. Another Protestant leader, the well-respected young tactician Semei Kakungulu, prostrated himself before Ntare and apologized for the deaths of Ankole ranchers during the past decade of cross-border cattle raids he had led on Mwanga's behalf.<sup>36</sup>

Ntare approved their stay, and over the next two months the widely dispersed allies of Nyonintono and Kagwa made their way to Kabula. Aided in part by Anglican or French Catholic missionaries, along with rogue missionary-turned-arms trader Charlie Stokes, Protestant Ham Mukasa and Catholics Stanislus Mugwanya led armed contingents out of Buganda. Others who found their way to Kabula were the son-of-a-clan leader Samwiri Mukasa, and former mid-level *bakungu* chief Joswa Kate.<sup>37</sup>

After a year of fighting and in dire straits, these leaders agreed to reach out to the deposed Kabaka Mwanga, who had fled south and rallied supporters. Together with Mwanga they agreed to bury the hatchet and join forces to drive out the Muslims. The allied Christians won a decisive victory in 1889. Through the series of battles two important developments occurred which would have long-term repercussions. First,

---

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 202

<sup>35</sup> Kagwa was well over six feet tall and weighed more than 200 pounds.

<sup>36</sup> Michael Wright, *Buganda in the Heroic Age* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1971), 71-73; Michael Twaddle, *Kakungulu & the Creation of Uganda* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1993), 42-53

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., 103

Kakungulu gained a reputation for military cunning and tactical aggressiveness that may have embarrassed Kagwa and contributed to the two men's lifetime rivalry. Second, the Catholic leader Henry Nyonintono was killed in battle, leaving Stanislaus Mugwanyanya at the head of the Catholic faction and Kagwa as the senior officer on the ground.<sup>38</sup> Thus the roles and power relationships amongst the Kabula generation were generally established, with Kagwa on top and Mugwanyanya behind him. This balance would remain remarkably consistent over the next three and half decades.

### **The Oligarchical Revolution**

As it is described by D. A. Low in his 1971 book, *Buganda in the Modern Age*, the Oligarchical Revolution was a fairly conservative event. Unlike revolutions elsewhere, in which entire systems of governance were destroyed and replaced, this revolution merely "shifted the locus of power" from the kabaka to his chiefs while keeping the overall governmental structure intact.<sup>39</sup> Low places the focal point of this revolution in the September 1888 military coup against Mwanga, which was revolutionary less because of Mwanga's deposition than because his younger brother as successor was offered only circumscribed powers by Kagwa, Nyontinono and their Muslim colleagues. At no time in any living person's memory before this had the Kabaka been anything other than an unfettered autocrat.

This balance between the chiefs and Kabaka only lasted for less than two months before war broke out between Christian and Muslim parties. Once Mwanga was re-installed as Kabaka, however, the precedent for a weaker Kabaka had already been set. Moreover, Mwanga owed his success entirely to Kagwa and his soldiers. Mwanga rewarded Kagwa with the position of *katikiro*, while promotions also came to Mugwanyanya

---

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 107

<sup>39</sup> Low (1971), 33.

and the others. These appointments, while perhaps unavoidable in view of the services these men had rendered, were nonetheless fateful for Mwanga.<sup>40</sup>

While Low confines his “oligarchical revolution” to the years surrounding the civil war, this notion can actually be expanded further in time, all the way until 1897. By reframing the chronology to include an ongoing struggle between Mwanga and his own chief ministers, the revolution becomes somewhat more radical. Between 1889 and 1897, Kagwa and the other oligarchs incrementally but continuously appropriated royal authority from the Kabaka. Their most useful allies in this venture were the British colonizers who started arriving in late 1890. Over these years Mwanga acquiesced to British demands on numerous occasions by signing a series of treaties – treaties which Apolo Kagwa played an instrumental role in drafting, and which invariably included language improving the chiefs’ own position relative to the Kabaka’s. What made the oligarchic revolution revolutionary was not just the transfer of the locus of power to the chiefs, but the re-definition of that very power as something which was written down in paper on a treaty, rather than the result of unwritten and ambiguous interplay between human beings. Kagwa’s impressive political acumen was on display, as he understood the importance that written agreements would have in Buganda’s new colonial future, and harnessed their authority to secure his internal political victory that in earlier years could have been erased by the accession of a stronger Kabaka.

His first such opportunity came with the blustering arrival of Fredrick Lugard, his deputy Frederick Jackson, and approximately two hundred Sudanese conscripts representing the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) in December of 1890. Kagwa and Lugard met in private to negotiate a treaty that fixed in writing the political gains that the *bakungu* oligarchs had wrested from the Kabaka, including powers over taxation and government expenditures.<sup>41</sup> In addition to addressing the formal relationship between British forces and the Kingdom of Buganda, Kagwa was equally concerned to include language explicitly expanding powers of the *bakungu* oligarchs with respect to

---

<sup>40</sup> Wright (1971), 94-96

<sup>41</sup> *British Parliamentary Papers*, “Treaty between IBEAC and Mwanga,” 246.

internal government. For example, the final Lugard treaty set up a “committee of finance” which would delegate to the “officers holding the principle offices of state” (i.e. Kagwa and Mugwanya) the power to determine the collection and distribution of tax revenue and to allocate funds to different public functions such as palace expenditures, fielding armies, and financing public works projects like roads. Mwanga reluctantly signed the treaty giving sovereignty over foreign policy to Lugard and limiting his own domestic authority only after being convinced by a technical demonstration of Lugard’s rapid fire “Maxim” machine gun from an overlooking hilltop.<sup>42</sup> Lugard’s claimed legal basis for this takeover rested on a letter the Kabaka had written offering to “accept (the) flag” of the IBEAC in return for military assistance during the 1888-89 civil war.<sup>43</sup> It is important to note here that by the time Lugard arrived, the war had been over for nearly a year and the help was no longer needed, so as not to assign the IBEAC or British government an unwarranted role in the internal 1888-89 war.

In early 1893, a flare-up in religious tensions was resolved by an updated Lugard treaty that Kagwa and Mugwanya helped draft (along with the Muslim prince Mbogo) to maintain peace by guaranteeing certain lands and political positions to representatives of the three religions. It was decided, for example, that the chieftaincy of the large and economically productive Buddu *saza* in the south would be saved for a Catholic, that three small *sazas* in the north would be reserved for Muslim chiefs, and the central *sazas* such as Busiro where Mengo was located would be allocated to Protestants. In addition, Catholics were further compensated with a new position of “second *katikiro*” which was naturally awarded to Stanislus Mugwanya, who prior to this was *kimbugwe*.

This agreement had two immediate implications for the oligarchical revolution. First and foremost, it was an important step in the appropriation of the Kabaka’s power by the oligarchs. By guaranteeing that the Catholics would get a “co-*katikiroship*,” or that

---

<sup>42</sup> Frederick Lugard, *The Diaries of Lord Lugard, Vol. II* (ed. Margery Perham) (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1959)

<sup>43</sup> P. L. McDermott, *A History of the Formation and Work of the Imperial British East Africa Company*. (London: Chapman and Hall, 1893), 133. Mwanga to Jackson (dictated to Father Lourdel of the French Catholic mission): “In return (for military assistance), besides the monopoly of commerce in Buganda, he offers you, as a present, 100 frasilas of ivory... He also takes upon himself the provisioning of your men, and accepts your flag.”

Muslims would be assigned certain *sazas*, the agreement implicitly took the power of appointment to these positions away from the Kabaka, who had traditionally exercised this authority as a key component in his patronage system. The treaty specifically protected Mugwanya's new job: "He (Mugwanya) may not be removed from his office without the consent of Her Britannic Majesty's Representative; and generally, he shall exercise as regards the Catholic party in the assigned provinces, all the recognized functions now exercised by Apollo Kagwa."<sup>44</sup> Second, it inevitably led to the creation of formal political parties along religious lines, which was significant both for shaping the contours of early Lukiko politics, and because traditional animist clergy were further sidelined when they were not represented in the treaty.

The elevation of Mugwanya to "co-*katikiro*" allowed Semei Kakungulu to obtain a promotion to *kimbugwe*.<sup>45</sup> In this same manner all members of the Kabula generation who stayed loyal to Kagwa were compensated with high office. Joswa Kate, for instance, was appointed to be *saza* chief of Busiro – a position which carried with it the respected honorific *mugema* and the symbolic vocation of clan father to the *Kabaka*.<sup>46</sup> When Kakungulu had a falling out with Kagwa and resigned as *kimbugwe* in 1895 the position was given to Zachary Kizito, while Kakungulu went north with British commanders to subdue Bunyoro.<sup>47</sup>

Lugard's legally ambiguous IBEAC treaties were soon superseded in late 1893 by another treaty that brought Buganda under the official aegis of the British Empire. This treaty was signed by Mwanga, Kagwa, Mugwanya, and Special Commissioner Sir Gerald Portal, who was sent to Uganda on the insistence of Foreign Secretary Lord Roseberry. Roseberry had been persuaded by the missionary community in England to launch a government take-over of the fledgling IBEAC in the interests of "native welfare"

---

<sup>44</sup> *British Parliamentary Papers*, "Agreement Between the Chiefs of the Protestant and Roman Catholic Parties," 22 April 1893:

<sup>45</sup> Twaddle (1993), 107-109

<sup>46</sup> Description of *mugema* honorific: Holly Hanson, *Landed Obligation: The Practice of Power in Buganda* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003) 46. Also see: Roscoe (1911), 198. The *mugema* traditionally delivered the oath of office to a new Kabaka.

<sup>47</sup> All of these internal appointments are best chronicled in: Wright, 131-153

as well as mission work, and he had to threaten his resignation to coerce William Gladstone into sending Portal to establish an official Protectorate.<sup>48</sup>

As Gladstone had pessimistically predicted, The Uganda Protectorate was a financial liability to the British Treasury, beginning with expenditures of £20,000 in 1894 and quickly rising to £300,000 in 1899 to the distress of London politicians.<sup>49</sup> In the early days, these funds were never used for the direct benefit of Buganda, but rather to pay for a small colonial staff which, in 1895, reached twenty-one in number, as well as for a small garrison of Sudanese conscripts, which numbered approximately six hundred in the same year.<sup>50</sup> Funds were also allocated to survey and construction of the famed Uganda Railway linking Buganda to the port of Mombasa – a project which loomed large in the British public's imagination.<sup>51</sup> In a kingdom with a population of approximately one million, spread out over nearly eighteen thousand square miles, these twenty-one administrators were tasked by the Foreign Office with the following commission:<sup>52</sup>

While not unduly interfering with internal administration, he (the commissioner) would control foreign affairs, have a voice in all serious matters of State, such as appointments of Ministers, the distribution of territory, taxation and expenditure; would secure the peace of the country and suppression of the Slave Trade, with a view to the ultimate abolition of slavery; would exercise jurisdiction over Europeans and would control the administration of justice among the natives.<sup>53</sup>

High turn-over, careerism, and disease meant that seven acting British Commissioners were assigned to Buganda during the 1894 and 1899s, making it all but inevitable much of this over-reaching and under-resourced mandate would remain undone. Colonial officers in the new Protectorate became supporters of Lugard's theory of "Indirect Rule"

---

<sup>48</sup> Low (1971), 79

<sup>49</sup> D. A. Low & R. C. Pratt, *Buganda and the British Overrule: Two Studies*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), 13

<sup>50</sup> Roland Oliver, *Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1954), 288-289. Although it would have been impossible to muster even this many soldiers: "By 1896 there was practically no central reserve force left in Buganda; and some of the wretched Sudanese detachments had been marched hundreds of miles from one campaign to another."

<sup>51</sup> "The Uganda Railway," *Economist*, June 14<sup>th</sup>, 1902, pg. 932. This early *Economist* article also describes perennial cost overruns associated with the project.

<sup>52</sup> For pre-colonial population estimates, see: M. Fallers (1968), 19

<sup>53</sup> "Foreign Office Committee Report," cited in: Low (2009), 282



by practical necessity if not ideology.<sup>54</sup> Kagwa's success in this stage of the "oligarchical revolution" was built on his decision to take over the undone remainder.

Buganda's oligarchical revolution, reached its climax in the 1897-1899 rebellion of Kabaka Mwanga against the combined forces of the fledgling British administration and the *bakungu* chiefs. Mwanga saw himself being pushed further into a figurehead role every day by the ascendant oligarchs. "I know you are against me," Mwanga screamed at his top ministers one night, "You have all been plotting against me."<sup>55</sup> Finally, he chose to rebel against the same chiefs who had aided him in recovering his throne in 1889.<sup>56</sup> The "abdications" of 1888 and 1897 look similar, since on both occasions Mwanga slipped away from his Mengo palace to waiting boat that took him to what is now Tanzania. However this second time Kagwa and his colleagues remained firmly in control. They quickly agreed to declare Daudi Chwa, the one-year-old son left behind by Mwanga, as his successor. Unsurprisingly, it was Apolo Kagwa, Stanislus Mugwanya, and Zakary Kizito whom the British officials present agreed to name as "co-regents" to rule on the young Kabaka's behalf until he reached his age of majority in 1914, while Semei Kakungulu was given an army and sent to hunt down young Daudi's father.<sup>57</sup> With this move, these four men who had first huddled together as exiles in Kabula achieved a major victory by officially gaining the power of the Kabaka upon which they had been encroaching for nearly a decade. Having struggled their way to the very top of Buganda's political structure though, Kagwa and his followers now faced a growing external challenge that threatened to minimize the position they had worked so hard to achieve: the inexorable encroachment of British hegemony in the region.

---

<sup>54</sup> Frederick Lugard later expanded on his theories in his book: *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1922)

<sup>55</sup> John Rowe. "Erieza Kintu's 'Sultani Anatoloki': A Nineteenth-Century Historical Memoir from Buganda," *History in Africa*, 20 (1993), 315

<sup>56</sup> M. S. M Kiwanuka, "Sir Apolo Kagwa and the Pre-colonial History of Buganda," *Uganda Journal*, 30 (1966), 140. This "rebellion" has been described as an essentially anti-colonial revolt by historian M.S.M. Kiwanuka. I have argued in a paper delivered at the Boston University African Studies Center 2011 Graduate Student Conference called "Decolonizing and an East African Narrative: Kabaka Mwanga of Buganda and the 1897 Rebellion" that Kiwanuka's interpretation is incorrect, and that it is more accurate to interpret Mwanga's act as a rebellion against Kagwa's influence and against the presence of British colonialists.

<sup>57</sup> Twaddle (1993), 125.

This looming challenge to internal autonomy was not immediately manifest in 1897. During the two years of war that followed Mwanga's rebellion and Daudi Chwa's subsequent succession the relationship between the *bakungu* chiefs and British administrators continued to be defined first by temporary expedience and wartime alliance.<sup>58</sup> Mwanga was still at large, and had linked up with the deposed *mukama* of Bunyoro, Kabalega, as they both tried to recruit followers and wage guerilla warfare against British soldiers and the Ganda regulars led by Semei Kakungulu. Britain also had its hands full with a spreading mutiny over low pay and substandard living conditions amongst the Sudanese conscripts who fought under British officers in the region.<sup>59</sup> Finally, the British government was concerned with establishing legal paramountcy throughout the rest of the Uganda Protectorate and delineating borders between the new protectorate and other African lands. In 1897 there were still only a few dozen British officials present at the tiny government house in Entebbe, and they did not have time or resources to devote to internal governance in Buganda.

The Regents stepped confidently into the void created by Mwanga's abdication and took steps to make their gains permanent. *Bakungu* chiefs historically derived their authority directly from the Kabaka, rather than a clan or lineage, and therefore their position had always depended on the Kabaka's position. *Bakungu* had been strong when the Kabaka was strong. An infant Kabaka was not a strong Kabaka, so a re-think of old ways was needed to maintain the *bakungu* power base in Buganda. As Regents, Kagwa, Mugwanya, and Kizito possessed the power of the "office of the Kabaka," but this was a concept without exact precedent. The Kabakaship was not an office, in the sense that a westerner would have an "office of the President" -- it was a man who was also the father of all the clans. In his absence it would perhaps have been more likely that the *namasole* (queen mother) or a senior *bataka* clan leader would take charge in a regency capacity.<sup>60</sup> In the past, Kabakas usually had many sons with many different wives, and brothers of

---

<sup>58</sup> Low and Pratt (1960), 13. "During the early years the precise conditions of this essentially pragmatic relationship were never closely defined. The country was too troubled."

<sup>59</sup> Herbert Austin, *With MacDonald in Uganda* (London: Edward Arnold, 1903), 95

<sup>60</sup> For pre-colonial Ganda kings see: Christopher Wrigley, *Kingship and State: The Buganda Dynasty*, (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

the Kabaka could also lay a claim to the position anyways, so an infant regency would not have been common.<sup>61</sup>

The unique position of the Regents was that because of Daudi Chwa's infancy and their self-declared regency, they now possessed the power of the "office of the Kabaka" in addition to their own positions in top administrative posts. For their new power to be meaningful, Buganda's government would have to become more bureaucratic and less personal. The strategy by which the Regents drove Buganda's central government towards more regularization and bureaucratization was one of three "power plays" that they made at the end of the century.

### **Three "Power Plays:" The Lukiiko System, Similitude, and Sub-Imperialism**

After claiming the regency, Kagwa, Mugwanya and Kizito directed their attention towards securing their new station vis-à-vis the three entities against whom their power could be measured. In order of importance, these categories were 1) their fellow Baganda of rival classes, 2) the British colonial officials and missionaries, and 3) their African neighbors. Relative to the three categories, there was a positive correlation regarding the acquisition of power. In other words, as the Regents garnered more influence with one group, it would buy them more leverage with another. The Regents maintained a distinct approach towards the three different groups. First, with respect to Buganda's internal political culture, they advanced the Lukiiko System and centralized Buganda's government under a bureaucracy controlled by the Regents. Second, the Regents stepped up their charm offensive vis-à-vis the British officials and missionaries which was intentional and gained them important practical benefits in the coming years. Third, the hunt for the rebellious former Kabaka gave Kakungulu an opportunity to lead an army outside of Buganda that he would subsequently use to subjugate many of

---

<sup>61</sup> C. C. Wrigley, "The Kinglists of Buganda," *History in Africa*, 1 (1974) 129-139. Wrigley identifies all of the available "kinglists" from Buganda, that reach with some reliability at least into the 15<sup>th</sup> century. The most comprehensive was written by Apolo Kagwa in 1901 and republished in 1912: Apolo Kagwa, *Base Kabaka be Buganda* (London: Lusac & Co., 1912)

Buganda's neighbors throughout the Protectorate, while Buganda spread its cross-border influence in more subtle ways elsewhere. Through the implementation of these three distinct strategies, the Regents stood more politically secure as they entered the twentieth century than that they had any earlier time.

In the wake of Mwanga's "abdication," the Regents and other *bakungu* chiefs began to emphasize the role of a deliberative body with a long but sporadic pre-colonial history, known as the Lukiiko, as a central feature of native government.<sup>62</sup> The Lukiiko was historically a deliberative and advisory body headed by the Kabaka whose membership consisted primarily of *batongole* and *bakungu* chiefs, such as the *katikiro* and *saza* chiefs. Past Kabakas had called for Lukiikos to discuss impending military campaigns or other matters, but they had been limited under Mwanga. With Mwanga gone, the Lukiiko presented an opportunity for the chiefs to have an organization with "traditional" roots, that they could lead as the representatives of the infant Kabaka, and which also relied on a *bakungu* powerbase, thereby sidelining the rival *bataka* political structure.<sup>63</sup>

Prior to the Lukiiko's rise, political notables, including the *bataka*, were more likely to discuss policy in an open forum called a *baraza*, which the British commissioners had found useful to attend when they arrived.<sup>64</sup> The oligarchs began to supplant the *baraza* with the Lukiiko, which had the effect of shutting the British out of the legislating process.<sup>65</sup> *Barazas* became quick and sporadic affairs where the British commissioner would approve a raft of Lukiiko legislation, and adjudicate between any high-level disputes (although even these disputes were usually referred by the British back to Kagwa and Mugwanya). Pressed for time and money, British commissioners did not

---

<sup>62</sup> David Apter, *The Political Kingdom in Uganda: A Study in Bureaucratic Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961) 109

<sup>63</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 130. The "development (of the Lukiiko) from an 'occasion' to an 'institution' was most probably hastened by Kabaka Mwanga's revolt and his replacement by a minor, Daudi Chwa."

<sup>64</sup> Low (2009), 291.

<sup>65</sup> Low (2009), 292

object to being removed from the discussion and horse-trading of the Lukiiko, just as the Regents were happy to have them gone.<sup>66</sup>

The speed and efficiency with which the oligarchs replaced the *baraza* with the Lukiiko can be shown by a quick survey of British word usage. In the early 1890s, the *baraza* was frequently referenced as a native assembly of chiefs in British documents while the Lukiiko was rarely mentioned.<sup>67</sup> By the time of the 1900 Uganda Agreement, *only* the Lukiiko was mentioned in the document, and 'Baraza' was falling out of use in private correspondence. By 1914 the word 'Baraza' had ceased to have its old meaning at all, and in a Uganda Herald article detailing the coronation ceremony of Daudi, the word 'Baraza' was used to denote the ceremonial physical structure under which Daudi and the Regents sat.<sup>68</sup>

The legislative reach assumed by the *Lukiiko* expanded the role of the central government in Buganda. Whereas even under Mutesa directives from the capital were generally limited to tax collection, land distribution, military levies and labor conscription, the oligarchs began to pass more intrusive laws that applied to all chiefs and *bakopi* throughout the kingdom. New laws regulated commodities markets, ordered the construction of new roads and bridges, guaranteed religious freedom, outlawed adultery and polygamy for Christians and banned gambling for everyone.<sup>69</sup> A small police force that reported to the *bakungu saza* chiefs was raised by the Regents with assistance from the British in order to help enforce these laws.<sup>70</sup>

Prior to 1900, the Lukiiko was still an evolving and changing institution, but the groundwork was being laid for the Lukiiko System that would come in the twentieth century. As will be seen in the next chapter, the Lukiiko was enhanced and codified in the Uganda Agreement of 1900. The Lukiiko system was pushed down to the local level

---

<sup>66</sup> Low and Pratt (1960), 131

<sup>67</sup> For example, in George Wilson's unadopted "Land Regulations" proposal of 1897, he referred to the "Public Baraza" as the forum for all government land negotiations. *Uganda Land Regulations*, 22 Feb. 1898 (cited in Low & Pratt, 18)

<sup>68</sup> "Here had been erected a large Baraza forming three sides, the top side occupied by a large dais of built bricks, which was carpeted." Staff Writer, "Daudi Chwa's Coming of Age: His Reign Begins" *Uganda Herald*, Vol. 4, No. 3, 14 August, 1914.

<sup>69</sup> Low (2009), 293

<sup>70</sup> Ingham (1958), 117

of government, where each locale would have its own “lukiiko” reporting through a bureaucratic structure to the Great Lukiiko in Mengo.<sup>71</sup> Throughout the first quarter-century of the colonial Ugandan state’s existence, this system was the primary vehicle by which the chiefs exercised power over their own subjects and resisted encroachment on their autonomy by the British.

Part of the reason that the Regents have long been accused by anti-colonial historians of having collaborated with the British Empire is the publicity campaign they directed at Europeans in order to curry their favor and obtain their assistance.<sup>72</sup> The campaign entailed sometimes obsequious behavior towards Europeans, adoption of many European customs and the embrace of Christianity. These signals have been misinterpreted in the past by some historians who have derided the Kabula Generation members as selfish collaborators and by others from an earlier generation who saw their embrace of British qualities as an indication of Buganda’s political progressivism. There is truth in both interpretations. It is impossible to ignore the handsome personal profit that the oligarchs received in return for their collaboration with the British. Kagwa also seems to have believed in the superiority of certain British customs and saw a place for them in his new Buganda.<sup>73</sup> However, neither of these views correctly fingers what was probably the primary motivation for this behavior: to manipulate the Europeans’ sense of superiority – whether motivated by smug racialism or civilizational hubris – by exchanging intangible flattery for tangible military aid, beneficial treaties, and political autonomy relatively free from European molestation.

In fact, the oligarchs of Buganda adopted a strategy that has been used by other African societies that also survived the initial punch of imperialism significantly intact.

---

<sup>71</sup> Apter (1961), 44

<sup>72</sup> The two most thoughtful examples are: John Rowe, “Western Impact and African Response: Buganda 1880-1900,” *Journal of Developing Areas*, 1, 1 (1966), 65 & Semakula Kiwanuka “Sir Apolo Kagwa and the Pre-Colonial History of Buganda,” *Uganda Journal* 30 (1966), 140. Other strident (Marxist) anti-colonialists like Ramkrishna Mukherjee (w/Immanuel Wallerstein) have a less nuanced view where Kagwa and the others are either collaborators or victims with little room in between: Ramkrishna Mukherjee, *Uganda: An Historical Accident? Class, Nation, State Formation* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1984) See Kenneth Ingham, *The Making of Modern Uganda*, (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1958) for the latter colonial apologist view.

<sup>73</sup> Ham Mukasa, *Sir Apolo Kagwa Discovers Great Britain* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1976). This view is supported by the journal kept during Kagwa and Ham Mukasa’s trip to London to attend the coronation of Edward VII. During this trip Kagwa was inducted as a Knight Commander of the Order of St. Mark and St. George (KCMG), an honor usually reserved for white colonial governors.

Historian Jeremy Prestholdt has coined the phrase “similitude” to describe the practice of colonized peoples in a similar context gaining material benefit through establishing a beneficial relationship with their colonizers by adopting their culture, behavior, and mannerisms.<sup>74</sup> In writing about the island of Nzwani, Prestholdt defined “similitude” as “the strategic use of imported symbols (to affect) the producers of those symbols and ultimately their relation to Nzwanians (i.e. the colonized people)... (the Nzwanians) parlayed their claims to a special, at times familial, relationship with Britain into economic and political support.” By adopting aspects of English dress and mannerism, by greeting European administrators with pomp appropriate to their rank, and by proudly singing along to “God Save the Queen,” the *bakungu* chiefs plucked the heartstrings of the Victorian adventurers who found their way to inland East Africa. The oligarchs had proven that they understood the value of over-the-top yet disingenuous displays of humility, flattery, and obeisance with regard to their own Kabaka, even while they actually undermined him.<sup>75</sup> When one considers how much they gained at so little cost by adopting British customs, and the clever political tactics employed by the oligarchs in other arenas, it is probable that the same dynamic was at work with the British.

One example of a tangible benefit can be seen when, in the Uganda Agreement negotiations in 1900, Harry Johnston was pressured by English missionaries to agree to terms more favorable to the Regents. The Regents would not have enjoyed this extra leverage if they had not embraced Christianity and “civilization” previously. Likewise Kakungulu tapped his and his wife’s lively and polite performance at British dinner parties to secure new weaponry, extra gunpowder and tactical advisors during in his campaigns in Bunyoro and beyond.<sup>76</sup> Such efforts led to the development of fairly close personal friendships that had consequences for colonial policy. For example, after a bond developed between Kakungulu and official George Wilson, Wilson was prone to take Kakungulu’s side amongst colonial officials in arguments stemming from his rivalry with

---

<sup>74</sup> Prestholdt (2008), 13

<sup>75</sup> Portal, 189: “each chieftain is careful to preserve, in the royal presence, all outward signs of abject submission and grovelling [sic] humility... (but) if his wishes, advice, or commands do not happen to coincide with the opinions or interests of his council, they will be ignored or disobeyed without the slightest hesitation.”

<sup>76</sup> Twaddle (1993), 176

Apolo Kagwa. Kagwa's position was in turn defended by his friend and Wilson's colleague, the IBEAC mercenary-turned-colonial officer Frederick Jackson.<sup>77</sup>

Much has been made of the fact that Apolo Kagwa used a typewriter.<sup>78</sup> Whether he used it because he simply found it more productive or because he had sold himself to an alien culture, the attitude symbolized by it in the colonial mind gained him valuable diplomatic advantage at absolutely no material cost to himself or to Buganda. An unattributed writer, when reviewing Kagwa's history of Buganda kings, described the *katikiro* as "a striking personality, whose dignified, yet withal genial, and commanding presence is well known to many."<sup>79</sup> The chiefs cultivated their image and enforced this policy down the line – early Lukiiko papers record numerous instances of subordinate chiefs being chastised by Kagwa and Mugwanya for any rudeness towards Europeans that interfered with the top chiefs' agenda of flattery.<sup>80</sup>

When Kagwa wrote his history of Buganda, he explained that his purpose was in part to show that "the Ganda had always been good at government and therefore deserved a high degree of autonomy within the colonial state."<sup>81</sup> The Regents staged large events to overwhelm British officials with good feeling. For example, Harry Johnston was deeply impressed upon his arrival when over a thousand Baganda greeted him by holding torches on either side of his route.<sup>82</sup> A similar event was staged to bid farewell to Johnston's successor, Colonel Hayes-Sadler, when he departed. Even in Whitehall, cabinet ministers found themselves endeared to Buganda. Consider the reaction of then-Colonial Secretary Winston Churchill to his quick visit in 1907:

The Kingdom of (B)[u]ganda is like a fairy tale. You climb up a railway instead of a beanstalk, and at the end there is a wonderful new world... In place of naked, painted

---

<sup>77</sup> Michael Twaddle, "Bakungu Chiefs of Buganda Under British Rule," *Journal of African History*, 10, 2 (1969) 312.

<sup>78</sup> Rowe (1966), 65

<sup>79</sup> Review of "BaseKabaka to Buganda, by Sir Apolo Kagwa, K.C.M.G." *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 12, 46 (1913), 217

<sup>80</sup> Lukiiko Archives

<sup>81</sup> Wrigley (1996), 34

<sup>82</sup> A. Johnston, 185. Harry Johnston thought the display was at once "barbaric and splendid!"



savages, clashing their spears... an amiable, clothed, polite, and intelligent race dwell together.<sup>83</sup>

By 1907, Buganda had become a “fairy tale” in the minds of everyone in the British public who read the famous visitor’s popular book.

In one case a British officer suspected that Ganda obsequiousness was not entirely genuine. In 1902 after subduing the region of Bukedi, Semei Kakungulu attempted to hide his royal aspirations so as not to challenge or provoke the British. The British officer based at Jinja suspected that Kakungulu’s servile flattery may have been trickery. “I have reason to believe,” he reported to his superior, “that (he) secretly encourages throughout Bukedi the idea of his kingship.” The official did not trust Kakungulu because he kept hearing other Africans call Kakungulu “kabaka” and he guessed (correctly) that Kakungulu was changing his title when colonial officials were not around. However, upon learning of the letter, Kakungulu sent his letter, written in English, to his “dear friend” the same superior officer, along with a package. The package included gifts of a leopard skin, a bow and arrow set, and a traditional shield. In the end, the final response came down recommending that “a letter be written (by the British subordinate)... addressed to Kakungulu congratulating him on the progress he has made in the district.” As Michael Twaddle puts it, Kakungulu was proving “highly adaptable to colonial conditions.”<sup>84</sup>

In London, the legal and political rights of Buganda were championed in corners where African autonomy or sovereignty was rarely a consideration, and the Uganda Agreement was routinely upheld in British courts as a treaty between two legitimate states. On the ground in Buganda, the oligarchs were able to carve out an unusually wide space for self-government in the 1890s partly because the British there *trusted* them.

---

<sup>83</sup> Winston Churchill, *My African Journey*. (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1908), 86-87

<sup>84</sup> Michael Twaddle, *Kakungulu and the Creation of Uganda* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1993), 203-204

This trust stands in stark contrast to European attitudes towards the “savage” Banyoro. This must be understood in the context of Victorian racial theories that studiously assigned different (and objectively worse) racial characteristics to Irishmen than to Englishmen, and to Frenchmen relative to Germans. Gerald Portal, during his mission in 1893, theorized that the Ganda behavior towards the British was evidence that Baganda possessed a drop of “Abyssinian” blood that conferred on them “the curious mixture of negro coarseness of feature with slight traces of higher refinement, of African cunning with real intelligence.”<sup>85</sup> There is of course no racial difference between Baganda and Banyoro – in fact, the two are ethnically close kin, they share similar Bantu languages, have a common set of origin myths, and similar pre-colonial methods of government – but there was a difference in how the elites in each society chose to respond to British encroachment. Bunyoro’s cold rejection of British entreaties was met with British assumptions of racial inferiority and “savagery,” while Buganda’s “similitude” was met with British assumptions of racial superiority and “higher refinement.”<sup>86</sup>

This racial theory may have been a fantasy, but the practical outcome of this perception was certainly not. Take a quote from British Colonel Ternan from 1895 describing the British response to Nyoro invasions of Buganda: “We make a rule of burning every village we come to and cutting down their bananas etc. to impress on the Wanyoro [sic] the disagreeable results of raiding into Buganda.”<sup>87</sup> The British descended to the “savagery” of which they accused the Banyoro in order to defend the ennobled Baganda. If one accepts Shane Doyle’s suggestion that there is no evidence of the Banyoro raids to begin with, and that the entire event was invented by the Baganda to goad Britain into retaliation against Bunyoro, then the true nature of the British-Buganda bilateral relation stands in very stark relief.<sup>88</sup>

---

<sup>85</sup> Portal, *Mission*, 185

<sup>86</sup> Low (2009) 36. Low argues that Bunyoro’s first uncompromising resistance to early colonialism created a “British mindset, which was never substantially altered, in which Buganda generally figured positively while all but invariably Bunyoro was denounced.”

<sup>87</sup> Ternan Diary, cited in Shane Doyle, *Crisis and Decline in Bunyoro* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006) 72

<sup>88</sup> Doyle (2006), 74. Doyle in another context wrote that Lugard “appeared incapable of realizing when he was being manipulated by Buganda’s leaders.” *Ibid.*, 68.

While not usually in so dramatic a fashion, British assumptions about race were directly responsible for British endorsement of the Ganda “sub-imperialism” project. The “superior” Baganda were ultimately trusted not only to govern themselves, but also to help administer the rest of the Protectorate, and this racial “potential” was identified early on in the Protectorate’s timeline.<sup>89</sup> Military conquest of some neighbors in the 1890s led to acts of political submission from others, and both the British and Baganda subscribed in the 1890s and 1900s to a regional strategy built on Buganda’s cultural, political and strategic supremacy. With British support, Buganda defeated long-time enemy Bunyoro in a devastating five-year war from 1894-1899, and then went on to conquer the weaker, disunited territories of Bukedi, Teso and Busoga by 1902. In the Uganda Agreement Buganda was rewarded for military conquest in Bunyoro with territorial gains, and afterwards Ganda agents were appointed by the British Commissioner into leadership posts in every corner of the protectorate, whether the territory was subjugated directly by Buganda or not.<sup>90</sup> The spread of Buganda’s political leadership and cultural influence throughout the rest of the Uganda Protectorate, called “sub-imperialism” by historian A.D. Roberts, was a project that allowed space for the Kagwa government to flourish inside Buganda unimpeded by fear of encroachment or attack from African neighbors.<sup>91</sup>

More than any other man, Semei Kakungulu embodied sub-imperialism. Driven by personal ambition and feeling stifled under his rival Apolo Kagwa, Kakungulu took advantage of British equipment, supplies, and tactical advice to wage a war to subdue Buganda’s historic enemy Bunyoro. Beyond securing Buganda’s strategic position, Kakungulu had ambition to create a kabakaship of his own somewhere outside of Buganda. Bunyoro was a bad choice for a number of reasons, so Kakungulu went east where, after subduing the Iteso people, he settled down as a quasi-kabaka in Bukedi at

---

<sup>89</sup> Lugard wrote before leaving in 1893: “Not only, I think, may we hope in the present that subordinate officials for the administration of B[u]ganda may be supplied by the country itself, but in the future we may even draw from thence educated and reliable men to assist in the government of the neighboring countries of East Africa generally.” Lugard Letter, cited in Mukherjee (1985), 40.

<sup>90</sup> Mukerjee, 145. Mukerjee provides the most detailed and accessible account of each corner of Uganda under sub-imperialism.

<sup>91</sup> “The history of the Ganda ‘empire’ in eastern Uganda is very largely to be read in the career of the Muganda general, Semei Kakunguru.” Roberts (1962), 439

the foothills of Mt. Elgon. This was something Kagwa could easily support in part because, in the words of a British sub-commissioner Stanley Tompkins, “[Bu]ganda was not large enough to hold both Sir Apolo (Kagwa) and (Semei Kakungulu).”<sup>92</sup>

Teso, Bukedi, and later Busoga were all conquered by Kakungulu’s armies when he turned east after capturing Mwanga in 1899. Until 1906, this project was directly supported by the British protectorate government, who gave Kakungulu free reign in the East, seeing him as an inexpensive way to bring the Eastern Province under control. Initially, they were so pleased that they decided his work “compared favorably by that which might be done by a European official” and Harry Johnston offered him recognition as “Kabaka of Bukedi.” The British later reneged on this offer and developed a more contentious relationship with Kakungulu, but for the first years Kakungulu’s campaign had full British support accessed in part through the “similitude” strategy described above. In all three regions the new Lukiiko System was imposed on the conquered population, and Baganda were assigned as chiefs:

the pattern of occupation was everywhere the same; first an armed expedition would be made from an established fort to a new area; the pretexts were often obscure, sometimes a request for help from a warring faction or sometimes a threat of attack on local inhabitants; after skirmished or pitched battles a new fort would be established and a garrison of armed Baganda installed. This garrison would then extend its influence over the surrounding countryside by establishing armed posts or minor forts. When local opposition had been overcome, the region would be proclaimed as a *saza* and the smaller areas controlled by the outlying posts would be defined as a *gombolola*. Baganda chiefs were appointed down to the *muluka* level (subordinate to *gombolola*).<sup>93</sup>

Ganda “sub-imperialism” resembled British imperialism in a number of ways. For one thing, the local leaders who collaborated with the Baganda often profited and were treated well as a result. In a more macabre sense the subjugation of Teso in 1900 saw instances of violence and property destruction akin to the British devastation of Bunyoro in 1895. Whenever they encountered resistance the Baganda retaliated by devastating

---

<sup>92</sup> Twaddle (1993), 117

<sup>93</sup> G. Emwanu, “The Reception of Alien Rule in Teso,” *Uganda Journal*, 31, 2 (1967), 171

the countryside and imposing what has been described as a “reign of terror.”<sup>94</sup> By 1902, however, Kakungulu had stopped conquering territories and transitioned into the role of administrator. He served as the native administrator of Bukedi until 1906, when he became president of the Busoga Lukiiko.

Kakungulu's armies were not the only means by which Ganda influence extended throughout the Protectorate. Both Low and Steinhart have discovered regional patterns in the emergence of powerful chiefs at the expense of monarchs throughout western Uganda in this period.<sup>95</sup> Neither of them sufficiently fingers the major catalyst for these changes though, which was spill-over from events in Buganda. The key difference between the oligarchical revolution in Buganda and similar evolutions elsewhere was that Buganda's had more roots in the pre-colonial past. Religious factions developed under Mutesa and oligarchs were vying for power before Mwanga was even made Kabaka. The tumultuous events of 1890s Buganda can be seen as the culmination of decades of internally wrought changes, only accelerated by the British presence. On the other hand, in Bunyoro, Ankole, and elsewhere, there is no obvious historical path to the rise of oligarchies and displacement of kings that does not require the hand of Anglo-Ganda imperialism.

The strongest historic monarchies after Buganda were Bunyoro and Ankole, both of which had a large population, a distinct language and culture, and a wide territory. Of the three, Bunyoro clearly suffered the greatest fall during the period of Apolo Kagwa's political ascent. In the mid-nineteenth century, Bunyoro had been at least an equal rival for strategic dominance and cultural influence with Buganda.<sup>96</sup> As late as 1886, Bunyoro's armies had defeated a Ganda attack, and there is still a powerful (if likely exaggerated) strain in Nyoro nationalist historiography that tells of a plan to launch a

---

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., 171

<sup>95</sup> D. A. Low offers a complex analysis with numbered confrontations “types” (e.g. the 1888 civil war was a “Confrontation II”) to describe regional similarities in *Fabrication of Empire*, while Edward Steinhart offers categories of “collaborators,” arguing that each society had one “arch-collaborator” in *Conflict and Collaboration*. See: Edward Steinhart, *Conflict and Collaboration: The Kingdoms of Western Uganda, 1890-1907* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), 155

<sup>96</sup> Toro had been a client-state of the Bunyoro-Kitara Empire. Buganda in comparison never had such a dominant relationship with another significant kingdom.

devastating attack against Buganda that was only interrupted by the untimely arrival of the British.<sup>97</sup> When Buganda invaded Bunyoro by marching headlong to attack its capital in 1894 there was still relative military parity, and it was a bold and risky tactical move that could have backfired. British support, which was limited to a few maxim guns that proved unimpressive in the offense, tactical advisors and medics, did not foreordain a Ganda victory, and the Ganda army was not significantly larger than Bunyoro's. Buganda's weaponry and organization were critical to its success, but the quick victory was in large part due to the tactical and strategic cunning of Semei Kakungulu.<sup>98</sup>

The initial victory was not, however, the end of the war. As is all-too-common in imperial wars, Buganda's initial triumph turned into a five-year guerrilla insurgency that devastated the Bunyoro countryside, as Kabalega continued to rally supporters until his capture in 1899. One-by-one, between 1895 and 1899, Kabalega's generals and county chiefs reluctantly capitulated to the Anglo-Ganda regime and adopted an oligarchic role similar to that played by chiefs in Buganda.<sup>99</sup> Much like Mwanga's infant son was placed on the throne in Buganda, the British-Ganda invaders convinced some of Bunyoro's more collaborative chiefs to declare allegiance to Kabalega's adolescent son, which undermined Kabalega's political position. To emphasize Bunyoro's position as a "conquered territory," the British commissioner in 1899, Colonel Ternan, refused to consider a negotiated agreement along the lines of the Uganda Agreement, Toro Agreement, and Ankole Agreement, and he recognized no autonomy, however limited, in Nyoro politics.<sup>100</sup> The Muganda chief Jemusi Miti was installed as the "katikiro" to advise the new puppet *mukama*. Thus, by 1900 Bunyoro was in a structural position somewhat similar to Buganda – a young puppet king was controlled by a group of elite politicians

---

<sup>97</sup> Uzoigwe, G. N. *Revolution and Revolt in Bunyoro-Kitara*, (Kampala: Longman Uganda Ltd, 1970), 40

<sup>98</sup> Twaddle (1993), 96-97

<sup>99</sup> Steinhart (1977), 86-97

<sup>100</sup> Ternan, "Outline of Method to be Adopted in the Administration of Unyoro," 3 June 1899, FO 2/202 (cited in Low (2009), 308). About the status of Bunyoro's government relative to Buganda Ternan said "Bunyoro is a conquered territory... so that we are perfectly justified... all executive power will be vested in the sub-commissioner and while, under the presidency of a katikiro, a council of influential chiefs could be formed, it will have no executive powers."

(oligarchs) – but this “oligarchic revolution” and had very different origins and implications.

There was also an “oligarchical revolution” of sorts in Ankole. In 1895 the long-lived and powerful *mugabe* (king) Ntare IV died, setting off a very tumultuous struggle for succession that was common to Ankole history. The difference again was the heavy involvement of the Baganda in determining the winner. A Ganda emissary sent to the capital of Ankole, Mbarara, to convey the Ganda court’s preference for the weak-willed teenager Kahaya was enough to guarantee his succession from a field of three or four candidates.<sup>101</sup> A second three-way struggle emerged between Kahaya’s two regents, Kahitsi and Igumira, and Ankole’s prime minister, Mbaguta, over who would rule behind the scenes. While Kahitsi and Igumira battled each other for the support of elders in the traditionally-ruling Hinda lineages and for popular support in the Nkore countryside, Mbaguta, who was fluent in Luganda, fervently pressed his case to Apolo Kagwa and the British commissioner. Mbaguta utilized the “similitude” strategy toward his overseers of adopting Ganda dress and mannerisms and achieved success similar to that of the Regents in regards to the British. In fact, just as British customs and the English language worked their way into the Ganda court and Lukiiko, it became common throughout the rest of the protectorate for Kiganda dress and language to be preferred at the center of non-Ganda governments. Mbaguta was also the man most responsible in Ankole for convincing Ntare to provide safe harbor at Kabula to the Baganda Christians in 1888, and this undoubtedly helped him win the Regents’ support.

As it happened, a contingent of Ganda emissaries were sent to Mbarara at his request, along with a newly appointed British District Commissioner and a company of armed Ganda police. Although Igumira was widely liked throughout Ankole, he was unable to gain personal commitments once the Ganda delegation made its support for Mbaguta clear. “In the showdown between Igumira and Mbaguta, the former was unable

---

<sup>101</sup> Steinhart (1977), 149-150

to compel the compliance of his supporters and allies.”<sup>102</sup> The Nkore needed only look north to ravaged Bunyoro to know why this was a rational decision to make. Mbaguta became the chief oligarch, ruling as regent for a young and weak king, and closely aligned with the Baganda and British, yet again similar in form but not context to what existed in Buganda itself.

Through the “Sub-Imperialism” project, Buganda laid to rest any potential for strategic rivalry in her neighborhood. Mwanga had seen his star start to dim early in his reign as a result of military losses against Bunyoro in 1884-1886. This was a problem the Kabula Generation would never have to face. This last power play was completed by 1902. Ganda overrule would continue, in some cases, until the late 1920s, but by 1902 this phenomenon was clearly separated from the everyday work of the Lukiiko. By the time of a 1907 anti-Ganda revolt in Hoima Bunyoro, the Lukiiko records only reflect that the event was noted by the body before they turned to other matters.<sup>103</sup> As early as November 1900, Kagwa wrote a letter to Jemusi Miti asking that he discourage Colonial officer George Wilson from annexing all of Bunyoro to Buganda.<sup>104</sup> Except perhaps for Kakungulu and Miti who went on to spend over a decade outside of Buganda, the Kabula Generation did not feel driven to proselytize their Lukiiko System to neighbors.

With their military supremacy unchallengeable with respect to their neighbors and their relationship with the new colonizing force cozy, the Kabula Generation was ready to cash in some of this capital to further secure their position within Buganda’s internal political system. The primary vehicle for this would be the Uganda Agreement, as described in the next chapter.

---

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 155

<sup>103</sup> *Lukiiko Records*, July 22, 1907, pg. 84

<sup>104</sup> *Lukiiko Records*, Letter from Kagwa to Miti, August 1<sup>st</sup>, 1900, “Make sure Mr. Tayili (i.e. George Wilson) does not annex Bunyoro to Buganda.”



## *Chapter 2 – An Aristocracy Emerges, 1900-1902*

The Uganda Agreement of 1900 was named by one historian in 1957 as a contender for “the most important single event in the history of Uganda since the founding of the Protectorate.”<sup>1</sup> While other developments in the half-century since that statement was made have certainly overshadowed the Agreement, there is no question that its negotiation and implementation represents a key moment at least in the history of the Kabula Generation Era. The treaty was unusual in colonial African history because negotiations were held between two parties, Britain on one hand and the Regents of Buganda on the other, where the African party was the clear winner. More importantly, the treaty empowered Apolo Kagwa and his closest colleagues to radically transform elite politics in their country.

Provisions which the Regents wrote into the Agreement allowed them to leverage their political influence for economic gain, crafting a freehold land tenure system which granted their chiefly class private ownership of more than eight thousand square miles of

---

<sup>1</sup> Roland Oliver, *Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1957), 307

the most productive agricultural land in the kingdom. The Agreement also included the architecture of the Lukiiko System designed by Kagwa to replace absolute monarchy with a bureaucratic, legislative political structure controlled by the three Regents. Finally, the language they agreed upon reached a compromise position on colonial self-government that granted the kingdom of Buganda more political autonomy than other comparable “native” governments within the imperial footprint.

Relative political autonomy created space for the Regents to fashion a new social class, recruited mostly from the leading men of *bakungu* and *batongole* chieftaincies, which combined wealth in freehold land and political power under the new Lukiiko System with ancient customary privileges and titles. In essence, this new class was a landed aristocracy.<sup>2</sup> The first years of transition to an aristocratic system were tumultuous, and the political principles espoused by the Regents led to increasing economic inequality in a quest to bolster the social position of approximately four thousand chiefs at the top. The contours of this new society were deliberately shaped by Kagwa, Mugwaynya, Kizito, and the other top chiefs. Contrary to the views of some past historians, aristocratic inequality was not imposed by the colonial government on Buganda, but rather constructed by the Regents with the colonial government paying little attention.<sup>3</sup>

Lastly, although the new aristocratic system was “deliberately shaped” by the Regents, it is important to note that no one, including Apolo Kagwa, possessed a detailed plan for what kind of society would emerge after the Agreement before entering negotiations. Rather, Kagwa maintained a set of consistent principles - control over land, a robust form of self-government, defending class interests, opposition to absolute monarchy - and he paid close attention to any political developments in order to quickly and effectively take advantage of opportunities to pursue his interests. One such opportunity was the Uganda Agreement in 1900.

---

<sup>2</sup> The word “aristocracy” was used by contemporaries and has been widely used by historians. The second section of this chapter will explore the origins and use of this terminology further.

<sup>3</sup> For opposing views see: Mahmood Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976) & Ramkrishna Mukherjee, *Uganda: An Historical Accident? Class, Nation, State Formation* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1985).

As will be seen in this chapter, the lead British negotiator for this agreement was on the whole unprepared and inattentive to his task, and he underestimated the political acumen and foresight of Apolo Kagwa. Kagwa was able to take advantage of a weak negotiating opponent and a negligent early colonial administration to exert enormous influence on the Agreement's text and its first years of implementation. In a phenomenon gaining recent academic attention, lackluster imperial governance provided shrewd colonized subjects with opportunities to exercise "agency" throughout Africa.<sup>4</sup> This is especially true in early colonial Buganda. A key reason that British agency was subordinated to Ganda agency was that the British in Uganda were unusually bad at being colonizers, in addition to the fact that the *bakungu* chiefs, and Kagwa in particular, were unusually good at being colonized.

### **Negotiating the Uganda Agreement**

No matter how entrenched or powerful a political class is within its own society, it is still vulnerable to incursion on its position by a stronger external party, and the *bakungu* chiefs were no exception with regards to the British Empire. The threat that Britain would forcefully assert sovereignty in Buganda was not immediate in the period 1897-1899. Yet, as British government expenditure in Uganda increased during the last years of the nineteenth century from £50,000 to £300,000 annually, as more Indian troops were imported into Uganda to prosecute the war against Mwanga and quell the Sudanese mutiny, and as the British set about asserting dominion over Buganda's smaller neighbors, the status quo of Britain's hands-off approach to colonialism in Buganda was poised to change.

When Mwanga and Kabalega finally surrendered and were deported to the Seychelles Islands in 1899, the wartime necessity of an ambiguous political relationship

---

<sup>4</sup> William Bissell, *Urban Design, Chaos and Colonial Power in Zanzibar* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011). Leading an anthropological trend that has recently gained more steam, Bissell dissects the poor planning and bureaucratic incompetence of the British colonial regime in Zanzibar over many decades. Also see: James C. Scott, *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999)

between the Regents and the British ended.<sup>5</sup> It is indisputable that at this point Kagwa, Mugwanya, and Kizito were the pre-eminent leaders of Buganda's native government. The question which finally loomed in the British colonial mind, however, was what exactly "native government" entailed and how the authority of that native government would be balanced with British suzerainty over the whole of Uganda. This question was more complicated with respect to Buganda than it was elsewhere in the region, because Buganda's centralized pre-colonial government, powerful standing army, and history of alliance with the British made it politically and legally awkward for Britain to simply declare absolute authority over Buganda.<sup>6</sup>

The first practical attempt to answer this question was made by Colonel Ternan, a veteran of the expedition against Kabalega and acting district commissioner, who proposed to the foreign office in 1899 that a council composed of both the Regents and British officials be vested with authority to distribute land. He suggested that on the most important issue of the day – land – the Crown would share some authority with the native government but maintain veto power. When Ternan suggested this scheme to the Regents, they were non-committal but receptive to the conversation. However, the proposal got no further because of the appointment in London of the new Special Commissioner for Uganda, Sir Harry Johnston, who instructed Ternan not to make any big decisions until his arrival. Thus, any codification of the relationship between the British and Native governments was put on hold until Johnston reached Uganda in December, 1899.<sup>7</sup>

The agreement which was eventually negotiated between Special Commissioner Johnston and the Regents marks, by all measures, a seminal moment in the history of the nation of Uganda. Unlike most of the other "agreements" or "treaties" which British colonial officers nonchalantly signed with African leaders, the Uganda Agreement was

---

<sup>5</sup> Twaddle (1993), 128. Kakungulu's final victory was described by a French Catholic missionary as a "fine feat of arms."

<sup>6</sup> D. A. Low & R. C. Pratt, *Buganda and British Overrule* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1960) 21. A controversial Foreign Office circular in 1899 notified officials that the Orders-in-Council under which Uganda was governed did not grant direct jurisdiction over Baganda subjects without going through chiefs, because the Kingdom of Buganda already had an effective government.

<sup>7</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 20

truly negotiated between two competent parties, and its provisions granting limited but real autonomy to the “native” government held the force of binding law in the British colonial mind and were affirmed in British courts.<sup>8</sup> More importantly, it set in writing the political gains that had been made by the *bakungu* chiefs since Mwanga's abdication, such as the Lukiiko System. The Agreement's biggest impact was the resolution to the land question agreed upon by both sides. All land in Buganda had been previously “owned” by the Kabaka and distributed through *bakungu*, *batongole* and *bataka* chiefs to the *bakopi* in a complex mix of inheritance, royal grant and rudimentary market economics.<sup>9</sup> The new system established by the Agreement more resembled the English freehold system with personal ownership of land, and its initial distribution would be determined by the Regents.

The triumph of the *bakungu* chiefs was to ensure that when the freehold system was implemented, they as the current ruling class were given freehold allotments large enough to solidify their position in the new protectorate. The remarkable extent of their success with the Agreement set the conditions for their rise as a new landed aristocracy more than they themselves could have predicted, and the Agreement consequently grew in importance and stature in the minds of the chiefs.<sup>10</sup> Because of the significance of the Agreement for the three decades following its ratification, it is useful to study its provisions closely here. In addition, an analysis of the negotiations that occurred in 1900 will help illuminate the political and social relationships that surrounded the *bakungu* as they embarked into the new century.

The British negotiator Sir Harry Johnston was an outsized personality, very much in the mold of the early explorer/colonialists typified by Henry Morton Stanley or Richard Burton.<sup>11</sup> He had experience throughout tropical Africa working as a government official,

---

<sup>8</sup> Malcolm Hailey, *Native Administration in the British African Territories*. (London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1950) Introduction and Chapter One; H. F. Morris, “Two Early Surveys of Native Courts in Uganda,” *Journal of African Law*, 11, 3 (1967) 159-174.

<sup>9</sup> John Rowe, *Land and Politics in Buganda*, *Makerere Journal*, 10 (1964) 1

<sup>10</sup> Kenneth Ingham, *The Making of Modern Uganda* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd, 1958) 107

<sup>11</sup> Edward Berenson, *Heroes of Empire: Five Charismatic Men and the Conquest of Africa* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011) & Dane Kennedy, *The Highly Civilized Man: Richard Burton and the*

but he was as much a mountaineer, botanist, big game hunter, and amateur anthropologist as he was a colonial administrator. He routinely clashed with foreign office staff who resented Johnston's being asked to take over the Ugandan administration.<sup>12</sup> While his archived letters demonstrate that Johnston was actively engaged in governance while in Uganda, the two-volume book he published upon his return focused almost entirely on popular natural sciences, including numerous intricate sketches of plants and animals.<sup>13</sup> He was only in Uganda for a little over a year in total. The man who negotiated the treaty that would upend the Ugandan political economy and create a new aristocratic class, had never been to Uganda previously, worked part-time while there, and would never visit the country again.

Johnston did not let inexperience temper his self-confidence though, and before he even left England he had decided on some ideas about how he would "settle native land ownership, taxations, government, and other important matters."<sup>14</sup> Regarding land, he wrote to the Foreign Minister Lord Salisbury: "Upon reaching Uganda, I shall endeavor as quickly as due regard for local conditions permit, to acquire complete control over the disposal of land."<sup>15</sup> His vision was to confirm the right of settlement of all land cultivators wherever they were, grant small estates to the "native" leadership, and assume control over all other land under the British government, to be doled out to African farmers, sold to European settlers, or exploited for natural resources as future colonial policy dictated.

Salisbury had not specifically instructed Johnston to resolve the land issue, but based on his previous colonial experience, Johnston believed that land settlement was the most important question to address quickly after his arrival. He wrote to Salisbury while in transit that "[i]n view of the absolute necessity of said control over land being obtained... it is extremely undesirable that any action should be allowed which would

---

*Victorian World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005). Also see: H. M. Stanley, *In Darkest Africa* (New York: Scribner & Sons, 1891).

<sup>12</sup> Alex Johnston, *The Life and Letters of Sir Harry Johnston* (London: J. Cape, 1929) 179 & 211. Foreign Office employee Clement Hill consistently tried to undermine him, and Johnston saw his job as "fixing all the blunders the FO made."

<sup>13</sup> Harry Johnston, *The Uganda protectorate; an attempt to give some description of the physical geography, botany, zoology, anthropology, languages and history of the territories under British protection in East Central Africa* (London: Hutchinson & Co., 1902)

<sup>14</sup> A. Johnston, 185

<sup>15</sup> Johnston to Salisbury, 28 Sept 1899 (cited in Low and Pratt, 24)

either let the land go away in endowments or private ownership without benefit to the state.”<sup>16</sup>

Regarding taxation, Johnston was instructed by Lord Salisbury to, above all, keep net costs down by bringing revenue up: “You will pay special attention to the possibilities of raising the present revenue, whether by a Hut Tax or otherwise, without risk of arousing the susceptibilities of the natives or pressing unduly upon their resources.”<sup>17</sup> For the last piece of his mission, establishing governance, Johnston received only general guidance from Salisbury to “place the administration of the present Protectorate on a permanent and satisfactory footing.” Unfortunately, Johnston wrote very little before leaving England about his specific vision for the role of the British in native governance. In light of his correspondence with Lugard and his ideas on land policy, though, he appears to have supported a weak version of “Indirect Rule” that left plenty of room for British officials to exercise necessary authority while acting in the “public interest.”<sup>18</sup>

Of the three matters Johnston set out to address, he achieved his goal only on the issue of revenue, although this was to come later and not by the means he anticipated. By the conclusion of the agreement, Johnston had signed up for a system of land ownership that favored an expanded ruling class and led to the privatization of land which he had hoped to avoid. He also somewhat unwittingly constructed a bulwark *against* British intrusion in the native government of Buganda with the codification of the Lukiiko. The agreement he negotiated provided maximum benefit to the *bakungu* chiefs and their allies, despite his professed desire to protect the interests of the *bakopi* from this group’s overlordship.<sup>19</sup> Johnston in the moment did not understand the true impact of his work though. He proudly wrote after signing the Agreement that “This agreement will be the making of Uganda. It gives us complete control over the land, the forests, the native army, the minerals, and highways, and the right to raise very large resources by

---

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 24

<sup>17</sup> Salisbury to Johnston, 1 July 1899. (Ibid., 15)

<sup>18</sup> Johnston to Salisbury, 28 Sept 1899 (Ibid., 24)

<sup>19</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 37

taxation. In return, we pay from these taxes salaries to the Kabaka and the chiefs acting as government officials. They, and about a thousand land owners, have their estates guaranteed, but we acquire control over the rest.”<sup>20</sup>

Within three years, nearly *four thousand* land owners had their *freehold* estates guaranteed, and the British government maintained control over less than half the total land, which for the most part only included swamps and rocky wasteland rejected by the Baganda. “Minerals” were never discovered, and the “native armies” were tightly controlled by Semei Kakungulu until they were mostly disbanded. The salaries provided to the chiefs were minor compared to their other revenue sources, and they acted as semi-sovereign legislators rather than “government officials.” Only on the issue of revenue was Johnston’s triumphalist prediction somewhat accurate, but the colonial budget was only balanced in 1914, after cotton-growing had taken hold and Johnston’s Hut Tax had been replaced by the Lukiiko with a Poll Tax.<sup>21</sup> Therefore, the reputation Johnston has earned among many historians for having been “outwitted” is not an unfair one.<sup>22</sup> But the question of how Johnston effectively lost the negotiations for the British can only partially be answered with reference to his overconfidence and lack of local knowledge. Johnston may have lost the negotiations for the Uganda Agreement, but just as significantly the chiefs who sat opposite him at the negotiating table won. They not only managed to secure more land and power for Buganda than the British intended to give up, but they took advantage of the permanency offered by a lengthy written treaty to clearly stake out and enhance their own elite position within Ganda society. Internally, the Uganda Agreement was the final step in the Oligarchical Revolution of the past decade.

In Johnston’s first meeting with the Regents and leading *saza* chiefs he struck a posture close to that of a superior telling his subordinates what was to be done with regard to land, taxes, and governance. He was not prepared for their reaction. Kagwa

---

<sup>20</sup> A. Johnston, 214

<sup>21</sup> Gardner Thompson, *Governing Uganda: British Colonial Rule and Its Legacy*, (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2003), 42. Colonial revenue first outweighed expenditures in the year 1914-1915, when cotton accounted for 70% of all exports.

<sup>22</sup> Rowe (1964), 8



and the chiefs walked out of the meeting lamenting “What have we done to be treated like this? Why does the Government of the Queen wish to tear up all past agreements between the Kabaka and Queen? This new agreement is contrary to them all.”<sup>23</sup> The breakdown in negotiations was observed by English missionaries who sought a permanent treaty that would help secure their mission work, and who understood Ganda society better than Johnston did. Anglican Bishop Tucker complained that “Johnston has arrived and his first action has been to disturb the country from one end to another by his new proposals... He proposes on behalf of the Queen to take over the whole land of the country... the proposals are not the result of Sir Harry Johnston’s investigations into the conditions of the country. He expounded them on the day of his arrival. They have been concocted in the Foreign Office in utter ignorance of the social conditions of the country.”<sup>24</sup> Another missionary wrote that “it is a little pity that he (Johnston) starts by thinking the chiefs children who do not know how to take care of themselves and must be taken care of, but he will find out he is not dealing with children.”<sup>25</sup> The missionaries stepped into a more active role to facilitate the negotiations after this first encounter.

For five weeks, recriminations between the two parties and angry letters went back and forth. Johnston frequently claimed he was tempted to run roughshod over the chiefs and force an agreement, but he never followed through on this threat.<sup>26</sup> Aside from the fact that English missionaries counseled him to work with the chiefs, Johnston could not realistically afford to try to force an agreement. Notwithstanding Britain’s status as a global power, at the moment of negotiations Buganda was in an equal bargaining position. First, the centralized government system of Buganda, run by the Regents and chiefs, was considered to be essential for establishing low-cost indirect rule over the most populated area of the Protectorate. For a colonial administration which had no truly consistent imperial philosophy in Uganda other than frugality, the employment of this organized and effective system at the lower levels of administrative manpower was

---

<sup>23</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 40

<sup>24</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 39

<sup>25</sup> Holly Hanson, *Landed Obligation: The Practice of Power in Buganda* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003) 130

<sup>26</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 28

essential.<sup>27</sup> Secondly, Johnston was keenly aware that Buganda's military, currently subduing outlying areas under the leadership of Kakungulu, could conceivably be turned on the relatively feeble British military presence in the region. As Johnston wrote to Salisbury in March 1900, "...if there is any country forming part of the Uganda Protectorate which could do us any real harm it is Uganda itself – the Kingdom of Uganda (i.e. Buganda). Here we have something like a million fairly intelligent, slightly civilized negroes of warlike tendencies, and possessing about 10,000-12,000 guns. They are the only people for a long time to come who can deal a serious blow at British rule in this direction."<sup>28</sup> No explicit military threat was necessary for this fact to enter consideration.

The Regents for their part insisted on three broad principles for any treaty. First, they wanted strong language guaranteeing Buganda's and the Kabaka's right to self-government on internal matters. Notably, the Regents couched their argument for increased political autonomy in terms of the same obsequious flattery described in Chapter One: "It is the rules of the Queen (Victoria) which we seek to put in force in Buganda... our failure... is due to the immaturity of our country... This is indeed the reason for our begging you to leave us to rule so that we may under your tutelage rule wisely. For our country, you should remember, Sir, is unique in Central Africa. For years we have been friends of the Queen..."<sup>29</sup> Their strategy of feigning subservience and calling on past displays of friendship to stake their claim for more self-government was appreciated by one CMS missionary, Walker, who called the above letter "a cheerful quaint production cleverly getting out of all the Commissioner wishes them to agree to and turning his arguments against himself."<sup>30</sup> The strategy of similitude lubricated the gears of these negotiations to the benefit of the Regents' position.

The chiefs paid close attention to final wording regarding political autonomy during a long meeting lasting from 10-13 February. Johnston was concerned not to give in too much on this point. The standoff led to the final result of somewhat rambling and

---

<sup>27</sup> Ingham (1958), 86: "over one issue only was there no disagreement, namely, that they should not be involved at great expense."; Roberts (1962), 436 for administrative use of Baganda.

<sup>28</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 94

<sup>29</sup> Regents to Johnston, 3 Jan 1900 (Low & Pratt, 31)

<sup>30</sup> Walker to B.W.W, CMS Archives, 12 Jan 1900 (Low and Pratt, 32)

unclear sentences explaining that the Kabaka would exercise “direct rule” over the inhabitants of Buganda as long as he did so in a manner that was “loyal” to the British.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps more importantly, it was agreed that the British could not unilaterally abrogate the agreement and deny Buganda’s rights unless the Ganda government displayed overt disloyalty or failed to live up to tax obligations imposed by the treaty.

Second after limited autonomy, the Regents wanted to be secure in their land. While Johnston had originally only imagined granting estates to the top chiefs and Kabaka, Kagwa insisted that grants be made to “1,000 chiefs and landowners” so that he could purchase the support of more *bakungu* and *batongole* chiefs. Kagwa and Johnston jointly estimated that there should be in total 8,000 square miles of land grants amongst all the chiefs. This land would be registered with a title, but the specifics of allocation were left to the native government to decide so long as it kept within the agreed upon 8,000 square mile limit. Considering that Johnston had originally intended to grant only symbolic estates to the leading men, this was a major concession. In exchange he received a promise of tax revenue equaling three rupees per annum of “Hut Tax” levied on the head of household for every “permanent dwelling” and a three rupee “Gun Tax” paid by anyone who owned a pistol or rifle.<sup>32</sup>

Yet, as much of a concession as Johnston made on the land issue, it turned out to be an even more considerable concession than he originally thought. When drafting the agreement, Johnston had estimated that 19,600 square miles of land existed in Buganda, of which Britain would get the remaining after Kagwa’s 8,000 square miles plus some other specific grants to certain individuals such as the Kabaka and his family were staked out. Johnston appears not to have foreseen that under this formulation, all the best land would be staked out first by the new land owners. By the time Britain got around to claiming its Crown Land under the Agreement, not only had the total size of Buganda had turned out to be two thousand square miles less than Johnston had

---

<sup>31</sup> *Uganda Agreement*, Clause 6

<sup>32</sup> *Uganda Agreement*, Clause 12

assumed, but the remainder available to Britain was mostly rocky wasteland and swamps.<sup>33</sup>

The Regents' third request was the easiest for Johnston to accede to. They pushed for clauses in the Agreement specifically addressing the configuration of the new native government, which would be led by "three native officers of state" (convenient for the three regents) who would be the Prime Minister or *katikiro* (Kagwa), the Chief Justice or *omulamuzi* (Mugwanya), and the Treasurer or *omuwanika* (Kizito).<sup>34</sup> The *katikiro* would be the president of the Lukiiko, whose membership would also include each of twenty *saza* chiefs, three "notables" from each *saza* appointed by the Kabaka in consultation with the *saza* chief, and six "persons of importance" appointed directly by the Kabaka. The Lukiiko was established as both a legislative council and native court of appeal. Clauses throughout the Agreement were changed to specifically reference the Lukiiko or the leading ministers, rather than just the "native government" writ large. For example the clause was added that "On all questions but the assessment and collection of taxes the chief of the county will report directly to the King's (Kabaka's) native ministers, from whom he will receive instructions."<sup>35</sup> They also inserted that "(t)he Lukiiko will be empowered to decide as to the validity of all (land) claims, the number of claimants and the extent of land granted..."<sup>36</sup>

These last modifications were unimportant to Johnston, and he had not even bothered to include any wording about the structure of native government in his original proposals. To Johnston these clauses merely captured on paper what was already the current practice of native government, which the British took for granted. However, for the Regents these clauses captured a moment in time where they were at the apogee of their power with regards to the Kabaka and the *bataka* clan chiefs, and then preserved this moment for the future. If the Agreement had been written five years earlier, the Kabaka and not the Lukiiko or chief ministers would have been the locus of power. If it

---

<sup>33</sup> H. B. Thomas, "An Experiment in African Native Land Settlement," *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 27, 107 (1928) 242

<sup>34</sup> *Uganda Agreement*, Clause 10

<sup>35</sup> *Uganda Agreement*, Clause 11

<sup>36</sup> *Uganda Agreement*, Clause 15

had been written twenty-five years earlier, it very well may have privileged the *bataka* clan chiefs. Kagwa managed to formalize and codify a system which had previously been in unwritten and continuous contention just as he had made it to the top.

In a break from past autocratic tradition, the Regents would not agree to sign on behalf of the kingdom without gaining the assent of a majority of lesser chiefs. After concluding the outlines of an agreement, Kagwa set about convincing the Protestant religio-political faction, while Mugwanya did the same with Catholics. Muslims were brought on board by their faction's leader, Mbogo, after he was offered 24 square miles of freehold for "himself and his adherents" plus £250 per annum for life.<sup>37</sup> Some animists were offered estates as well, but less politically-organized followers of the Kiganda religion, most closely associated with the *bataka* and their totemic clan structure, were the clear losers in the Agreement.<sup>38</sup> A total of 3,945 chiefs of all different levels were offered estates ranging from 1 to 45 square miles in order to secure their support.<sup>39</sup> This number was much higher than the 1,000 Johnston had agreed to, but the true higher number did not surface to the attention of British authorities until three years later.

Each religio-political faction was promised representation in the Lukiiko proportionate to their political influence by Kagwa who, in his role as a regent for the infant Kabaka, could select the "notable" and "important" members of the Lukiiko as prizes for support. Written at the bottom of the first "Lukiiko list" compiled by Kagwa is the revealing note - P. 60; C. 43; M. 6 - which suggests how the spoils were to be divided.<sup>40</sup> The support of the entire *bakungu* class, plus a small number of influential and amenable *bataka*, was thus secured by promises of landed economic security and political influence in the new regime. The price would be paid in taxes for the Protectorate Government raised from the *bakopi*.

On the day of signing, Kagwa insisted that every *saza* chief sign the document as a witness so that there would be no question as to the validity of the Agreement. The

---

<sup>37</sup> *Uganda Agreement*, Clause 15

<sup>38</sup> Mamdani (1976), 43; Apter (1961), 122-129

<sup>39</sup> Rowe (1964), 7. Others, including Ramkrishna Mukherjee, set the number at 3,700.

<sup>40</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 136

only *saza* chief who did not was Joswa Kate, the chief of Busiro *saza* and traditionalist *mugema* within the *bataka* lineage system. Even to the end, the Regents drove a hard bargain with Johnston - Johnston's personal notes show that days before the signing ceremony, Johnston had granted an unofficial "bribe" of a little more freehold land to the three regents.<sup>41</sup>

The context of the Uganda Agreement in relation to other "treaties" in Africa is important for understanding its true significance. Between 1899 and 1901, the British government concluded a number of other treaties and agreements, including the "Toro Agreement" with Kasagama, the *mukama* of the Toro Kingdom, and an "Ankole Agreement" with Kahaya, the *mugabe* of Ankole. Both of these agreements were hardly more than a page and did little more than confirm the titular position of the current leadership and establish British overrule. These agreements served little real purpose other than to satisfy British political sensitivities, and the Ankole Agreement was later suspended for seven years without much consequence.<sup>42</sup> The nineteen-page Uganda Agreement, in contrast, was routinely upheld as protecting Ganda political autonomy in British courts through the 1920s, even overriding parliamentary Orders-in-Council issued in Westminster, and its text was often referred to and contended with by British administrators and Buganda's leadership.<sup>43</sup> As late as the 1950s, the Agreement played a significant role in the nationalist Buganda political movement and its unique status caused it to be used as a prop to support claims of Buganda's unique superiority amongst the Ugandan people throughout the entire colonial period.<sup>44</sup>

---

<sup>41</sup> J. V. Wild, *The Story of the Uganda Agreement* (London: MacMillan & co., 1965), 92. It is described as a "bribe" in Low & Pratt (1960), 80.

<sup>42</sup> John Gray, "Early Treaties in Uganda," *Uganda Journal*, 12, 1 (1948). For suspension of Ankole Agreement, see: H. F. Morris, *A History of Ankole* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2007), 41

<sup>43</sup> H. F. Morris, "Sir Phillip Mitchell and 'Protected Rule' in Buganda," *Journal of African History*, 13, 2 (1972) 310; Low & Pratt (1960), 187-194, section entitled "Legal Significance of the Agreement and of Uganda's Protectorate Status."

<sup>44</sup> Roland Oliver, *Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1954), 307

## Freehold: An Oligarchy Becomes an Aristocracy

John Rowe has written that, “a new class of landlord aristocracy (was created) virtually at the stroke of a pen” when the Uganda Agreement was signed.<sup>45</sup> The first recorded use of the word “aristocrat” to describe the Ganda chiefs was a July 1901 letter from Harry Johnston which claimed that “the Land Settlement [was] a practical attempt to establish on a sound basis a ruling oligarchy which, under British guidance might do for Buganda what the landed aristocracy had done... to give stability to the government of England.”<sup>46</sup> The accuracy of his claim that he attempted such a feat is questionable since it contradicts his earlier pronouncements described above and it was written with hindsight when he was back in London on the political defensive, with rivals forcing him out of the Foreign Office.<sup>47</sup> However, whether at the time Johnston had actually attempted to create such an institution or not, “aristocracy” was a plausible word to describe Ganda politics as they emerged from the Agreement through Apolo Kagwa’s efforts.

Buganda as it was envisioned by Kagwa (and as Johnston retroactively claimed to have intended it), was in theory a bureaucratic and centralized state, built on an agrarian peasantry, controlled by a small class of landowning elite, and ruled over by British officers in Entebbe. But in 1900 this theory was not yet the case in practice. The Lukiiko System of centralized bureaucracy outlined in the Agreement, like any new governmental scheme, needed time to sink in among the population. The Lukiiko itself still needed time to grow procedurally and institutionally into the sophisticated legislature-court that Kagwa had imagined. Although agriculture was the primary economic activity of the *bakopi* peasantry, it was not the kind of agriculture that was conducive to the development of a landlord class, because it still centered on subsistence farming of bananas and other food crops for family consumption. Money for rent and taxes was

---

<sup>45</sup> Rowe (1964), 7

<sup>46</sup> Mamdani (1976), 41

<sup>47</sup> Oliver (1954), 338. The on-going rivalry between Sir Clement Hill and Sir Harry Johnston was very strong, and affected Johnston’s Agreement as well as the demarcation of the border between Uganda and East Africa (Kenya). See: Ingham (1958), 102 for border dispute.

only unreliably earned through smaller industries such as bark cloth manufacture, fishing, cattle-keeping, big-game hunting, and manual labor jobs like portering for Europeans, while currency was in chronically short supply.<sup>48</sup>

Furthermore, the newly invested landlord-aristocrats who had acquired freehold claims under the Agreement had not yet in 1900 found suitable land on which to stake their claim. It would take them between five and ten years to adjust their economic and political paradigms to accommodate freehold tenure and Kagwa's bureaucratic system before they could fulfill their new dual roles as landowners and as officers of state in a centralized government. Finally as regards Buganda's nominal suzerain, the machinery of British colonial government in 1900 was still very limited in both influence and scope.<sup>49</sup> Inadequate housing, poor health, and minimal amenities depressed morale amongst colonial officials.<sup>50</sup> Philosophically disunited, they did not speak with one voice or adhere to any consistent vision on key long-term issues such as settler colonialism, taxation and labor requirements, or the role of "native" governments in Uganda.<sup>51</sup>

But while the transformation from pre-Agreement to post-Agreement Buganda did not happen overnight, it did happen remarkably quickly, and in the decades following the Agreement most aspects of Ganda society were overhauled in its wake. This two decade transformation, while undoubtedly spurred on by the British colonial presence, was driven and steered primarily by the top chiefs, without whose support any large-scale renovations of Buganda could not have happened. The most wide-reaching aspect of this transformation was the changing physical and social map of Buganda, as populations were re-shuffled *en masse*, rural villages were re-designed, urban populations amplified,

---

<sup>48</sup> Michael Tuck, "The Rupee Disease: Taxation, Authority, and Social Conditions in Early Colonial Uganda," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 39, 2 (2006) 230

<sup>49</sup> In 1900 there were only about 150 white people working in Uganda. Ingham (1958), 126

<sup>50</sup> Harry Johnston, "Preliminary Report by Her Majesty's Special Commissioner on the Protectorate of Uganda, Presented to Both Houses of Parliament" *CMS Archives*, B2, (July, 1900) 748

<sup>51</sup> Christopher Youe, "Peasants, Planters, and Capitalists: The 'Dual Economy' in Colonial Uganda," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 12, 2 (1978) 169. Lord Robert Coryndon, Uganda's Colonial Governor from 1917-1922, complained upon attaining his post that "I would like to observe that there does not seem to have been any concerted policy in this Protectorate... No goal has been set up to work to; no general policies laid down and impressed up on the different departments; no one seems to have worked out a plan, either on paper or in his dreams, of what the countryside should look like in 15 or 50 years time; and no Governor seems to have pictured to himself what the most suitable form of native government is... Every Provincial Commissioner and almost every District Commissioner has his own ideas and methods on such questions such as the supply of labour." *Letter from Coryndon to Bottomley at Colonial Office, 1917.*



commercial road and rail corridors were constructed, and cotton crops sprang up throughout the countryside. Therefore before addressing the chiefs' numerous efforts to expand and reinforce their aristocratic political and economic power between 1900 and 1920, it will be useful to provide a brief overview of the historical context during which these efforts occurred.

Between 1900 and 1902, most of the arable land in Buganda was divided into freehold plots ranging in size from less than one to as many as forty-five square miles, and distributed amongst nearly 4,000 new members of a landed aristocracy. From 1902 until 1907, landlords erected the new freehold land economy, while cash-poor peasants were conscripted as low-paid laborers to build public infrastructure as they also struggled to pay taxes and rent while social tensions increased. The new economy changed dramatically again between 1907 and 1910 with the introduction of cotton, cash cropping, and global export.<sup>52</sup> From 1909 until 1920 the majority of freehold land was occupied by peasant farmers growing the cotton with which they paid rent to the landlords (whose number rose from 4,000 to approximately 10,000 by 1920), paid colonial taxes, attempted to buy their way out of forced public labor requirements, and finally entered the cash economy for imported goods with any remaining profit.<sup>53</sup> To understand cotton's influence on the cash economy and peasants' monetary wealth over this period, it is useful to note that in 1902 the British government and the chiefs had a very difficult time scrounging up a 4 ½ s. "hut tax" from between 20,000-30,000 Ganda families, but by 1926 a "poll tax" of 15 s. was collected from approximately 535,000 Ganda adult men, and there was still cash left over to stimulate demand for imported goods, which rose precipitously throughout the decade.<sup>54</sup> The chiefs who owned the land on which cotton was grown became even wealthier and more politically secure in the second decade than they were in the first.

---

<sup>52</sup> Ingham (1958), 110

<sup>53</sup> Earl Case, "Agriculture and Commerce in Uganda," *Economic Geography*, 6, 4 (1930) 356

<sup>54</sup> For 1926 see: Ramkrishna Mukherjee, *Uganda: An Historical Accident? Class, Nation, State Formation* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1985) 157; For 1902 see: Ingham (1958), 99.

In contrast to Ganda success with cotton, throughout the same period European planters were unsuccessful in attempts to establish cash-crop plantations growing coffee and rubber. However, because their role has been so over-emphasized by colonial historians, it must be mentioned in this study. Of all the transformations Ugandan society went through in this period, one phenomenon which was conspicuously absent was the large-scale introduction of white settler plantations analogous to those taking root in neighboring East Africa (Kenya). White farmers and their supporters were never able to effectively compete with the Ganda chiefs either in the colonial political arena or in the marketplace. White settlers were continuously hindered by various economic and political obstacles until the combination of increasing bankruptcies and decreasing support from the British government sounded the death knell for the “dream” of settler colonialism in Uganda by 1920. At their peak in 1915, there were fewer than two hundred white plantations in Buganda, covering a total of less than fifty square miles. This represents in comparison to all Baganda freeholders approximately one percent of all landowners, and they controlled one half of one percent of all freehold land.<sup>55</sup> By 1921, there were only one hundred and six planters in the entire protectorate, compared to nearly two hundred just in Buganda six years earlier.<sup>56</sup>

Transformation of the political landscape during these years mimicked the transformation of the physical landscape, in that was centered on and powered by the top land-owning chiefs. After climbing to the top of Buganda’s political life in the oligarchical revolution, and securing their place vis-à-vis the British colonial government with the Uganda Agreement, the Kabula Generation built a centralized and sophisticated Lukiiko System at home while remodeling the political structure of Buganda’s neighbors. In both Buganda and the wider protectorate, Ganda chiefs were the technical subordinates of British Imperialism, yet they played a more significant role than anyone else, including the British, in determining what colonialism would look like on the ground. The Colonial

---

<sup>55</sup> Youe 1978), 170. When compared to the whole population and land of Buganda, rather than just freeholders’, this percentage would obviously be even smaller.

<sup>56</sup> Lucy Mair, *An African People in the Twentieth Century* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1934) 12

government relied heavily on the Ganda elite to achieve colonialism on a shoe-string budget for the first twenty years of the Ugandan state's existence.

The recovered Lukiiko records bear witness to the political transformation of the Lukiiko itself from an elite forum in which the Regents could grant favors, register freehold claims and resolve disputes amongst their own class in the early 1900's, to a legislative and judicial body that by 1914 drafted sweeping laws affecting wide swaths of Ganda society, delivered final decisions on legal cases, controlled a "top-down" central government, and asserted its institutional rights in opposition to the British colonial government. Outside Buganda, the Ganda chiefs who acquired authority in neighboring territories through either direct military conquest or British appointment gained in power by 1902-1904. The most prominent such agents of "sub-imperialism" were Semei Kakungulu in Teso, Bukedi and Busoga, and Jemusi Miti in Bunyoro. These and other chiefs wielded enormous influence in their territories between 1902 and 1913, replicating and enforcing the new Ganda system of government, encouraging cotton farming, building public infrastructure, and re-drawing ethnic and political boundaries.<sup>57</sup> Roughly between 1913 and 1920, the regime of Ganda agents administering the Anglo-Ganda sub-imperialist project was dismantled by the colonial government, but many of the fundamental political and economic changes they had introduced remained.<sup>58</sup>

But in Buganda in 1900 nobody knew what this immediate future would look like or understood all the changes the Agreement had wrought. Nor did Buganda's colonial rulers attempt to guide the transition. Harry Johnston effectively quit administering Buganda two months after the Agreement was signed to pursue other interests, and after departing Africa in 1901 he was not replaced for over a year. The British colonial administration in Buganda was therefore functionally leaderless during most of 1900-

---

<sup>57</sup> George Emwanu, "The Reception of Alien Rule in Teso," *Uganda Journal*, 31, 6 (1967) 177. In a stark example, a group of Ganda sub-imperial administrators chose the name "Teso" to describe the historically diverse region conquered by Kakungulu because "one Ganda chief said he had heard a legend about people in the region originating from a place called "teyso" so they decided to call the district "teso."

<sup>58</sup> A. D. Roberts, "The Sub-Imperialism of the Baganda," *Journal of African History*, 3, 3 (1962) 446. Although the last Ganda sub-imperialist agents did not retire until the early 1930s, and Luganda remained the official language of Ankole until 1938.

1902.<sup>59</sup> On the most important issue of the time, namely the distribution of freehold land, the Regents and other chiefs quickly struck out on the path they set for themselves in the Agreement without waiting for any additional supervision from the British in Entebbe.<sup>60</sup>

It is not an overstatement to say that the Uganda Agreement's freehold land clauses literally upended Ganda society between 1900 and 1902. Chiefs who had been granted freehold rights in 1900 moved throughout the country to stake out the best claims, and a large portion of their *bakopi* peasants followed them to their new lands. British officials had originally thought of any land settlement as securing the rights of landholders to their current estates, but this was clearly not how leading Baganda interpreted the Agreement, and mass displacement quickly ensued as grantees rushed across the kingdom to occupy the best land they could before registering their freehold with the Lukiiko. Peace following Mwanga's and Kabalega's capture in 1899 along with the annexation by Buganda of three rich Nyoro provinces in the war's aftermath opened up many square miles of nearly empty land in northern Buganda for claims.<sup>61</sup> Chiefs claimed vacant land to register it with the Lukiiko. Sometimes they claimed land already occupied by other chiefs, in which case the two parties would argue their case before the Lukiiko if they could not come to a resolution. Peasants could be forcibly displaced if they stayed on land which was claimed by another chief with his own *bakopi*, or if they worked land owned by classes of chiefs such as the *bataka* who were not all granted freehold rights. The resulting scene was vividly described by the Anglican missionary Bishop Tucker: "Streams of men, women and children going east with all their household goods, cattle, sheep, goats, and fowls, met similar streams going west. Evicted tenants from the north were able to greet friends in similar condition from the south. And so the

---

<sup>59</sup> Oliver (1954), 318. Although Johnston stayed in Uganda for a full year, eight of these twelve months were spent exploring, hunting, and engaging in pursuits which were "scientific and not administrative."

<sup>60</sup> Low and Pratt (1960), 111.

<sup>61</sup> Elliott Green. "Understanding the Limits to Ethnic Change: Lessons from Uganda's 'Lost Counties,'" *Perspectives on Politics*, 8, 3, Sept. 2008. Known as the "Lost Counties" in Bunyoro's historiography, this annexation has long been a sore spot in Bunyoro-Buganda relations, and provides interesting material for ethnographers studying the identity of the Banyoro who remained after this period.

game was played until everyone was sorted out and settled down in his own place.”<sup>62</sup>

Things were not “settled down” for nearly three years.

Under the Agreement, details of land distribution and registration were left to the Lukiiko, but freehold land would be denominated by a new measurement which was previously unknown to Buganda: the square mile. The size of a square mile was not widely recognized and no survey of Buganda had ever been conducted, so chiefs who rushed to claim estates denominated in terms of “mailo” (as the word was commonly mispronounced) encouraged their *bakopi* to begin cultivating the new land as soon as possible.<sup>63</sup> In a period of quick reaction and uncertainty, the scramble for *mailo* land was thus performed in accordance with both new and old standards of tenure. Square miles were delineated and registered with the proper authorities in the new bureaucratic-freehold style, but these claims were also backed up with actual cultivation of land harkening to the pre-colonial usufructury system where land claims were only valid insofar as there was evidence of the land being recently cultivated.<sup>64</sup>

Johnston’s eventual successor, the elderly Colonel James Hayes-Sadler, initially deferred to the Lukiiko on the land question when he arrived in 1902. The vacancy in the position of Commissioner during this most critical two years had provided the Lukiiko with the opportunity to reorganize Buganda’s society in accordance with their own interpretation of the Agreement without the involvement of colonial authorities. When Apolo Kagwa finally presented the first rough draft outline of *mailo* registration (contingent on the results of a future land survey) Hayes-Sadler was therefore surprised and upset to see 3,945 named registrants instead of the 1,000 he had read about in his copy of the Uganda Agreement. Hayes-Sadler attempted to put his foot down, declaring that “an Agreement is an Agreement,” and called Kagwa into his office to spend many late nights justifying every single *mailo* allocation made over the previous years. Kagwa complied

---

<sup>62</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 111

<sup>63</sup> Low (1960), 109

<sup>64</sup> Mair (1934), 157. In this early anthropological text published in 1934 Lucy Mair explained that land claims in among Baganda were typically considered valid as long as traces of cultivation still existed. This allowed for claimants’ to allow their land to lay fallow without losing it.

promptly and politely as usual, but the end result was unchanged as the land was already occupied and peasant cultivation already underway.<sup>65</sup>

The Regents had pledged away four times the number of *mailo* allocations that were authorized by the British in order to secure support for the Agreement from an array of minor chiefs and to obtain their buy-in on the new political arrangement. So, whose support were they purchasing? Looking through the first list of *mailo* allocations presented in 1902 we can gain insights into the bases of political power which the Regents wanted to woo in 1900 by seeing how the Regents subsequently distributed the spoils of freehold. Unsurprisingly, *mailo* grants to Protestant, Catholic and Muslim chiefs greatly outpaced grants to animist chiefs, and these grants were similar in proportion the number of Lukiiko seats which Kagwa had distributed. Freehold distribution was the largest wealth transfer based on religio-political affiliation that ever occurred in Buganda's history, and the disproportionate benefit attained by adherents of the new religions showcases how the increased clout of monotheistic faiths that had begun under Mutesa continued into the early twentieth century.

Another noticeable dynamic is that there were more numerous, and smaller, *mailo* grants to chiefs in the older central provinces than there were in the more recently incorporated outlying provinces. In the old central *sazas* like Busiro, a large number of minor *batongole* chiefs with small but ancient leadership positions or minor royal appointments still held a measure of sway in 1899-1900. They were likely provided with some *mailo* by Kagwa in exchange for their support. In outlying provincial areas and more recent additions to the kingdom, such as Buddu *saza* in the south, chiefships had a history less than a century old and the positions had been created by direct appointment from the central government. There were also fewer chiefs overall to entice in frontier *sazas*, where minor *batongole* positions associated with the Kabaka's coterie of courtiers

---

<sup>65</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 112-119. Kagwa made the extraordinary argument that he interpreted the Agreement's phrase: "one thousand chiefs and landowners" with an emphasis on the 'and', meaning one thousand chiefs (*bakungu*) plus another group of landowners (*batongole*) who together equaled nearly four thousand. Kagwa likely knew perfectly well what Johnston thought he meant by the phrase, since they together had done the math to arrive at eight thousand total square miles of freehold in early 1900. However, Kagwa's word-smithing and legalism both provided a comfortable fiction which helped both parties diffuse the impasse, and provides evidence of how well-suited his less-than-genuine approach to politics was for the early British colonial rule.

(e.g. the Kabaka's official elephant hunter, the royal ironsmith, royal bird-trapper, royal cook, etc.) were non-existent. In both cases, it is interesting that the Regents used promises of *mailo* grants to secure support from these minor chiefs for an Agreement which would in turn abolish the old Kiganda political system that had empowered them to command this price in the first place.

Kagwa and his closest colleagues probably could have taken legal right (as far as Britain was concerned) to all or most of the freehold land during the negotiations. The fact that they shared the spoils of the Agreement's *mailo* system with almost four thousand others demonstrates a certain degree of political acumen. It also may have shown an ideological commitment to building a far-reaching aristocratic class as a foundation for the new Ganda state.

Unlike earlier times when the Kabaka could control the allocation of land throughout his reign, *mailo* allocations were distinctly a one-off event. By freehold tenure's very nature, after the initial distribution of *mailo* land the Regents no longer had this lever of power to wield.<sup>66</sup> Needing a new incentive for minor chiefs to obey the central government, the initial distribution between 1900 and 1902 was therefore used by the Regents to secure support for a new government system where those same chiefs procuring freehold land would be brought in the Lukiiko System hierarchy as *saza*, *gombolola*, or *muruka* "chiefs" equivalent to their *mailo* holdings. No longer able to distribute lands to obtain allegiance from these smaller chiefs, Kagwa and the top chiefs inducted them into a system, enforced by the British colonizers, in which the minor chiefs were their direct bureaucratic subordinates. Chiefs down to the *gombolola* level earned salaries, were authorized to dispense justice, and could be promoted based on merit. They also drew a regular salary from Buganda's treasury. Good standing with the Lukiiko's leadership, rewarded sometimes by selection as a "notable" to attend the Lukiiko or with promotion to higher rank in the political structure, was also attended with

---

<sup>66</sup> Ingham (1958), 122. The permanence of the land settlement also had a corollary consequence with regard to religio-political factionalism. Once the land transfer was complete, belonging to one religious party over another promised less material benefit than it had in the 1890s. It is possible that this led to a marked decrease in religious conflict in the years following the Agreement. The diminished importance of religion as a component of politics after 1900 is commented in Ingham's 1958 work.

prestige and esteem traditionally accorded to leadership positions in Ganda society. Thus, the old land-based incentives which the central government had previously maintained to inspire loyalty and merit were replaced in this new system with wages and promotion.<sup>67</sup>

The final result was an invented “landed aristocracy.” The ruling class was also the landed class. With their land owned in freehold, the nouveau-aristocrats were no longer completely dependent on the Kabaka (who was a toddler in any case) for their wealth and status as their predecessor *batongole* and *bakungu* chiefs had been in the past.<sup>68</sup> Yet they retained social and cultural sanctions inherited from a bygone era, much like Europe’s aristocrats of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, because the original land allocation had been divided up based on the amount of influence held under the older traditional political system.

Aristocratic wealth was first extracted from peasants in the form of *busulu* (land rent), and it was later supplemented after the introduction of cotton with mandatory *nvujo* (cash tribute). These two words had pre-colonial antecedents, but they were both re-fashioned with the introduction of freehold away from informal relationships of reciprocal obligations between a chief and a *mukopi* and made into formal monetary debt owed by a peasant to his landlord.<sup>69</sup> Under Kagwa’s leadership, this new system was formalized by the Lukiiko in the Land Law of 1908 when it was decided that “for every produce from the land (the landowner) shall be entitled to a share of one tenth, that is 1 rupee from every 10 proceeds from the sale of whatever the produce from the land.”<sup>70</sup> The next twenty years was characterized by efforts to fortify the underpinnings of aristocratic society, often at the cost of *bakopi*, who saw these rents increase more than three-fold over the next fifteen years.<sup>71</sup> Substantial change only occurred after Kagwa’s resignation in 1926, which was followed by the passage of a “Peasant’s Charter” in the 1927 Lukiiko session

---

<sup>67</sup> Apter (1961), 91-105 for the most accessible description of the Lukiiko System’s hierarchy.

<sup>68</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 138; The terms *batongole* and *bakungu* fell out of use soon after 1900, as the distinctions became less meaningful when rank in the Lukiiko System and ownership of land both qualified one as a just a “chief.”

<sup>69</sup> Hanson (2003), 165-188

<sup>70</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, March 24<sup>th</sup>, 1908 [also cited in Hanson (2003), 153]

<sup>71</sup> Twaddle (1969), 314



which slashed *busulu* and *nvujo* payments and undercut many aristocratic economic privileges.

Gross inequality has opened this aristocratic system up to class-based criticism from historians influenced by Karl Marx. Perhaps most notably, Mahmood Mamdani in his compelling book *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda*, considers the Uganda Agreement to have turned a group which had “been a potentially dynamic pre-colonial ruling class” into a “parasitic collaborating class,” “parasitic because although they were to consume large amounts of economic surplus, they played no part in production.”<sup>72</sup> With the ruling class turned into landowners, Mamdani argues, it was possible for “their income to be derived neither from their own labor nor from supervising the labor of others but from the rent they were to extract from a tenant peasantry. The Baganda landlords were to be a rentier class par excellence.”<sup>73</sup> After cotton boomed, showy displays of economic inequality such as the chiefs’ imported American cars & flush bank accounts were quite common and stoked such criticisms for many years.

Mamdani and others are undoubtedly correct in their assessment of the new aristocratic system as unfair and abusive towards the Ganda peasantry. The deficiency in their analysis is that they ascribe too much credit (or blame) for this social system to British colonial officials, using aristocratic inequity as a springboard to criticize the imperial government.<sup>74</sup> But the system was not planned, designed and implemented by the British in a vacuum. More likely, it was never thoroughly thought through or planned at all. As early as 1927, economist and colonial supporter H. B. Thomas criticized Johnston for having “gravely misjudged the consequences of his settlement.”<sup>75</sup> As discussed above, there was no British governor or commissioner posted during the most formative years of the new aristocratic economy. Even if a powerful semi-autonomous native landed aristocracy had been in the mind’s eye of one or more colonial administrators (such as Johnston claimed only after the fact), the degree of influence

---

<sup>72</sup> Mukherjee formulates similar critiques in *Uganda: An Historical Accident? Class, Nation, and State Formation*

<sup>73</sup> Mamdani (1976), 42

<sup>74</sup> Mamdani (1976), 39-43 & Mukherjee, 130-145

<sup>75</sup> H.B. Thomas, “An Experiment in African Native Land Settlement,” *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 27, 107 (1928) 240

over daily economic activity wielded by colonial officials in the early twentieth century was too minimal to have made such plans fruitful without substantial chiefly participation. Any rapaciousness or social injustice therefore that existed in the new aristocratic system is the responsibility of the Kabula Generation and Kagwa, as the most substantial political leaders of the day, more than it is the responsibility of any other entity. Indeed, these criticisms should serve as a reminder that in addition to being colonized Africans, the leading chiefs who controlled the Lukiiko and owned vast tracts of lands were political and economic elites in their own right, responsible themselves for any negative connotations elitism has come to entail. Simply put, an "Economics of the Elite," was a defining feature of the Kabula Generation Era.

The next chapter will explore two important initiatives pushed by the chiefs in order to bolster the aristocratic system, namely the introduction and exploitation of cotton as a cash crop, and the institutional evolution of the Lukiiko System. In such a study it is impossible to separate class interest from ideological interest. For example, the chiefs' consistent expansion and protection of native autonomy over these first two decades can be seen simultaneously as a defiant defense of self-government by colonial subjects, or as their grabbing an opportunity to claim ever more control over rents and land policies for the benefit of the upper class. Principled opposition to an autocratic Kabaka in favor of a mature and deliberative legislature may be interpreted cynically in light of the power that accrued to the chiefs who ran that legislature. By the same token, modernizing and commercializing the agricultural economy may have raised the overall material standard of living and brought Uganda into the world market, but it also created massive profits for the landowners who benefited far more than anyone else. Whatever their motivations, this era was defined by a set of decidedly aristocratic governing principles, which were new to Buganda but quickly took hold in the first years of the twentieth century with the encouragement and design of the Regents.

### *Chapter Three – Building an African State, 1902-1919*

The tax regime imposed on Buganda through the Uganda Agreement was deeply unsettling to Ganda society in its early years. Apolo Kagwa was determined to make tax collection work in order to keep the Agreement intact, but tax collection and the associated system of coerced public labor for Baganda who could not afford their tax obligation caused tensions in the currency-poor country. These tensions were temporarily abated by a surge of cotton's cultivation and export as a cash crop in between 1907 and 1911 that triggered the second major transformation of Buganda's economy within a decade.

This chapter questions the common historical perception of the cotton economy as a foreign construct imposed on Buganda by outside forces. Instead, this chapter argues that the both the initial introduction of cotton and refinements to its cultivation over the years were motivated by Baganda actors. Crucially, most historians have overlooked the role played by Bulemezi saza chief Samwiri Mukasa, an original member of the Kabula Generation. The cotton economy found support first amongst the upper and

lower classes of northern Buganda, as well as the owners of textile mills in Lancashire, England, before finally gaining the serious attention of the colonial administration.

Samwiri Mukasa and Apolo Kagwa pushed other chiefs to grow cotton through their meetings in the Lukiiko. The last section of this chapter examines the institutional growth and development of the Lukiiko from the period 1900 to 1919. This section uses the recently recovered Lukiiko Archive records to trace the increase in policy reach and institutional sophistication of the native legislature over this time period. While admitting that the Lukiiko was a fairly weak legislative assembly in its earliest years, this section argues that Lukiiko was important in those years for reasons that historians have missed. Crucially, the Lukiiko provided a space free from European interference where the Regents could coordinate with the other top chiefs and keep tight observation and control over the day to day changes of Ganda politics. Even before the Lukiiko became a sophisticated legislature, it was the apparatus that Kagwa, Mugwanya and Kizito used to oversee mailo distribution, punish or reward lesser chiefs, and raise independent revenue. Kagwa kept the Lukiiko functioning as the apex of his Lukiiko System, and Mugwanya as Chief Justice used it as the court of final appeal for criminal cases which made their way up from the *gombolola* and *saza* levels. When it finally became established as a sophisticated and powerful legislature around 1914, the Lukiiko was buttressed by a systemic base of support that Kagwa had cultivated over the previous fifteen years.

### **Taxes and Labor**

The only significant burden placed on the top chiefs by the Uganda Agreement, which was otherwise a bonanza for them, was that they were required to collect tax from their population for the British Government. In fact, failure to pay colonial taxes was the only transgression for which the Agreement could legally be annulled by unilateral British

action.<sup>1</sup> This fact itself is evidence that the colonial government's overriding concern in 1900 was balancing the budget. Apolo Kagwa may have been justifiably assumed that as long as he was facilitating tax payments and otherwise avoiding major controversy, he would stand relatively unhindered by British interference in the rest of his administration.<sup>2</sup> Goading Baganda to pay the hut tax of three rupees, or else work it off with a month's labor on public works, quickly became a primary aim of the native government.<sup>3</sup>

But Buganda in 1900 was woefully unprepared for a centralized tax regime or a large wage-labor system, and the first few years of the Agreement's implementation were some of the most challenging that the Regents faced. The Buganda central government had never before directly taxed its citizens in a regularly reoccurring system, and although pre-colonial Buganda did use cowrie shells as currency, most wealth was held in other illiquid assets such as cattle, slaves, or ivory. For the first year of tax collection, Britain accepted in-kind payments and cowrie shells. The boondoggle that ensued from this policy soon convinced colonial officials that they were underprepared for such alternative currency.<sup>4</sup> Taxes after 1902 were required to be paid in hard currency, denominated in Indian rupees, which were shipped in from the subcontinent and introduced into the economy by colonial officials.<sup>5</sup>

The shift to a currency-based annual tax in Uganda was unprecedented. Under Mutesa, Buganda's central government had acquired most of its wealth from cross-border raids and by exacting tribute from neighboring petty states. Taxes were

---

<sup>1</sup> *Uganda Agreement*, Clause 12. There was also a clause saying the Agreement could be annulled for unspecified failures of "loyalty." *Ibid.*, Clause 6. The first and only time that this came up was when Clause 6 was invoked by the British during the famous Kabaka Crisis in the 1950s when the British government arrested and deported the Kabaka on account of his alleged "disloyalty" with respect to a potential political union with Kenya. David Apter, *The Political Kingdom in Uganda: A Study in Bureaucratic Nationalism* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961), 283

<sup>2</sup> D. A. Low and R. C. Pratt, *Buganda and British Overrule* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1960), 224. R. C. Pratt suggests that the British were not deeply concerned with internal affairs as long as taxes were collected.

<sup>3</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 102. Kagwa worried that "If the people refuse to pay to the Hut Tax it may ruin the country."

<sup>4</sup> Kenneth Ingham, *The Making of Modern Uganda* (George Allen & Unwin, Ltd, 1958), 99. As Baganda chiefs pushed their bakopi to pay their taxes, district commissioner offices began to overflow with livestock and shells for which the British Empire had little use. One exasperated DC wrote that he had 85,740,359 cowrie shells, nominally valued at Rs. 107,175 (Indian Rupees) in his stores. Having collected an enormous amount of tax the first year, the officer had "no doubt" that the Baganda would start paying for the next year soon, and wrote to Entebbe, "Might I ask your help to get rid of my present stock," since "all the stores here are completely full of shells..." Low & Pratt (1960), 101: Eventually the cowrie shells were all burnt, severely depressing the totals for first year of tax collections.

<sup>5</sup> Ingham (1958), 103-106

occasionally levied on particular regions or sectors of Buganda's population for specific political and fiscal reasons, but payments were often in the form of barkcloth, tools, livestock and cowrie shells which would be bundled together from the community undergoing the levy and carried off to the Kabaka's capital.<sup>6</sup> Mwanga was accused in his first reign of plundering the Ganda countryside with *bitongole* armies, yet this internal revenue can hardly be considered a "tax." Peasants had a long tradition of supporting their local chief, but mainly through *nvujo*, or tribute, in such forms as bananas, beer, pots, hoes, and barkcloth.

In early 1900, regularized annual taxes were on the whole unfamiliar, Baganda were still cash-poor, and coming up with rupees was certain to be difficult. Baganda who did not pay taxes in money could instead choose to work for a month as laborers on public works projects. Public labor had a stronger precedent in pre-colonial Buganda, and visitors as early as Speke in 1861 were remarkably impressed by the wide public roads and bridges built by public labor throughout the country.<sup>7</sup> The new colonial labor regime was different, however, because it was more geographically centralized. Previously, *bakopi* would gather to work on a local public project such as a road in response to their local chief beating a loud drum calling them together for work. This work was called *busulu*, or labor tribute, in contrast to the above-mentioned *nvujo*, or material tribute. Buganda had no strong tradition in Buganda of large centralized public building, however, and even the royal capital was not an exception to this rule.<sup>8</sup> Until late in Mutesa's reign, the royal capital had moved whenever there was a new Kabaka and, and possibly one or two more times during a longer reign.<sup>9</sup> Palaces were fairly temporary structures, and *bakopi* never spent very much time constructing the royal capital. Even this work they often sought to avoid because it was too far from home.<sup>10</sup> That the capital

---

<sup>6</sup> Richard Reid, *Political Power in Pre-Colonial Buganda* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2002) 99. See also: John Roscoe, *The Baganda: An Account of the their Native Customs and Beliefs* (Frank Cass & Co., 1911) 244-245

<sup>7</sup> D. A. Low, *Fabrication of Empire: The British and the Uganda Kingdoms 1890-1902* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 36

<sup>8</sup> Reid (2002), 102

<sup>9</sup> Roscoe (1911), 200

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 246-247

had remained in Mengo since Mutesa's time, long enough to be significantly built up, was still a novel phenomenon in the early 1900s. British projects therefore, centered as they were on the construction of a protectorate capital in Entebbe or lake-ports and roads meant to increase commerce, were unappealing to *bakopi* because of their geographical location and unprecedented distance from home.

Peasants who did not have cash to pay the hut tax resented having to travel to the far southeastern corner of Buganda for a month to work on a European construction project. Worse yet, the parsimonious protectorate government would not feed the laborers for free, and charged an extra month's labor from a peasant in exchange for providing food throughout the labor period.<sup>11</sup> *Bakopi* resented the new system, but chiefs who tried to be accommodating and avoided pushing their peasants to pay taxes or join the colonial labor force, while popular with among the *bakopi*, were chastised by the Lukiiko.<sup>12</sup>

It was not only the *bakopi* who felt financially shortchanged, though – the Lukiiko chiefs felt squeezed by tax obligations owed to Entebbe, and had little money left for themselves. Stanislus Mugwanya once declared that he felt financially “squeezed” worse than the mat under the heavy basket on a woman's head.<sup>13</sup> In a 1900 letter written by the Lukiiko to Jemusi Miti upon his assignment as first minister in Bunyoro, the Lukiiko complained that “ever since the European made the Buganda Govt. a well which he drains at its spring – I mean the collection of taxes – what water do you expect to find in the well?”<sup>14</sup> Miti had written the Lukiiko complaining that he was not being paid for his work in Bunyoro. They agreed that he should be paid 100 per month based on his rank and position, but said they could only send 130 rupees to carry him through the next four months. Aside from showing that the chiefs were under fiscal stress and unable to cover their debts, this exchange provides evidence that they were trying to hide their financial difficulties from the British during this period. Two days after writing to Miti saying they

---

<sup>11</sup> Holly Hanson, *Landed Obligation: The Practice of Power in Buganda* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 171

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, 158

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 184-185

<sup>14</sup> Author unknown, Lukiiko to Miti, July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1900, Lukiiko Archives

could only pay him 130 rupees, the chiefs in the Lukiiko wrote a follow-up letter instructing Miti not to ask the British district commissioner George Wilson for money and implying that they wanted Wilson to think they were giving Miti a salary.<sup>15</sup> A month prior they implied something similar when writing that Miti should be careful when talking to Wilson to “seek out those things that ought to be brought before his notice, and those that ought to be left out.”<sup>16</sup>

These letters, among the only surviving archived Lukiiko sources from 1900, provide rare evidence that in the first years of the Agreement the chiefs may have conspired to deliberately mislead the British officers assigned over them.<sup>17</sup> It is not surprising that they would, however, as even in this early period the chiefs identified their interests as separate from the British, belying the notion presented by some earlier historians that they were mere stooges loyal to the British. For example, in the first of three letters to Miti, the Lukiiko implored him to “inquire for everything from us who sent you,” and to work to achieve “good standing not only among the Europeans but also among all the Baganda.” They were intent that Miti not forget his allegiance was to his “mother country (Buganda)” and that he was supposed to “do the job for us (the Lukiiko) who sent you and for your country without pay” rather than ask for money from or report to the British officer who accompanied him.<sup>18</sup> There is no evidence to suggest that British colonialists understood Miti as reporting to anyone other the British district commissioner for whom he worked, and this is likely to have been a point on which the two parties would have disagreed, if the Lukiiko had brought it up.<sup>19</sup>

As the massive dislocation of the Ganda countryside settled down in 1902-1903, the difficulty posed by British tax obligations and the derivative labor requirements for

---

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.* “Because Mr. Tayali (i.e. Wilson) told us that if we should pay you he shall write a letter to Europe commending our action.” For reasons I do not understand, “Mr. Tayali” is the name used in these letters for Miti’s British partner, an old Uganda hand for the Foreign Office named George Wilson.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Records from 1900 to 1904 are missing, except for these letters which were thankfully misfiled with the 1906 records.

<sup>18</sup> Shane Doyle, *Crisis and Decline in Bunyoro* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006) 98. Miti would eventually grow rich from his position in Bunyoro: “He traded in ivory, cloth, and coffee, was a successful elephant hunter, and even built a dhow trade on Lake Albert.”

<sup>19</sup> For more information on the British and Bunyoro see: Shane Doyle, *Crisis & Decline in Bunyoro* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006) & M. S. M. Kiwanuka, “Bunyoro and the British: A Reappraisal of the Causes for the Decline and Fall of an African Kingdom,” *Journal of African History*, 9, 4 (1968) 603-619.



those who could not pay continued. The financial and labor obligations imposed on the peasantry began to contribute to a number of changes which were unwelcome by the Lukiiko, including peasants delaying marriage or building families in order to avoid being counted as a “head of household” for the hut tax, or moving to work for chiefs who were less strict in collecting tax.<sup>20</sup> Worse yet, *bakopi* were moving out of Buganda altogether and joining a growing emigration of Baganda to Ankole, Busoga, and other fertile areas within the protectorate that did not have the political machinery to enforce tax and labor requirements.<sup>21</sup> Others joined Kagwa’s personal rival Semei Kakungulu in eastern Uganda, fighting in his army or helping him administer foreign lands.<sup>22</sup> Finally, some Baganda even moved completely outside of the protectorate. Kisumu and later Nairobi in the East African Protectorate developed a large expatriate community of Baganda temporarily working for white settlers or Asian traders to earn money for taxes, or permanently settling to avoid tax and/or send remittances to pay taxes for their extended families.<sup>23</sup>

The colonial administration’s penalty for failure to pay tax was that a Muganda could be conscripted into the labor force and denied access to “government benefits” although it is hard to understand what exactly those benefits were. The British did not, however, employ a policy of chasing down recalcitrant taxpayers on their own.<sup>24</sup> Since colonial “punishment” for being caught skipping the labor requirement was only being conscripted to fulfill the labor requirement, and since there were no important government services for the average *mukopi* to “lose access” to, and since colonial officials did not chase down tax delinquents, it can be inferred that enforcement by the local chiefs, who were in turn pressured by the Lukiiko to produce tax, played more of a role in producing tax payments than did direct pressure by Europeans.

---

<sup>20</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 103. It was discovered that *bakopi* were abandoning their homes, or pretending to be unmarried and living with their parents in order to avoid being charged hut tax.

<sup>21</sup> A. D. Roberts, “The Sub-Imperialism of the Baganda,” *Journal of African History*, 3, 3 (1962) 448

<sup>22</sup> Michael Twaddle, *Kakungulu and the Creation of Uganda* (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 1993), 174. The loss of taxpayers as more men joined Kakungulu was a serious concern for the Regents.

<sup>23</sup> Hanson (2003), 155 for Kisumu. The expatriate community in Nairobi that first incubated Luganda nationalist press is described in: James Scotton, “The First African Press in East Africa: Protest and Nationalism in Uganda in the 1920s,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 6, 2 (1973) 212

<sup>24</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 99

Most historians recognize this early period as a time of “crisis” in Buganda, but there is disagreement about both the nature of the crisis and when it ended. To early historians, the crisis ended in late 1902, by which time enough rupees had entered the economy that, when combined with the labor option, Buganda’s tax obligation was able to be met.<sup>25</sup> Success meeting this obligation was a victory for Kagwa because it maintained the integrity of the Agreement and dissuaded the nascent colonial government from trying to micromanage his affairs. However, the crisis spurred by tax collection and forced labor within Buganda’s peasant society continued past 1902. Poor labor conditions, family distress, and impossible tax burdens took a toll on Buganda’s lower classes, as did the beginning of a sleeping sickness epidemic that reached its apogee in 1906. Marxist historian Ramkrishna Mukherjee wrote in the 1960s about the deplorable labor conditions during this period, and more recently Holly Hanson has described the damaging effect that onerous demands had on the previously “reciprocal” relationship between chiefs and *bakopi*.<sup>26</sup> Most recently, Michael Tuck has named the early tax economy as a period rife with “Rupee Disease” -- a poignant term that captures the social ills and economic inequality that accompanied British demands for cash tax payments.<sup>27</sup> Archival research hints that crises at the individual level increased in the middle of the decade, too. Lukiiko records from the time suggest higher rates of suicides, murders, and arsons.<sup>28</sup>

### **Cotton and the Kingdom of Buganda**

Without intervention it is unclear how long the uneasy situation could have continued without reaching a tipping point that threatened the young Lukiiko System. However, this most dangerous period for Kagwa and his colleagues abated without

---

<sup>25</sup> Low & Pratt, 104: “However, by 1902 the crisis was over.”

<sup>26</sup> Ramkrishna Mukherjee, *Uganda: An Historical Accident? Class, Nation, State Formation* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1985), 202 & Hanson (2003), 170.

<sup>27</sup> Michael Tuck, “The Rupee Disease: Taxation, Authority, and Social Conditions in Early Colonial Uganda,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 39, 2 (2006) 221-245.

<sup>28</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, May 22, 1904 mentions the “Prevention of Arson Law of December 8<sup>th</sup>, 1904” Nearly every session from this period includes records of some kind of violent crime, often linked implicitly to economic distress.

reaching this point and the precipice was avoided mostly because of the timely introduction of cotton. Cotton may be fairly regarded as one savior of the Lukiiko System and the savior of Apolo Kagwa. It was not, however, a *deus ex machina* that came along at the right time just by luck, nor was it imposed on Buganda by outside interests. A close examination shows that cotton's introduction and development owes much more to Baganda of all classes than has traditionally been assumed. Kagwa and the Lukiiko encouraged the cotton economy from above, while unprecedented profit margins enticed peasants to expand cotton farming from below.

The cotton economy has been treated by historians as a colonial imposition pushed on the *bakopi* by the colonial government, but this analysis is lacking.<sup>29</sup> While it is true that the cotton market would not have existed without British Imperialism, cotton agriculture thrived on small farmer entrepreneurialism rather than British scientific engineering, and cotton *shambas* (farms) were encouraged by the chiefs for their own reasons before cotton ever became an official British policy.

While native cotton (called *ebifimusi*) had been lightly cultivated in Uganda prior to the arrival of the first Europeans, it was never considered by early British administrators to be a serious option to become an important economic commodity.<sup>30</sup> Those colonialists who did have a long-term vision of the Protectorate's path to economic surplus usually envisaged a white settler economy erected on rubber and coffee plantations.<sup>31</sup> A colony with an economic foundation of hundreds of thousands of peasant families growing small quantities of cotton alongside food crops for subsistence was absolutely not a plan envisioned by the protectorate government when cultivation started in 1904. The imprint of small scale peasant cash-cropping was shaped by the

---

<sup>29</sup> Mahmood Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), 44-49; Jean-Pierre Chretien, *The Great Lakes of Africa: Two Thousand Years of History* (New York: Zone Books, 2003), 239; Christopher Wrigley, "Buganda: An Outline Economic History," *Economic History Review*, 10, 1 (1957) 75. William A. Lewis, *Tropical Development, 1880-1913: Studies in Economic Progress* (London: Routledge, 1970), 183. The imperial imposition of cotton on Uganda has been a common trope for many years. Peter Nayenga argues that historians have mistakenly credited "foreign influences" with the rise of the cotton economy. Nayenga (1981), 175.

<sup>30</sup> Reid (2002), 28 & Peter Nayenga, "Commercial Cotton Growing in Busoga District," *African Economic History*, 10 (1981) 178

<sup>31</sup> Ingham (1958), 108. The most significant was Judge William Carter, Chief Justice of Uganda and settler economy enthusiast. Those who advocated for Uganda to stay a "black man's country" did so for ideological, not economic reasons.

Baganda landowners, by the peasants who did the actual growing – who “took risks and innovated” at the lowest level - and by emissaries from the British textile industry, but definitely not by the protectorate government.<sup>32</sup> In the summer of 1905, a year after the first commercial export of cotton, the Entebbe government was still asking the Lukiiko to have farmers send produce to a trade show in Nairobi which prominently featured coffee and tobacco as potential export crops.<sup>33</sup>

The two most important driving forces behind the initial introduction of cotton to Uganda were the Lukiiko chiefs and the Lancashire-based British Cotton Growing Association (BCGA) in that order.<sup>34</sup> The first cotton to be grown for large-scale commercial export was in Bulemezi *saza*, north of Kampala, where *saza* chief and original member of the Kabula generation Samwiri Mukasa approached the British commercial enterprise “The Uganda Company” about the prospects of growing cash crops in his *saza*.<sup>35</sup> Mukasa wanted his peasants to be able to earn enough cash through selling crops that they could pay their tax without having to work for one or two months on public works projects. The landlords had a number of incentives to find a cash crop, beyond the impulse to placate their peasants’ increasingly painful plight. Time spent by peasants on projects for the British government was money lost by the chief who owned the land on which the peasant worked and paid rentier tribute. By seeking a cash crop, Mukasa was not only providing peasants an incentive to work and stay in Bulemezi *saza*, but he was making sure the *muruka* and *gombolola* chiefs underneath him would realize additional economic gain by having peasants work for one or two more months than they would otherwise.

K. Borup, an employee with the Uganda Company, agreed to provide Mukasa with high quality cotton seeds in exchange for a share of the profits that came from selling it. Mukasa agreed to pledge twenty square miles of his own mailo as collateral to ease Borup’s concerns that Mukasa might not be able to convince a large number of

---

<sup>32</sup> Nayenga (1981), 185

<sup>33</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, 11 September, 1905, p.57 & Ingham (158), 110

<sup>34</sup> Ingham (158), 108-109 for the BCGA and Lancashire Mills

<sup>35</sup> Nayenga (1981), 176

peasants to grow cotton.<sup>36</sup> Mukasa then took the seeds and distributed them throughout Bulemezi.<sup>37</sup> The first couple years of cotton-growing were distinguished by the fact that cotton was treated as a communal project by the local chief, who would beat a drum to call *bakopi* to work planting cotton on large vacant fields set aside for this purpose.<sup>38</sup> Within three years this was no longer the norm, and *bakopi* found it easier to plant individual cotton plots beside their own family food crops. Cotton spread throughout Buganda when Mukasa encouraged it through his position in the Lukiiko, and after the first two to three growing seasons, nine tons of raw (un-ginned) cotton were exported. Cotton spread like wildfire throughout Buganda, and climbed to “716 tons in 1907-8, continued to increase and reached 726 tons in 1908-9, 1,159 tons in 1909-10 and in 1910-11 fell only just short of 2,500 tons.”<sup>39</sup>

Outside of Buganda, cotton also boomed in areas controlled by Ganda sub-imperialists. Jemusi Miti and Semei Kakungulu both pushed cotton in Bunyoro and the eastern provinces respectively. By 1911, Karamoja district in the far northeast of the Protectorate was the only district that did not grow at least some cotton. Financial benefit came to the chiefs who owned land by way of charging *nvujo*, or rentier-tribute, from the peasants who worked their land. This was substantial, reaching as high as one-third of an entire harvest in some cases. The average lower-level chief grew wealthy, while the average *mukopi* realized modest but real gain. Baganda could finally meet their tax obligations on their own accord, without joining the dreaded public labor gangs. The Regents and *saza* chiefs, many of whom owned between twenty and forty-five square miles of land, entered a new stratosphere of material wealth. Thus, cotton served to reify the new emerging social order of a landed aristocracy, while simultaneously contributing

---

<sup>36</sup> K. Borup, for whom I cannot find a first name, appears in the Lukiiko records as an imperious and sometimes obnoxious Englishman, connected with the CMS, who participated in a number of different ventures while staying in Uganda.

<sup>37</sup> Nyenga (1981), 176 & Mamdani (1976), 45. Mamdani neglects Sam Mukasa's role entirely, mentioning only K. Borup.

<sup>38</sup> Hanson (2003), , 169

<sup>39</sup> Ingham (1958), 110

to a moderate improvement in the life of the peasant and allowing Britain to finally balance its check-book in 1914.<sup>40</sup>

The role played by *bakopi* in cotton cultivation has also been severely underrepresented. Chiefs knew they wanted their peasants growing cotton, but did not know the right techniques for them to do so. The BCGA's "scientific" suggestions such as strictly segregating cotton and bananas or growing cotton in straight lines robbed the cotton of helpful shade from banana leaves and made fields more susceptible to wind erosion. Wiser peasant farmers discarded such advice despite pressure from chiefs to follow it when they began to recognize their own opportunities in cotton, and they continued to innovate on a small scale improving cotton production throughout the protectorate over many years.<sup>41</sup>

Historian Peter Nyenga has pointed out that the British government and Lancashire-based British commercial interests that formed the BCGA benefited in three distinct ways from the growth of the cotton farming in Uganda, even if the original initiative was taken by Baganda. First, the wealth created by the export of cotton meant that Baganda were able to meet their tax obligations and therefore weaned the protectorate government off the imperial treasury. Second, by turning Uganda into a cash-economy, the British opened a new market for manufactured goods that British businesses could sell to. Third, and most importantly to the BCGA, Uganda offered a stable, imperial source of cotton, which could be shielded to some extent from market fluctuations, and reduced the Lancashire mills' dependency on a somewhat erratic supply from the United States and Egypt.<sup>42</sup>

Cotton therefore found support in the Lukiiko, the protectorate government, and the newly-interested British textile industry. Its only detractors were the aspiring white planter/settlers and their supporters who found that in the half-decade following cotton's introduction, the price of land had spiked by seven hundred percent and it was

---

<sup>40</sup> Gardner Thompson, *Governing Uganda: British Colonial Rule and its Legacy* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2003), 42.

<sup>41</sup> Nyenga (1981), 185

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 175

increasingly difficult to find Baganda who were willing to work on white plantations rather than grow their own cotton.<sup>43</sup> Planters were frustrated throughout these first two decades by stumbling blocks such as inconsistent Colonial Office policy, opposition from the Lukiiko, and regulations preventing Ugandan land sales to non-Africans. Finally after a worldwide economic downturn in 1920, the planters ended this period mostly bankrupt and shrinking, having never established more than a minor foothold in Uganda.<sup>44</sup> Skin color allowed European planters to play a disproportionate role in the politics and subsequent historiography of Uganda, but the key dynamic keeping Uganda from turning into a settler colony was capitalist competition – specifically competition against cotton which drove up land and labor costs.

The three-way alliance between Mengo, Entebbe, and Lancashire can be seen in the Lukiiko records from 1908, when Apolo Kagwa endorsed a plan suggested by the BCGA to pass a law banning the growth and sale of “inferior” cotton strains in favor of an American strain which was considered to be of higher quality.<sup>45</sup> Kagwa addressed concerns about the law, and reassured the Lukiiko that they should “not fear to grow your cotton” and that new, better seeds would be issued to replace those which were destroyed by the BCGA scheme, and that the new seeds would demand even higher prices.<sup>46</sup>

The cotton industry generated manual labor jobs which were often filled by immigrants. Cotton succeeded in reversing a trend of net emigration caused by colonial tax and labor burdens into one of net immigration, as Africans from the rest of the protectorate would move to work on cotton farms in Buganda.<sup>47</sup> Encouraged by the benefits reaped in Buganda, sub-imperialist agents like Jemusi Miti and Semei Kakungulu pushed cotton-growing throughout the Protectorate. Even so, immigration rates into Buganda still remained high, which could be explained in at least some cases

---

<sup>43</sup> Ingham (1958), 107

<sup>44</sup> Christopher Youe, “Peasants, Planters, and Cotton Capitalists: The Dual Economy in Colonial Uganda,” *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 12, 2 (1978) 173

<sup>45</sup> Ingham (1958), 109

<sup>46</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, 12 October, 1908, 105-107

<sup>47</sup> Doyle (2006), 135

by the attitude of economic migrants who preferred to work in Buganda rather than Busoga. Perhaps harkening back to Buganda's past regional supremacy, some migrant laborers believed it "beneath their dignity to work for Basoga in their spare time as they (did) for Baganda."<sup>48</sup> Traditional "push" factors encouraged migration as well, and many immigrants were really refugees from war-ravaged Bunyoro and the hyper-oppressive colonies of the Congo Free State and German East Africa.<sup>49</sup>

The transformation from a subsistence agriculture economy to a cash-crop economy dramatically changed the face of Buganda's society, allowing for the growth of an intermediate, or middle, class of renter-employers that complicated previously hierarchical and stratified delineations.<sup>50</sup> Buganda's society has always had meritocratic elements, and in theory nothing prevented an exceptionally talented *Muganda* of any class from climbing the ladder of royal appointments.<sup>51</sup> The change brought by cotton was not philosophical, then, but one of scale and opportunities.

Before cotton it was possible but rare to gain distinction and favor in the eyes of a political leader, and then be promoted based on merit and rewarded with land and wealth. After the rapid growth of cotton between 1907 and 1912, it was within reach for an enterprising *mukopi* to grow enough cotton on rented land to afford to hire other *bakopi* or foreign workers, and eventually to grow enough to buy his own small plot of freehold land. Cotton also created opportunities for *bakopi* to earn money as middlemen, buying up cotton on a number of small *shambas* and then transporting it to a big ginnery, or ginning cotton by hand. These interactions would also slowly give rise by 1920 to a new middle class founded on Baganda who did not own significant freehold land, but rented enough and produced enough cotton to employ a small number of immigrants or other *bakopi*. By 1930, most Baganda cotton farmers considered it their proper station to

---

<sup>48</sup> Youe (1978), 173

<sup>49</sup> For "hyper oppressive" see: Adam Hoschild, *King Leopold's Ghost* (New York: Mariner Books, 1998) & John Iliffe, "The Organization of the Maji Maji Rebellion," *Journal of African History*, 8, 3 (1967) 495-512. For immigration patterns, see Mukerjee (1985), 202.

<sup>50</sup> Mamdani (1976), 172. Mamdani labels this the "kulak" class.

<sup>51</sup> Twaddle (1993), 1-66. Semei Kakungulu, for example, was only the son of minor courtier in the outlying petty kingdom of Koki which was later conquered and annexed by Mutesa, yet through martial skill and diplomatic cunning he rose to a leading position in Mwanga's court even before the first revolution of 1888.



manage other workers, and the physical labor of growing one's own cotton became in some corners of Buganda an embarrassing occupation thought better left to Banyoro, Basoga, or other foreigners whenever possible.<sup>52</sup> As will be seen later in this chapter, lower class encroachment on the land-owning elite through land purchases became a cause of concern for the landed aristocracy of the Lukiiko.

Lastly, one understudied factor which may also have contributed to the growth of the cotton economy is the sleeping sickness epidemic that ravaged much of southern Uganda in the first decade of the twentieth century, and is estimated to have killed approximately 200,000 people in Buganda between 1903 and 1908.<sup>53</sup> The epidemic touched all corners of the protectorate but the epicenter was on the shore of Lake Victoria and to the west of Kampala. Life-saving measures, such as a wholesale evacuation of the coast enforced by the Lukiiko likely had two simultaneous effects. The first was to bludgeon the lacustrine water-based trade which had been a key component of Buganda's economy for over a century. The second was to increase the available labor pool in northern *sazas* like Samwiri Mukasa's Bulemezi just as the cotton trade was kicking off in there. Some historians, including Mahmood Mamdani, have pointed to the growth of cotton and decay of industries such as lacustrine trade and fishing as proof of the "mercantilist" colonial relationship built on the "subordination of the colonial economy to the metropole."<sup>54</sup> However, when one considers the role of chiefs such as Sam Mukasa in spreading cotton, and the disruption in trade and fishing inevitably caused by trypanosomiasis, the fact that the newcomer Lancashire-based cotton promoters won out over the more regionally entrenched planters in Buganda may have had less to do with colonialism than originally thought.

---

<sup>52</sup> Lucy Mair, *An African People in the Twentieth Century* (London: Routledge & Sons Ltd., 1934) 127

<sup>53</sup> Hanson (2003), 170. For regional overview of disease: Georgina H. Endfield et al. "The Gloomy Forebodings of This Dread Disease', Climate, Famine and Sleeping Sickness in East Africa," *Geographical Journal*, 175, 3 (2009) 181-195

<sup>54</sup> Mamdani (1976), 44-48

## **Institutional Development of the Lukiiko**

The sleeping sickness epidemic was also the event which triggered what David Apter has named as one of the Lukiiko's first "important" pieces of legislation: the 1908 Sleeping Sickness Law.<sup>55</sup> This law, recommended by British physicians, mandated that all Baganda evacuate the coastal areas most stricken by sleeping sickness, that swamps be drained or filled in, and that villages inundated with the disease be burnt to the ground. The Lukiiko established temporary housing ("patient camps") and built hospitals for victims. The Lukiiko records show that enforcement of sleeping sickness regulations was a priority for the Regents, and in a letter to the *saza* chief of Buddu the Regents chastised him for delaying to ask questions rather than complying right away after he was instructed to evacuate a village, burn the homes, and keep an accurate list of those who had lost their homes so that they could be exempted from tax that year and reimbursed for their loss.<sup>56</sup>

Historian David Apter has written of 1908 as a banner year in the development of the Lukiiko, because it was the year of both the Sleeping Sickness Law and the Land Law which clarified freehold rights. Prior to this, Apter argues, the Lukiiko primarily legislated on pet projects of missionaries, such as laws outlawing abortion and the use of "indecent language." Some other minor laws were passed at the urging of British colonial officials, such as an early law regulating currency exchange rates, but there was no significant legislation originating in the Lukiiko or with sweeping impact until 1908. Through the Lukiiko Archives we are able to gain a glimpse of the legislative "process" three years earlier, in 1905, and it confirms Apter's assessment of the Lukiiko as a weak legislature during the earlier period.

This weakness can be illustrated by looking at one case from 1905 regarding dairy farmers. The Lukiiko secretary noted that on July 24<sup>th</sup> of that year that "Mr. S. Tomkins (Buganda District Commissioner) has written to the Lukiiko a letter ordering

---

<sup>55</sup> Apter (1961), 136

<sup>56</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, Letter to Alikisi Pokino, July 29, 1907.

them to enact a law that will prevent Bahima milkmen from adding water to the milk.” In a letter to Tomkins dated the same day, the Lukiiko responded that they would immediately comply. “Legislation” in this period was conceived in Entebbe and passed in Mengo as a mere gesture towards the ideal of indirect rule. Yet even in their early acquiescent letter one can detect the stirrings of an independent attitude, which would become much stronger in the next decade. While agreeing to pass the law as requested, the Lukiiko insisted in their letter that the new law was really their idea, too:

As regards a law to prevent Bahima milkmen from mixing water with milk we shall enact it quickly *so that we can prevent them* from adding water to milk. Because what they do is very insolent which *we also regret very much*. *We do not like it*. It is foolish. (italics added)<sup>57</sup>

But the Lukiiko was more than a native legislature, and its significance in these early years goes beyond stirrings of independence found in archived letters. Apter’s dismissal of the Lukiiko as a legislature before 1908, while fundamentally cogent, neglects earlier developments that were related either to the Lukiiko’s judicial function, or to its role as a zone free of Europeans where chiefs could regularly meet. The Lukiiko played a special role for Kagwa, Mugwanya, and Kizito, as a space where they could dispense justice and settle disputes, thereby solidifying their claim to the child Kabaka’s authority as his regents. Before the Lukiiko was “important” as a legislature, it was important as a nerve center of communication for the leading chiefs in Buganda, and it was a place where the Regents could exercise influence through judicial decisions, especially Mugwanya in his role as Chief Justice. The Lukiiko archives provide insight into this earlier time period in the Lukiiko’s development.

The day to day operation of the Lukiiko allowed the Regents to have their thumb on the pulse of Ganda politics at all times. By being involved in every issue every day, and insisting that matters be formally routed through the Lukiiko even before they exerted serious legislative influence, the Regents were able to position themselves front and

---

<sup>57</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, Letter to Tomkins, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2005, pg. 51

center in every development, small or large. It is for this reason that Kagwa was very reluctant when he was invited to leave Buganda for England in 1904 to attend Edward VII's coronation. He was nervous that during his absence the Lukiiko would either fall into disuse or irrelevancy, or that his position would be usurped by Stanislaus Mugwanya.<sup>58</sup> A promise of knighthood and a more intimate knowledge of his colonizers were too beneficial to ignore, however, and his decision to make the trip proved wise in the end. Mugwanya and Kizito kept the Lukiiko together and effective during Kagwa's absence but did not attempt a *putsch* at his expense like Kagwa had feared. If the test of a new political system's inherent strength is that it can survive the extended absence of its founder, then with Kagwa's trip to England the Lukiiko System passed the test, while the personal stature of its leading man, now styled KCMG, was enhanced once more.

Apolo Kagwa's consolidation of power and the simultaneous development of the Lukiiko as an institution through these first two decades can be traced through the Lukiiko archives. Through these records a continuous trend can be discerned towards centralization of Buganda's governance, along with growing independence of action for the Lukiiko with respect to the British colonial government. Under the routine guiding hand of the Regents, an independent legislature would slowly emerge. In the early years, though, the Lukiiko does not seem to have commanded very much respect from British authorities. Buganda's early District Commissioner, the overbearing Stanley Tompkins, would at times issue commands to the Lukiiko as if its members were his direct subordinates. For example, on May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1905, Tompkins ordered the Lukiiko to reprimand six *saza* chiefs who he believed to be inadequate to their job: "you must reprimand them and if they do not pull up I will dismiss them."<sup>59</sup>

Tompkins specifically targeted Joswa Kate, the *mugema*, as the worst among them. Kate had been an ally of Apollo Kagwa and friend of Mwanga since the 1888 civil war, and he had been instrumental in organizing the alliance between the two erstwhile rivals and the defeat the Muslims. For this service he was rewarded with the most

---

<sup>58</sup> Ingham (1958), 123

<sup>59</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, 29 May 1905, pg. 10

prestigious *saza* chiefship in the central *saza* of Busiro where he also held the position of *mugema*, or ritual clan “father” of the Kabaka. From this prominent place straddling the *bakungu* and *bataka* realms of authority, Kate had a unique ability to speak with an independent voice. He was, for instance, the only *saza* chief to refuse to sign the Uganda Agreement out of principle, and he was unafraid of standing up to British authorities, or arguing with his long-time colleagues in the Lukiiko. Eventually he would found the primary opposition movement against Apolo Kagwa around 1920. He is widely credited with promoting economic growth and peasant welfare in Busiro, so it is unlikely that his offense was really the “laziness” of which Tomkins accused him and the others, rather than insubordination or non-conformity.<sup>60</sup> It is impossible to tell whether the Lukiiko delivered any formal reprimand or not, as the record only says “He (Tomkins) told us to reprimand all those chiefs. He afterwards reprimanded them himself.”<sup>61</sup>

Between 1905 and 1908, the Lukiiko records evince a predilection among its members to get caught up in small issues, while pushing more important questions to the British for answers. Half a page of the 12 June, 1905 record is taken up with a dispute about who the proper owner of a particular cow is. On the same date, the Lukiiko faced a seemingly minor question about whether a man owed gun tax on two guns which he had owned but were stolen from him, and they decided it went beyond their authority or ability to resolve, and sent the matter to the district commissioner. In 1908, the unfortunate event of a hippopotamus killing a drunken man is addressed with lengthy detail in the official record, while the decision about what to do with the animal was sent to the district sub-commissioner who suggested it be killed.<sup>62</sup>

The Lukiiko’s reluctance to make these decisions without colonial consent must not be misunderstood as puppetry or incompetence, however. On the most important

---

<sup>60</sup> Hanson (2003), 187. Holly Hanson credits Kate with effectiveness as a chief.

<sup>61</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, 29 May 1905, pg. 10

<sup>62</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, 12 October, 1908 p. 101. “On this day we were informed of Akula Sematimba Namwama’s death. He was killed by a hippo on 10 October at night. He was coming from Kyabakade in Kyagew, where he had been offered a calabash of beer. After drinking he started to cross River Lwajali with 7 other people. When he got into the river a hippo started to come towards them from the other side where it had been grazing. When the animal grunted the others ran, but not Nanwama because he was very drunk. The hippo made for him. It was then that he ran a little and hid in a bush. That is where the beast found him and cut him up through the chest, and he died. We then telephoned the Sub-Commission [sic] who said that the beast should be killed. We then detailed Yakobo Kago for the job.”

question - mailo allocations - the Lukiiko was actively engaged from the outset. The largest share of the Lukiiko record throughout the period 1904-1909 (after which records are lost until 1914) is allocated to mailo registrations and Lukiiko approvals for land transfers between mailo holders. This was something that Kagwa insisted on keeping tight control over. He delivered multiple speeches in the Lukiiko and wrote letters throughout this period warning *saza* chiefs against attempts by colonial officials to acquire high quality land left over after the survey of a mailo allocation was completed. Kagwa instructed the chiefs on how to swap shortages and overages amongst themselves to prevent land from being registered as such with the colonial government, in which case it would become "crown land" as per the Uganda Agreement.<sup>63</sup> Kagwa severely chastised a minor chief in 1907 for not including forests in his mailo registration because "Mr. Martin (county sub-commissioner) had said so." In the text of the Agreement Bugandas "forests" are considered Crown Land belonging to the colonial government. However, Kagwa claimed that "all *small* forests belong to us (the mailo holders) according to the Agreement governing this country," and that he was "very displeased over (the minor chief's) behavior, because he had only paid attention to the European's orders without caring for what the Lukiiko said."<sup>64</sup>

When the final surveys of freehold land were completed in 1913, the "Crown Land" procured by Britain turned out not only to be two thousand square miles smaller than Johnston had originally estimated, but consisted mostly of "swampy, tse-tse fly infested, and waterless outlying areas."<sup>65</sup> The Colonial government's loss has been claimed by historians to be evidence of how Johnston was "outwitted" in the Agreement negotiations by Kagwa. This claim is true, but the Lukiiko records show that the whole story continued for more than a decade, as Kagwa continuously managed the allocation of mailo to ensure maximum benefit to the new land-owning class and to deprive Britain of claims to Buganda's arable land as much as possible. That he did so through legalistic

---

<sup>63</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, Letter from Kagwa to Buddu *saza* Chief, Feb 10<sup>th</sup>, 1908, p. 95 "re-examine our mailo for any surpluses to make up his (another chiefs) land, as this surplus would be appropriated by Europeans if he did not spot it before they came to survey."

<sup>64</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, p. 27 (date unclear, June or July 1907)

<sup>65</sup> Rowe (1964), 8.

readings of the Uganda Agreement, or “subterfuge” as one colonial observer put it, showcases the foundational importance of that document to his vision for Buganda, as argued in Chapter Two.<sup>66</sup>

Kagwa’s top priorities were always to maintain control over land and over the Lukiiko System. While he fought British encroachment on Buganda’s land rights, Kagwa and the other regents also tightened their grip on the other chiefs and worked to improve the Lukiiko’s internal functioning. In 1907, when a chief complained that Mugwanya was fining him excessively and asked whether Mugwanya was ever fined by the British, he was told to stay in his place: “We (Mugwanya and the other regents) saw this was a question which might incite others to disobey. So we told him (the complaining chief) that although we were not fined by (the colonial government) we would continue fining other chiefs, including him.”<sup>67</sup> In an effort to improve the body’s decorum, Zakary Kizito criticized the entire Lukiiko for sounding like “birds” and “chimpanzees” always shouting at each other, and as treasurer he imposed a fine for speaking out of turn or yelling in the *bulange* (the Lukiiko’s main chamber).

Fines were popular with the Regents, because they went directly into the Buganda treasury instead of the British administration under a precedent which Kagwa successfully set in mid-1905. In June of that year, Stanislus Mugwanya in his capacity as chief justice fined a minor chief the unusually high amount of one hundred rupees for refusing to give a European food. The minor chief’s defense was that he “didn’t know what kind of European he was, but he was not a *balози* (colonial official).” This incident is an instructive and important moment in the history of the Lukiiko for a number of reasons. First, the minor chief’s defense that he did not provide food because the European was of a class he did not recognize shows how Baganda understood the differences between official and civilian Europeans. They respected and obeyed certain Europeans because

---

<sup>66</sup> H. B. Thomas, “An Experiment in African Native Land Settlement,” *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 27, 107 (1927) 242. This strategy was implicitly acknowledged by H. B. Thomas in 1927, when he opined that “by the employment of various subterfuges which the Native Council appeared to be unable or unwilling to check, a Provisional Certificate of Claim, which originally purported to recognize a chief as entitled to a certain piece of land ‘by occupation and cultivation,’ became to a large extent a letter of credit for land negotiable where and when desired.”

<sup>67</sup> Lukiiko Archives, June, 1907 (exact date unclear) p. 82

of their rank and governmental authority, and not because of anything inherent in their European-ness. Second, it shows that Regents were concerned with putting a good face toward the Europeans, and their willingness to punish subordinate chiefs who undermined their program of “similitude.”

More important than the event itself, however, were the after-effects in the Lukiiko, when the precedent of Lukiiko control over income from fines was set and Kagwa’s personal pre-eminence publically affirmed. The incident led to the first recorded public argument between Kagwa and Mugwanya, although those who knew them thought them to be rivals and not personally very close.<sup>68</sup> The argument began when Kagwa attacked Mugwanya for two separate reasons. First, he said that the amount of one hundred rupees was too much, and that fines of that nature would set a precedent that would undermine the entire system of fines. Second, he criticized Mugwanya for giving the collected rupees to the colonial government upon their request, since the offense involved a European. Kagwa argued that all fines, no matter what they were for, were the property of the Buganda government, and that Mugwanya should not have let go of the money even though he was asked to do so by the Europeans. As a rule, Kagwa was not opposed to such gestures of obedience and respect to gain the approval of Europeans, but only if the gestures were empty, and certainly not if they cost the Lukiiko one hundred rupees.

This incident also reveals Kagwa’s uniquely powerful position with relation to both his colleagues and the British. When Kagwa instructed Mugwanya to get the money back, Mugwanya replied that it was “unfair of the *katikiro* to compare what he could do to what they (Mugwanya and Kizito) could do.” Even among co-Regents, it was understood that Kagwa, knighted by King Edward VII into a higher order than most colonial administrators, held a special position of authority with regard to both the colonial and

---

<sup>68</sup> Michael Wright, *Buganda in the Heroic Age* (Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1971) 111-115. Amateur historian and colonial officer Michael Wright conducted oral interviews with a number of older Baganda who had first-hand memory of the Kabula Generation. He compiled their accounts into his book *Buganda in the Heroic Age* which contains some of the most engaging information available in print on the personalities of Kagwa, Mugwanya, and the others. Personal conflicts among the Kabula Generation are described in his section, “Strains within the Christian Leadership,” from this book. A complete list of his informants with brief descriptions of their experiences is located in the back of the book.



native governments. Kagwa ended the conversation by stating that he would go himself to the district commissioner and demand the money back.

Tensions between Mugwanya and Kagwa continued throughout their entire political careers. A popular Ganda song even referenced a famous wrestling match that broke out between the two men when Mugwanya called his court to recess to jump down and attack Kagwa out of anger, apparently regarding papers Kagwa removed from Mugwanya's table while he was using them.<sup>69</sup> Such personal rivalries ultimately took a back seat to class interests though, and unity of purpose amongst the chiefs was one of the foundations of a strong Lukiiko System. Infighting, rivalry and jealousy over Kagwa's pre-eminence never rose to a fatal level among the three Regents, or stunted the growth of the Lukiiko as an institution. Personal conflicts were subordinated another time when Kisingri convinced the other chiefs to hire Kagwa's son, newly returned from an education in England, as senior clerk and translator for the Lukiiko.<sup>70</sup>

When the archives pick up again in 1914 after going silent in 1909, the maturation of the Lukiiko during the intervening years is noticeable. Relatively haphazard entries which documented public events, criminal cases, land transactions, legislation, and political correspondence in no particular order were replaced in those five years by detailed and organized minutes. In terms of content as well, there was marked expansion of governmental reach into realms that had been the province of British authorities a decade earlier. Minutes from April, 1914 show the Lukiko tackling issues as wide-ranging as welfare for lepers (they were provided food and a small house at least fifty yards from the nearest neighbor), restricting mailo sales to non-Baganda, and taking

---

<sup>69</sup> John Rowe & Michael Tuck, "Phoenix from the Ashes: Rediscovery of the Lost Lukiiko Archives," *History in Africa*, 32 (2005), 413.

<sup>70</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, January 15<sup>th</sup>, 1909, p. 107. Kagwa made a show of recusing himself from this decision and claiming that it was entirely his son's wish: "You should not think that I had prior discussions with the Europeans that my son should work for the Lukiiko. But I only heard him express that wish. Because all the time he was studying in England his aim was to work in the office at Entebe [sic]."

steps to reduce foreign workers who were “not desirable” because of their “morals/manners.”<sup>71</sup>

If the Lukiiko functioned as an advocate for Buganda’s interests in opposition to “foreign” and British interests, it also stood as a bulwark preserving the new landed aristocracy against other elements of Ganda society, such as traditionalist *bataka* chiefs and the *bakopi* peasantry. Worried Lukiiko members expressed concern that their ranks were inflating, as more entrepreneurs began to own land. Although they decided against a blanket law to “abolish the increasing number of landlords, who increase through land purchase,” measures were taken such as reducing taxes on land inheritance (vs. purchase outside of aristocratic family circles), requiring explicit Lukiiko consent for any land purchase, and making it illegal for chiefs to divest themselves of all their own mailo. Combined with anti-immigration measures shown above, 1914 appears to have been a year in which the Lukiiko leadership tried to button up the status quo and reduce mobility between districts in the protectorate and between classes in Buganda. Although speculative, one can imagine that the impending coronation of Kabaka Daudi Chwa in August of 1914 may have played a role in convincing the three regents to consolidate as much as possible before losing their dual royal-ministerial authority upon Daudi’s coming-of-age.

Kagwa remained committed to improving his control of Buganda’s government in this period as well. The Regents pushed for a number of reforms to the Lukiiko System itself throughout the kingdom in 1914. These included laws providing for succession rules whenever chiefships were vacated, the construction of government headquarters buildings for each *gombolola*, creating a map of each *saza* for display in relevant government offices, and standardizing tax collection paperwork and deadlines. The Regents also increased administrative requirements on the *saza* and *gombolola* offices,

---

<sup>71</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, April 1914 Minutes, p. 112-114, The Lukiiko voted to increase the number of Baganda labor recruitments in order to reduce immigrants: “At this time it is not desirable to introduce foreigners to our country. We are very much anxious about them because of their morals/manners.”

requiring transparent financial records, publishing ready-made legal forms to fit various cases, and standardizing oaths taken before testimony was provided at criminal trials.

While it would be naïve to ignore the British contribution to some of these new regulations, the reforms were ultimately motivated by the Lukiiko itself and approved by Kagwa. The Lukiiko was not afraid to disagree with British suggestions when necessary. An excellent example is a proposed cattle tax which the Lukiiko rejected in April, 1914. When compared to the Lukiiko's obsequious response to the British suggestions for a law regulating the purity of milk in 1905, the Lukiiko's rejection of the cattle tax through a cogent argument stands in stark contrast and is worth quoting in full:

Of cattle tax: After discussion it has been found too difficult to impose a cattle tax. Because cattle are both food and raiment to Baganda. There are many chiefs who do no paid administrative jobs but who (are) helped by being in possession of cattle... also if a cattle tax was imposed it would look as if they had been taken away from the people. Some people will kill their cattle, others will sell theirs without good reasons. The country will be plunged into poverty and lack of meat. A letter has been written (to the British Administration) about this matter.<sup>72</sup>

One of the last institutional developments noticeable in the Lukiiko archives before they go silent again in 1919 is the extension of Lukiiko jurisdiction over matters which were originally in the realm of the *bataka*. By 1915, there is a whole subset of cases labeled "Heritage" that would not have been the domain of the Lukiiko in earlier times, but were heard with increasing frequency in the years 1915-1919. Baganda appealed to the Lukiiko, in its role as arbiter of mailo, to resolve disputes regarding inheritance of land. Over time, this led to disputes about clan inheritance and clan membership tied to land. By November, 1916 Mugwanya judged a dispute where land was not even at issue between members of the Mpologoma and Ngeye clans where he gathered all the parties together to name who their grandparents were and how they were related in order to decide who belonged to which totemic clan – a seemingly *bataka* function.<sup>73</sup>

---

<sup>72</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, April Minutes, 112-115

<sup>73</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, 4 November, 1916, p. 215.

Such usurpation of the old authorities of the *bataka* chiefs along with *bataka* chiefs' continuing marginalization stemming from having been left out of the original mailo grants fueled a growing resentment among the traditionalist *bataka* against the imperious Kagwa and his new Lukiiko System. As *mugema*, Joswa Kate uniquely straddled important positions in both the Lukiiko and *bataka* power structures, and Kagwa's old ally slowly emerged as an organizer of this resentment. It was manifested in different ways, first with Kate founding a breakaway religious sect of an anti-colonialist flavor that rejected many of the rites of both the Church of Uganda and Catholicism (closely associated with Kagwa and Mugwanya), and rejected Western medicine as well. His sect grew in number, and attracted numerous disaffected *bataka* as well as many *bakopi* in northern Busiro. Notably Semei Kakungulu, who had been gradually marginalized by the British throughout the 1910s, joined Kate's group, although he soon left to found his own religious sect based on Judaic teachings and went lived in retirement in Eastern Uganda until his death in 1928.<sup>74</sup> In 1916, a Lukiiko member was dispatched to investigate claims that Joswa Kate had been refusing to vaccinate cattle against an unspecified disease because of his new religious beliefs.<sup>75</sup> Confrontation between the Lukiiko and the *bataka*, represented by Kagwa and Kate respectively, would lay the groundwork for the erosion of Kagwa's political position in the 1920s discussed in Chapter Four.

---

<sup>74</sup> Twaddle (1993), 286

<sup>75</sup> *Lukiiko Archives*, 4 November, 1916, p. 215

#### *Chapter Four – The Edifice Crumbles, 1919-1927*

This short chapter serves two purposes for the larger thesis paper. First, it highlights some of the key events and trends that marked the end of the Kabula Generation Era. Second, it provides the narrative history necessary to bring the story of a tumultuous and dramatic four decades to a satisfactory conclusion. During the period it covers, 1919 to 1927, the prominence and independence of the Lukiiko was diminished by numerous factors, while at the same time Apolo Kagwa lost his political footing and he was forced to resign as *katikiro* in 1926. Kagwa's fall from power coincided with the growth of a new age in Ganda political life that was based on different fundamental principles than those which held sway in the previous three decades. Together these developments marked the end of the Kabula Generation Era.

This chapter begins by examining the growing dissonance between those defining "Kabula Principles" and the changing political landscape of 1920s Buganda. During this decade the status quo of politics under Kagwa's government became

increasingly unacceptable to emerging sectors of Ganda society. Objections to an economic system which favored the landed elite were raised by a rising middle class of *bakopi* farmers who rented freehold land from chiefs but also employed a workforce of their own on sizeable cotton farms. The first generation of literate young adults, who came of age after being educated at mission schools, criticized the Lukiiko chiefs as backwards and corrupt, and of standing in the way of social and economic progress. Old rivalries also reared their head. The *bataka* clan chiefs and the Kabaka himself, whose positions had both been weakened by Kagwa's nineteenth-century political maneuvers and the Lukiiko System, organized together and reinvigorated their opposition to *bakungu* rule. Lastly, this chapter also demonstrates how a new crop of British colonial professionals viewed Kagwa and the Lukiiko as obstacles to efficient and just government, and they sought to exercise greater control over Buganda's internal affairs by downgrading Kagwa's place within Buganda's administration.

The scope of this study is the period during which the Kabula Generation wielded power and defined an era, as well as the means by which they acquired and maintained that power while they had it. This short chapter, therefore, does not pretend to offer a comprehensive analysis of the historical forces that ushered in a new period for Buganda, nor does it attempt to explain the social, economic, or political legacy of the Kabula Generation to late colonial Uganda. The goal of this chapter is instead to strengthen the overall argument that the Kabula Generation Era truly was indeed a distinct and well-defined moment in Buganda, by showing how it ended and the great contrast between the political era of the Kabula Generation and that which succeeded it.

### **New Principles of Ganda Politics**

The governing principles that defined politics in Buganda during the Kabula Generation Era included robust political autonomy of ruling oligarchs within the imperial system, wealth held in the form of landed estates controlled by a relative few, a

weakened position for the Kabaka and the lineage-based *bataka* clan chiefs, and the regional supremacy of Buganda vis-à-vis her neighbors. During the 1920s different layers of Ganda society drifted from these principles for different reasons. After more than three decades of Kagwa and the *bakungu* chiefs founding, building and reinforcing a government based on these principles, they began to give way to new notions that emanated from an emergent middle class, a literate and politically active youth, and a new crop of British colonial administrators. In addition to new ideas, Kagwa's government was challenged with old conceptions of power advocated by the Kabaka and *bataka* clan chiefs who organized in the 1920s to agitate for a return to ancestral land rights and a restoration of the Kabaka's and *bataka* role in Ganda politics. Moreover, the edifice of *bakungu* power he had constructed began to erode internally, marked in 1920 by the resignation of Stanislus Mugwanya and Zakary Kizito as Chief Justice and Treasurer (although they kept other chiefly titles and remained as Lukiiko members).<sup>1</sup> By 1926 Buganda in many ways had already moved on while Kagwa had stayed put. His thirty-seven year tenure as *katikiro* finally ended not with a great defeat but with an unedifying argument with a mid-level colonial officer and a dispute with the Kabaka, who compelled his resignation in 1926.

The first of these principles, robust political autonomy in the hands of Kagwa's government, was assaulted from many sides in the 1920s. Looking in more detail at these assaults will provide insight into the decline of the other Kubala Generation principles throughout the same time period. Numerous sectors of Ganda society undermined the autonomy of their aristocratic native government by appealing directly to the colonial administration to seek redress against the Lukiiko's self-interested policies. Such grievances were widely varied, and couched in both progressive and reactionary language. Complaints against the Lukiiko emanated from all corners including the Kabaka, the *bataka* clan chiefs, the growing farmer middle class, and literate upper class

---

<sup>1</sup> Holly Hanson, *Landed Obligation: The Practice of Power in Buganda* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 2003), 209. Mugwanya resigned over a dispute about British attempts to alter the structure of the Lukiiko. D. A. Low & R. C. Pratt, *Buganda and British Overrule* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1960), 224-228. Kizito resigned as treasurer under a cloud of suspicion regarding the possible misuse of Lukiiko funds.

youth, but they all named the *katikiro* Apolo Kagwa as their chief antagonist.<sup>2</sup> In addition, an increasingly domineering British administration sought to reclaim government powers that it had haphazardly ceded to the native administration over the previous twenty years. Whether motivated by imperial hubris, careerism, technocratic schemes to improve colonial governance, or humanitarian impulses towards Buganda's lower classes, the new generation of well-schooled colonial officers saw the aging Lukiiko chiefs as obstacles rather than as allies.<sup>3</sup>

### **Apolo Kagwa Loses Ganda Support**

Apolo Kagwa's downfall was ushered in when he became unable to leverage his broad base of support among the *bakungu* chiefs to stake a legitimate claim to be the political representative of the people of Buganda. Early in his career, Kagwa had subdued all realistic contenders for this title through the oligarchical revolution before negotiating the Uganda Agreement. After the Agreement's implementation, the position of the top chiefs as at once the wealthiest landowners, the leaders of the Lukiiko and the legal representatives of the child Kabaka pre-empted any question as to their authority to speak for the Baganda and rule on their behalf. By the 1920s, however, Kagwa's *bakungu* base of support was eroding at the same time that old and new rivals for power among the Baganda began to assert themselves and question the *bakungu* chiefs' right to rule.

The erosion of Kagwa's *bakungu* power base, the re-emergence of the *bataka* clan chiefs and Kabaka as serious rivals, and the appearance of new domestic challenges to his authority from middle-class farmers and active educated youth were intertwined phenomena and they were mutually reinforcing. For example, the growing

---

<sup>2</sup> Michael Twaddle, "Bakungu Chiefs of Buganda under British Rule," *Journal of African History*, 10, 2 (1969), 315. Twaddle quotes a "knowledgeable observe" in 1922: "The plain fact is that, at present, Buganda politics have become centered on one point and that is the Katikiro. In every single one of the quarrels and episodes that have recently attracted attention the real foundation has been either the attack on the Katikiro or a counter stroke prepared by the Katikiro or his friends."

<sup>3</sup> Frederick Lugard, "Native Policy in East Africa," *Foreign Affairs*, 9, 1 (1930), 65-78. Lugard discusses many aspects of colonial theory which were popular among the western foreign policy elite at the time.



opposition to his rule from former *bakungu* chiefs Joswa Kate and Jemusi Miti was bolstered by their alliance with a group called the Federation of the Bataka which had been formed in 1920 to protest the status of ancestral clan lands, or *butaka*.<sup>4</sup> The Kabaka, in turn, was encouraged by the *bataka* chiefs to more forcefully assert his authority as *sabataka* (father of the clans) in their defense at the same time that middle-class farmers were appealing to him and the colonial government as their political sovereign in an effort to stop the Lukiiko landowners from imposing oppressively large rents.<sup>5</sup> A newly educated and socially conscious Baganda youth supported the rights of disenfranchised middle- and lower-class farmers, were inspired by the struggle of the *bataka*, and saw the old chiefs as anachronistic obstacles to economic progress and good governance in Buganda.<sup>6</sup> All of these parties were willing to sacrifice the political autonomy of the Lukiiko in order to acquire British colonial support for their particular efforts.

The two most important issues over which these disparate groups attacked Kagwa's regime were the status of *butaka* lands and the high costs of rents in the form of *busulu* and *nvujo* tributes imposed by Lukiiko law. It is notable that on both issues Kagwa won tactical political victories in the moment. These victories proved to be pyrrhic in nature, however, because after alienating so many important components of Ganda society Kagwa was unable to survive an ouster organized by a colonial official in 1926. On the issue of land rents, Kagwa's victory was also only temporary, because within a year of his resignation a much-cowed Lukiiko passed a law known popularly as the "Peasants' Charter" that dramatically reduced rents and undermined the aristocracy's

---

<sup>4</sup> Hanson (2003), 209 & Kenneth Ingham, *The Making of Modern Uganda* (George Allen & Unwin Ltd, 1958), 146.

<sup>5</sup> Hanson (2003), for petition on *butaka* issue, Ingham (1958), 155 for farmers, David Apter, *The Political Kingdom in Uganda: A Study in Bureaucratic Nationalism* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961), 107 for *sabataka*.

<sup>6</sup> Carol Summers, "Young Buganda and Old Boys: Youth, Generational Transition, and Ideas of Leadership in Buganda, 1920-1949," *Africa Today*, 51, 3 (2005), 110-113

economic supremacy.<sup>7</sup> Thus, after winning a series of battles, Kagwa eventually lost the war.

The roots of the *butaka* controversy can be found in the Uganda Agreement of 1900. As seen in Chapter One, after effectively sidelining *bataka* clan chiefs in his climb to power during the 1890s, Kagwa allocated a sizeable portion of *butaka* lands as mailo freehold to win needed support. These lands had ritual significance to the *bataka* chiefs because they contained ancestral burial sites, marked special moments in clan history, or contained other immaterial meaning.<sup>8</sup> While many burial sites themselves were left intact, Kagwa had authorized much of the land surrounding gravesites to be allocated as mailo, thereby depriving *bataka* chiefs and their followers of their traditional means of subsistence, and robbing the *bataka* of the political power that came with control over such estates.<sup>9</sup> After two decades in the political wilderness, the *bataka* clan chiefs organized under the banner of the Federation of the Bataka, led by Joswa Kate and Jemusi Miti.<sup>10</sup> Kate had become Kagwa's chief nemesis after a falling out that occurred when the two men had such a disagreement about the balance of Kiganda and Christian symbolism appropriate for Daudi Chwa's coronation that two separate ceremonies had to be performed.<sup>11</sup> He welcomed the opportunity to harness the moral authority of the *bataka* chiefs as much as they appreciated his stature and experience with the new politics of Buganda. They surely also appreciated his influence over some 91,000 Baganda who were members of the breakaway anti-medicine religious sect Kate had founded.<sup>12</sup> Miti, who had nursed a long-running feud with Stanislaus Mugwanya over certain *butaka* land claims for his own clan, joined soon after.<sup>13</sup>

---

<sup>7</sup> H. B. Thomas, "An Experiment in African Native Land Settlement," *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 27, 107 (1938), 247. "Peasants Charter" is a contemporary phrase used by H. B. Thomas to denote the Busulu and Nvujo Law of 1927.

<sup>8</sup> Neil Kodesh, *Beyond the Royal Gaze: Clanship and Public Healing in Buganda* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2010), 13-14

<sup>9</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 127

<sup>10</sup> Hanson (2003), 209

<sup>11</sup> Apter (1961), 140-141

<sup>12</sup> Hanson (2003), 207

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, 205. Miti's clans' lands had been re-assigned to another clan member by Mugwanya in the 1890s. After fighting to regain this land for years while working Bunyoro, Miti finally lost his claim permanently because of a paperwork discrepancy, even though both Kabaka Mwgana and Apolo Kagwa had agreed with him in the

Kate and Miti composed letters on behalf of the majority of *bataka* chiefs to both Kabaka Daudi and the protectorate government requesting that they hear the case. Daudi, by then twenty-four years old and eager to assert his royal authority against his stifling prime minister, agreed to their request.<sup>14</sup> A trial was held in the Lukiiko's main chamber, presided over by Daudi, in which Kate and Miti brought charges against Kagwa for misappropriating land and violating the rights of the *bataka* in favor of *bakungu* and *batongole* chiefs. The Kabaka sided with the *bataka*, and ordered Kagwa to provide them with lands or appropriate compensation. After months of deliberation, Kagwa refused and explained his decision to the protectorate governor by saying that complying with the order would call the whole freehold system into question. The Lukiiko ultimately passed a law giving *bataka* inheritors first right of purchase to any respective clan lands that came up for sale, but refused to offer even compensation for past allocations. The Kabaka appealed to the British when Kagwa ignored his order, who in turn established a "Commission of Inquiry" to investigate their claims.<sup>15</sup> After a long and fascinating series of investigations and public hearings which are detailed and analyzed by Holly Hanson, the colonial government decided that although there had been corruption, misrepresentation and unfair practices during the original period of mailo allocation, it had no choice but to uphold Kagwa's decision because it would be too disruptive to the economy undo the twenty-year old mailo allocations.<sup>16</sup>

Although he technically won the dispute, Kagwa's stature as a politician was undoubtedly damaged among the Baganda and the British by a long and sustained public attack launched by such eminent chiefs as Kate and Miti. Public criticism in the 1920s was not limited the Federation of the Bataka however. Young literate Baganda were inspired by the *bataka* controversy to start publishing newspapers in Luganda. The first such newspaper, called Sekanyolya, was printed outside of Kagwa's reach by the Ganda

---

past. Mugwanya's intransigence over the issue soured Miti on the regents personally and the new bureaucratic system over all.

<sup>14</sup> Michael Twaddle, "The Bakungu Chiefs of Buganda Under British Colonial Rule," *Journal of African History*, 10, 2 (1969), 315 for "stifling."

<sup>15</sup> Hanson (2003), 210

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, 217-226 for treatment of the Commission of Inquiry.

expatriate community living in Nairobi. Kagwa responded by founding his own newspaper to defend himself, but it collapsed within a year because of low circulation and editorial disputes.<sup>17</sup> Sekanyolya and similar newspapers embraced the plight of the *bataka*, but later moved onto other topics such as criticism of the Lukiiko as an institution.<sup>18</sup> The popular Luganda press accused Kizito's replacement as treasurer, for instance, of misappropriating government funds and general incompetence. Kagwa and the treasurer sued in a British court for libel and won on the particulars, but not before the Kabaka in collaboration with the colonial administration launched an investigation into the Lukiiko's financial transactions, which predictably turned up numerous misdeeds over the years that the Lukiiko had operated without any oversight.<sup>19</sup>

But the most burning issue of all, which galvanized the Luganda press, farmers, missionaries, and the colonial government, was the gouging land rents that were routinely increased by the Lukiiko to benefit a relatively small number of wealthy landowners. The combined cost of *busulu* and *nvujo* "tributes" increased to as much as 35% of a farmer's annual crop by the early 1920s.<sup>20</sup> Worse yet, the Lukiiko had passed a law in 1918 banning *bakopi* from moving outside of their gomobolola, thereby undermining a key centuries-old Ganda protection against abusive practices and further empowering land-owning chiefs.<sup>21</sup> The Lukiiko also passed laws exempting land owners from a new form of colonial public labor called *kasunuvu*.<sup>22</sup>

As the Lukiiko's class-based self-interest came into clearer resolution, more people lodged complaints against Kagwa, calling him a "tyrant," accusing him of "spoiling everything," and noting his increasing tendency to fly into rages and shout down opposition.<sup>23</sup> Even a number of *bakungu saza* chiefs, perhaps sensing a sea-change, formed an "alternate" Lukiiko council which gained the support of the Luganda press, and

---

<sup>17</sup> James Scotton, "The First African Press in East Africa: Protest and Nationalism in Buganda in the 1920s," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 6, 2 (1973) 221. Sekanyolya also maintained a virulently anti-Indian stance in response to the increasing number of Indian traders and businessmen operating in Buganda, but this is outside the scope of the present study.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 213 for *bataka* support

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 219 for "libel"

<sup>20</sup> Twaddle (1969), 314

<sup>21</sup> Hanson (2003), 186

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 190

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 220 for "spoiling everything," and 221 for "tyrannous"

complained that their voices in the real Lukiiko were never heard.<sup>24</sup> Before his own “retirement,” Samwiri Mukasa alleged that his and others *saza* chiefs’ opinions were routinely ignored by the Lukiiko’s regnant triumvirate.<sup>25</sup> On the model of the Federation of the Bataka, two other organizations were founded in opposition to Kagwa. They were the Young Baganda Association representing the youth who had been educated at missionary schools, and the Uganda Cotton Association (later renamed the Cotton Growers’ Cooperative Union) to support the interests of middle-class cotton farmers.<sup>26</sup>

The land rents issue proved disastrous for Kagwa because it naturally aligned the colonial government and the *bakopi* farmers. Aside from the humanitarian considerations popular among British theorists of empire during the 1920s, the colonial government opposed exorbitant rents because they dis-incentivized cotton production and because they took money out of the hands of potential consumers of manufactured goods.<sup>27</sup> The *bakopi*, and especially the growing population of middle class *bakopi*, were happy to have support from another entity, no matter its true motivation. Although Kagwa successfully blocked every attempt to decrease rents during his tenure, the issue destroyed what remained of his popular and official support. When the British and Kabaka decided to force him out, Kagwa had no one to turn to.<sup>28</sup>

### **Apolo Kagwa Loses British Support**

The changing British attitude towards the Lukiiko generation can be read in the career of one man: John Postlethwaite. Postlethwaite arrived in Uganda in 1911, having left a career selling insurance to join the expanding colonial service. When he first

---

<sup>24</sup> Scotton (1973), 216 for alternate Lukiiko. Hanson, 220 for

<sup>25</sup> Hanson (2003), 220

<sup>26</sup> Ingham (1958), 155 for the “Uganda Cotton Association,” & Ingham (1958), 165 for “Young Baganda Association.” Also see: Carol Summers, “Young Buganda and Old Boys: Youth, Generational Transition, and Ideas of Leadership in Buganda, 1920-1949,” *Africa Today*, 51, 3 (2005) 109-128.

<sup>27</sup> Low and Pratt (1960), 238 & Mahmood Mamdani, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda* (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976), 123-125. Pratt argues that the colonial government’s chief aim was to “promote and protect the interests of the *bakopi*,” while Mamdani has called this sentiment “colonialist apologia” and suggested the colonial government’s primary aim was economic self-interest.

<sup>28</sup> Low and Pratt (1960), 239. “Sir Apollo was not able to get effective support from either the Kabaka or his fellow ministers, who may well have been glad to see the end of such a strong Katikkiro.”

arrived, the regional dominance of Buganda, the Uganda Agreement, mailo distributions, the surge of cotton farming, and the institutional development of the Lukiiko were already events in the past. He had little interest in that past, but instead looked idealistically to the future of the protectorate. In the words of David Apter, "(Postlethwaite) was in the vanguard of those administrators who were concerned to administer, mete out justice, and establish orderly progress and efficiency. His was not the explorer and adventure-loving kind of administrator of an earlier generation, but the first of the bureaucratic-colonial generation."<sup>29</sup> Neither did he have the same personal experiences of that earlier generation to imbue in him a sense of deference for the chiefs and institutions who had been the partners of Britain since the 1890s.

For the two strongest pillars of the early Anglo-Ganda relationship – the Uganda Agreement and Apolo Kagwa himself -- Postlethwaite exhibited disdain. As a young and ambitious low level Colonial Office employee in 1911, Postlethwaite complained that "at every corner we (run) up against the Uganda Agreement and the powers of self-determination which that treaty had conferred upon the Baganda."<sup>30</sup> His energetic ideas to improve the protectorate also ran up against what he saw as the intransigence and lethargy of the self-governing Lukiiko. His frustration came to a head when he instructed Kagwa to requisition labor for a project in 1911. Normally, the request would have come from a higher colonial authority, but his two levels of superiors were either absent or ill, and he made the request on their behalf. Kagwa, unimpressed by the man with small stature and low rank, nearly ignored the instruction, and only made a belated, half-hearted attempt to requisition a fraction of the workforce Postlethwaite had demanded. Postlethwaite furiously informed Kagwa that he considered the incident a "breach of the section of the Agreement which insisted up on the loyal cooperation of the native government, and that unless the full numbers (of workers) were forthcoming within twenty-four hours, I require the Lukiiko to be suspended..."<sup>31</sup>

---

<sup>29</sup> Apter (1961), 152

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 151

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 152

A perturbed Kagwa declined to reply, but notified Postlethwaite's superiors, who reprimanded him for a "monstrous breach of etiquette" and transferred him to service elsewhere in the Protectorate.<sup>32</sup> In 1911 the governor of Uganda was Sir Frederick Jackson, an old friend of Kagwa's who had worked well with him since the heady days of the Lugard's arrival in late 1890. Kagwa's personal relationship with Jackson yielded tangible benefits throughout Jackson's 1911-1918 term as Protectorate Governor, such as when Jackson defended the Lukiiko after a group of young colonial officials complained that it was unfair for Kagwa and the other chiefs to retain the status conferred by their traditional pre-colonial chiefly titles while also wielding bureaucratic power in the Lukiiko System.<sup>33</sup>

Fifteen years later, though, Postlethwaite's and Kagwa's roles had become reversed, so that a dispute that had begun very similarly to the one in 1911 ended quite differently. The newly-arrived protectorate governor in 1925, Sir William Gowers, did not know Kagwa at all. Gowers had only been a sixteen-year-old boy in England when Jackson had first arrived in Buganda, and in 1925 he shared Postlethwaite's view that Buganda's government needed to be reformed and regularized, with more direct control taken by the British administration in order to improve governance and maintain the rights of a downtrodden *bakopi* class. He desired to conduct "indirect rule" of the protectorate through the Kabaka rather than a minister, breaking with past practices by saying that "the Katikiro should not write to the Protectorate on policy matters affecting the relations between the two governments without first ordered to do so by the Kabaka."<sup>34</sup> Gowers also opposed Buganda's supremacy in the protectorate, and to make this point he took steps soon after his appointment to end the use of Luganda as the official language of other districts such as Bunyoro, Ankole, and Toro.<sup>35</sup>

The issue that brought Postlethwaite and Kagwa to loggerheads once again in 1925 was the relatively minor question of issuing beer permits. In an effort introduced a

---

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 153

<sup>33</sup> Twaddle (1969), 320. Eventually, Jackson gave into a compromise solution when his subordinates threatened to publish their complaints in a newspaper.

<sup>34</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 249 for sentiment & 216 for quote

<sup>35</sup> Ingham (1958), 163

few years earlier to reduce public drunkenness, the Lukiiko had required beer sellers to gain permits from *gombolola* chiefs. Within the jurisdiction of the capital Mengo, Kagwa had decided to maintain this issuing power for himself. The *gombolola* chief for Mengo chafed under what he considered to be a usurpation of his local authority, and he raised the issue with Postlethwaite, who by then had been promoted to Provincial Commissioner for that district. Armed with this issue, and having secured a generalized promise of support from the governor, Postlethwaite asked Kagwa to authorize the beer permits to be issued at a lower level. The seventy-year-old Kagwa, who was becoming increasingly irascible, was predictably enraged that a *gombolola* chief would go over his head to a Provincial Commissioner, and he told Postlethwaite to ignore the request because it had come through improper channels.

Postlethwaite responded by delivering a speech to the Lukiiko in which he further provoked Kagwa. He called Buganda “small” and “relatively unimportant” country that still had much to learn about “efficiency” in government and suffered from corruption and injustice. Then he pre-emptively and publically accepted the “resignation” of Samwiri Mukasa as a *saza* chief, which had not been offered, and congratulated the famous *bakungu* chief on his “retirement.” Kagwa responded by delivering his own speech accusing Postlethwaite of overreaching and attempting to undermine the Lukiiko’s political authority. When Postlethwaite demanded an apology for this “angry tirade” and Kagwa refused, the matter was sent to the governor, William Gowers. Gowers took the side of his provincial commissioner, and in a clear break from past governors’ dismissiveness towards Ganda royalty, he laid the problem in the lap of Kabaka Daudi Chwa, warning him to bring his *katikiro* to heel. The Kabaka demanded Kagwa’s resignation, which he submitted, along with a lengthy protest letter to the Colonial Secretary Leo Amery in Whitehall. When Amery refused to overrule the governor, Kagwa



went into retirement, making sure to leave office just before the Kabaka's birthday celebrations as a gesture of insult. Kagwa died shortly thereafter in 1927.<sup>36</sup>

## **The End of an Era**

After Kagwa's resignation, the Lukiiko became a "rubber stamp parliament" in the words of Mahmood Mamdani.<sup>37</sup> Without Kagwa to protect them, the majority of Lukiiko members who had served with Kagwa for decades were also forced to resign, and they were replaced with bureaucrats educated at mission schools and loyal to the British government.<sup>38</sup> Lukiiko members were put on salary and prevented from pocketing money from fines and other sources of official revenue.<sup>39</sup> Their old economic base was undermined by the passage of the Peasants' Charter in 1927.<sup>40</sup>

Marked by both the passage of the Peasants' Charter and the death of Apolo Kagwa, 1927 is the year that ended the Kabula Generation Era. The core principles which had defined that era quickly fell out of currency in Ganda politics over the next few years. The Lukiiko, once an independent legislative assembly unrivaled in colonial Africa and the cornerstone of Kagwa's Lukiiko System in its heyday, faded into history as the council became a glorified appendage of the colonial state. Robust political autonomy for the Buganda Kingdom faded with it, as the British took more control over day-to-day governance. Most of the autonomy that did exist after 1927 first was invested not in the Lukiiko but in the Kabaka, thus undoing the work the oligarchical revolution had done in the 1890s to limit the monarchy by appropriating royal authority from Daudi's father, Kabaka Mwanga. Finally, Buganda's regional supremacy was slipping, with Luganda withdrawn as the Protectorate's official language, sub-imperialist Baganda administrators

---

<sup>36</sup> The events of the "Beer Permits Incident" are best chronicled in: Apter (1961), 153-158 & Low & Pratt (1960), 213-218. In R. C. Pratt's recounting, the Kabaka seems to have intentionally goaded Gowers into demanding a resignation by forwarding gratuitously forwarded Kagwa's letters that contained insults towards the Protectorate government.

<sup>37</sup> Mamdani (1976), 127

<sup>38</sup> Low & Pratt (1960), 219

<sup>39</sup> Mamdani (1976), 127

<sup>40</sup> Ibid. 126

in other districts giving way to chiefs of local origin, and the special place within the protectorate for Buganda, enshrined in the Uganda Agreement of 1900, growing less important by the year. Apolo Kagwa's historical legacy would continue to influence Ugandan politics until Independence in the 1960s, but the Era of the Kabula Generation – an era in Africa's colonial history truly shaped by the African elites and unmatched in all of East Africa – had come to an end.

### *Conclusion – The Kabula Generation Legacy*

This thesis argues that the political significance of African elites who held authority in Buganda during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries has generally been overlooked by previous historians, who have been focused instead either on European colonialists or on non-elite Africans. Such an argument is made on the particulars, and this thesis points to specific historical developments steered by leaders such as Apolo Kagwa to make its case. In Buganda, elite Africans helped change history by fashioning a new land tenure system, introducing a cotton economy, regularizing politics in Uganda through sub-imperialism, and building a strong indigenous multi-level parliamentary system of government. The historical legacy of Buganda's African political elite in the history of the nation of Uganda can be easily seen by looking at the after-effects of all these developments.

For example, the cotton export economy continued to boom in Uganda long after Apolo Kagwa left power. In the 1930s, Uganda became the world's fifth largest producer of cotton, and cotton exports continued during and after Independence, providing an important economic foundation for the new nation in 1962. Cotton farming started in Buganda, but as discussed in this thesis, it was deliberately spread throughout the rest of the protectorate by Ganda agents of sub-imperialism, such as Jemusi Miti and Semei Kakungulu.

The regularization of local and provincial government throughout Uganda on the model of the Lukiiko System transformed loosely knit societies into distinct political units which remained intact to varying extents even after the official structure was done away with. While *sazas*, *gombololas*, and *murukas* no longer exist in Uganda, the "revolutionary" model of president Yoweri Museveni's Local Council system, with Local Councils (or "LCs") one through five representing different levels of governance from the village to the district, is reminiscent of the old Lukiiko System.<sup>1</sup> The Great Lukiiko itself also remained as an important, if weakened, institution throughout the rest of colonial Uganda's history and into the first years of Independence. It was abolished by Milton Obote in 1966, and the *bulange* turned into a military headquarters.<sup>2</sup> However, in 1993 with the restoration of the ancient kingdoms, the Lukiiko was re-opened and it exists today as an advocate for the interests of Buganda within the Ugandan state. Its form and function have changed over time, but it still adheres to the fundamental structure that was designed by Apolo Kagwa in 1900.

Of all the Kabula Generation's individual historical legacies, the two most important are the Uganda Agreement and the freehold mailo system. The Uganda Agreement was a seminal moment in Uganda's history, and its provisions for Ganda political autonomy informed colonial politics through all of the protectorate's history. In

---

<sup>1</sup> The "Local Council" system has its direct roots in the guerrilla organization used by the Museveni's National Resistance Army during his fight against Milton Obote in the 1980s, but was transformed into a localized civil representation and authority regime after the NRM took power.

<sup>2</sup> There are many easily accessible studies of Ugandan history which cover the politics immediately after Independence. I want to draw special attention to the following monograph: Phares Mutibwa, *Uganda Since Independence: A Story of Unfulfilled Hope* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1992).

1953, that autonomy was challenged when Kabaka Daudi's son, Kabaka Mutesa II, was arrested and exiled by the colonial government after agitating in favor of Ganda independence from the rest of Uganda. The colonial government explicitly based its actions on Clause 6 of the Agreement, which required "loyalty" from the Kabaka to Great Britain. Mutesa II was returned after two years of intense protest by indignant Baganda, however, and he went on to serve as governor-general and then as the first head-of-state of Uganda after its independence in 1962, until he was deposed by Milton Obote in 1966. The special status conferred on Buganda by the Agreement also had polarizing ramifications throughout the rest of the Uganda. It served as a focal point for resentment from the rest of the country, which united around the ethnically Lango Milton Obote instead of a Ganda choice for president after securing independence. Since 1966, Uganda has never had a head of state come from Buganda, even though it is the largest and wealthiest province in the nation.

Freehold land tenure upended Buganda when it was introduced in 1900, and the mailo system has continued to influence the shape of economics and politics in Buganda since its inception. It has proved to be a hot-button issue into the twenty-first century and the mailo system has stayed at the center of debates of tenant and landlord rights throughout Uganda for over a century. These included the fortification of tenant rights in the 1960s and 1970s, the "nationalization" of mailo land under Idi Amin and the re-emergence of a rent-based landlord system in 1998. As shown by Holly Hanson, Buganda's social foundations have also been undermined and then transformed by freehold tenure, and appropriate reciprocal obligations between chiefs and peasants are still being negotiated in freehold's aftermath. On an individual level, too, the freehold legacy remains strong; today's descendants of the original 3,945 allottees include some of the wealthiest people in Uganda, none of whom are more well-off than the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the Kabula Generation leaders themselves.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>3</sup> *New Vision News*, "Old Money Still Reigns in Families of Buganda's Chiefs," April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013

But this thesis argues for more than the particularized historical significance of individual African elites. It recognizes that it was in fact the same group of elite Africans who steered all these developments, that their decisions were consistently guided by a definable set of political principles, and that this all occurred within a demarcated period of time, namely 1888 to 1927. Historians speak freely of the “Museveni Era,” and the “Idi Amin Years,” and even divide Milton Obote’s non-sequential tenures into two eras: “Obote I” and “Obote II.”<sup>4</sup> Yet, it is common to refer to the colonial era as if it were a monolithic time, where Uganda’s fate was determined by the policies of British administrators, perhaps with input from African “collaborators.” The truth though, as argued in this thesis, is that there was a vast fissure between the fundamental political ideas which guided colonial Uganda before and after 1927. This fissure was demarcated by the collapse of Apolo Kagwa’s style of government and its replacement with a new and different system. There is arguably more similarity to be found by comparing the despotically cruel years of Idi Amin and Obote II than there is by comparing colonial Uganda in Apolo Kagwa’s heyday and colonial Uganda of the 1940s and 1950s. Furthermore, one cannot resolve this tension by simply dividing colonial Uganda into two epochs – “early colonial” and “late colonial.” Aside from the fact that such labels would continue to unduly over-privilege colonialism in African history writ large, they are also inappropriate in this specific instance because the defining characteristic of the “early” period – rule by the chiefly aristocracy under Kagwa – began in 1888 *before* British colonial rule. As such, these years deserve their own “decolonized” name.

Thus, this thesis argues that the chiefs under Kagwa had a legacy whose sum is greater than all of its parts. After arguing on a case-by-case basis that the significance of the African political elite in shaping Buganda’s past has been downplayed or overlooked by historians, the conclusion of this thesis is that the true legacy of these African chiefs was is not merely cotton, the Uganda Agreement, or the Lukiiko. Their true

---

<sup>4</sup> Milton Obote had two tenures as Uganda’s leader, in between which the nation was ruled by Idi Amin. The large periods of Ugandan political history after Independence are: Obote I, 1962-1971; Idi Amin, 1971-1980; Obote II, 1980-1986; and Yowerie Museveni and the NRM, 1986 – present.

legacy is that in the long history of Buganda they defined a unique and significant political era – that they were the “Kabula Generation.”

## Selected Bibliography

### Monographs

- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 1983.
- Apter, David. *The Political Kingdom in Uganda: A Study of Bureaucratic Nationalism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1961.
- Austin, Herbert. *With MacDonald in Uganda: A Narrative Account of the Uganda Mutiny and MacDonald Expedition in the Uganda Protectorate and the Territories to the North*. London: Edward Arnold, 1903.
- Boahen, Adu. *African Perspectives on Colonialism*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987.
- Beattie, John. *Bunyoro: An African Kingdom*. Mason, OH: Cengage Learning, 2002.
- Berenson, Edward. *Heroes of Empire: Five Charismatic Men and the Conquest of Africa*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2011.
- Bissell, William. *Urban Design, Chaos, and Colonial Power in Zanzibar*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2011.
- Brown, Douglas & Peter Allen. *An Introduction to the Law of Uganda*. London: Sweet & Maxwell, 1986.
- Cain, P. J. & A. G. Hopkins. *British Imperialism: 1688-2000*. London: Pearson Education Ltd., 2002.
- Carswell, Grace. *Cultivating Success in Uganda: Kigezi Farmers & Colonial Policies*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 2007.
- Chretien, Jean-Pierre. *The Great Lakes of Africa: Two Thousand Years of History*. New York: Zone Books, 2003.
- Churchill, Winston S. *My African Journey*. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1908.
- Cleave, John H. *African Farmers: Labor Use in the Development of Smallholder Agriculture*. New York: Praeger Publishers, 1974.
- Comaroff, Jean & John Comaroff. *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism and Consciousness in South Africa, Vol. I*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991.
- Cooper, Frederick. *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005.



- Doornbus, Martin. *The Ankole Kingship Controversy: Regalia Galore Revisted*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2001.
- Doyle, Shane. *Crisis & Decline in Bunyoro*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2006.
- Fallers, Lloyd. *Bantu Bureaucracy: A Century of Political Evolution Among the Basoga of Uganda*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1965.
- *The Social Anthropology of the Nation-State*. Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1974.
- Fallers, Margaret. *The Eastern Lacustrine Bantu: Ganda and Soga*. London: International African Institute, 1968.
- Gukina, Peter. *The African Administration of the Kibuga in Buganda*. The Hague: Mouton, 1963.
- *Uganda: A Case Study in African Political Development*. Notre Dame, IN: Notre Dame University Press, 1972.
- Hailey, Malcolm. *Native Administration in the British African Territories*. London: His Majesty's Stationary Office, 1950.
- Hanretta, Sean. *Islam and Social Change in French West Africa: History of an Emancipatory Community*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Hanson, Holly. *Landed Obligation: The Practice of Power in Buganda*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Educational Books, 2003.
- Haydon, Edwin. *Law and Justice in Buganda*. London: Butterworth, 1960.
- Hoschild, Adam. *King Leopold's Ghost*. New York, Mariner Books, 1998.
- Ingham, Kenneth. *The Making of Modern Uganda*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1958.
- *The Kingdom of Toro in Uganda*. London: Methuen, 1975.
- Johnston, Alex. *The Life and Letters of Sir Harry Johnston*. London: J. Cape, 1929.
- Johnston, Harry. *The Uganda Protectorate, Vol. I & II*. London: Hutchinson & Co., 1902.
- *Britain Across the Seas: A History and Description of the British Empire in Africa*. London: National Society Depository, 1910
- Jones, Ben. *Beyond the State in Rural Uganda*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009.

- Kagwa, Apolo. *BaseKabaka Be Buganda (Kings of Buganda)*. London: Lucas & Co., 1912.
- Karugire, Samwiri Rubaraza. *A History of the Kingdom of Nkore in Western Uganda to 1896*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971.
- *A Political History of Uganda*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1980.
- Kazosi, A. B. K. *The Life of Prince Badru Kakungulu Wasajj and the Development of a Forward Looking Muslim Community in Uganda, 1907-1991*. Kampala: Progressive Publishing House, 1996.
- Kennedy, Dane. *The Highly Civilized Man: Richard Burton and the Victorian World*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2005.
- Kiwanuka, M. Semakula. *A History of Buganda: From the Foundation of the Kingdom to 1900*. New York: Africana Publishing Corporation, 1972.
- Kodesh, Neil. *Beyond the Royal Gaze: Clanship and Public Healing in Buganda*. Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2010)
- Low, D. A. & R. C. Pratt. *Buganda and British Overrule, 1900-1955: Two Studies*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1960.
- Low, D. A. *Buganda in Modern History*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1971.
- *Lion Rampant: Essays in the Study of British Imperialism*. London: Frank Cass, 1973.
- *Fabrication of Empire: the British and the Uganda Kingdoms: 1890-1902*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2009.
- Lewis, William. *Tropical Development, 1880-1913: Studies in Economic Progress*. London: Routledge, 1970.
- Lugard, Frederick. *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa*. London: William Blackwood & Sons, 1922.
- *The Diaries of Lord Lugard, (v.2, v.3 ed. Margery Perham)*. London: Faber & Faber. 1959.
- McDermott, P. L. *A History of the Formation and Work of the Imperial British East Africa Company*. London: Chapman and Hall, 1893.
- Mair, Lucy. *An African People in the Twentieth Century*. London: George Routledge & Sons, 1934.

- Mann, Kristin & Richard Roberts. *Law in Colonial Africa*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1991.
- Mamdani, Mahmood. *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1976.
- *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996.
- Mommsen, Wolfgang. *Theories of Imperialism* (trans. P. S. Falla). Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977.
- Morris, H. F. *A History of Ankole*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers Ltd., 1962.
- Morris, H. F. & James S. Read. *Uganda: The Development of its Laws and Constitution*. London: Stevens & Sons, 1966.
- Mukasa, Ham. *Sir Apolo Kagwa Discovers Great Britain*. (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1976)
- Mukherjee, Ramkrishna. *Uganda: An Historical Accident? Class, Nation, and State Formation*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1985.
- Mukiibi, Joseph (ed). *Agriculture in Uganda, Vol. I, II, III, IV*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2001.
- Nyakatura, J. W. *Anatomy of an African Kingdom: A History of Bunyoro-Kitara*. Garden City, NY: Anchor Books, 1973.
- Oded, Arye. *Religion and Politics in Uganda: A Study of Islam and Judaism*. Nairobi: East African Educational Publishers, 1995.
- Oliver, Roland. *Sir Harry Johnston and the Scramble for Africa*. London: Chatto & Windus, 1957.
- Pirouet, Louise. *Black Evangelists: The Spread of Christianity in Uganda, 1891 – 1914*. London: Collings, 1978.
- Portal, Gerald. *The British Mission to Uganda in 1893*. London: Edward Arnold, 1894.
- Prestholdt, Jeremy. *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Geneologies of Globalization*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 2008.
- Reid, Richard. *Political Power in Pre-Colonial Buganda*. Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2002.
- Robinson, Ronald & John Gallagher. *Africa and the Victorians: The Climax of Imperialism on the Dark Continent*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1961.

- Rodney, Walter. *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Washington: Howard University Press, 1972.
- Roscoe, John. *The Baganda: Their Customs and Beliefs*. London: Frank Cass, 1911.
- Scott, James C. *Seeing Like a State: How Certain Schemes to Improve the Human Condition Have Failed*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1999)
- Sathyamurthy, T. V. *The Political Development of Uganda, 1900-1986*. Brookfield, VT: Gower Publishing Company, 1986.
- Segall, Marshall H. & Martin Doornbos & Clive Davis. *Political Identity: A Case Study From Uganda*. Syracuse, NY: Maxwell, 1976.
- Sempebwa, Joshua. *African Traditional Moral Norms and Their Implication for Christianity: A Case Study of Ganda Ethics*. Sankt Augustin, Germany: Steyler Verlag, 1983.
- Shipton, Parker. *Mortgaging the Ancestors: Ideologies of Attachment in Africa*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2009.
- Shorter, Aylward. *Cross and Flag in Africa: The "White Fathers" during the Colonial Scramble*. Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2006.
- Stanley, H. M. *In Darkest Africa*. New York: Scribner & Sons, 1891.
- *Through the Dark Continent Vol. I*. New York: George Newnes, Ltd, 1899.
- Steinhart, Edward. *Conflict and Collaboration: The Kingdoms of Western Uganda, 1890-1907*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Thompson, Gardner. *Governing Uganda: British Colonial Rule and its Legacy*. Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2003.
- Twaddle, Michael. *Kakungulu & the Creation of Uganda 1868-1928*. Athens: Ohio University Press, 1993.
- Uzoigwe, G. N. *Revolution and Revolt in Bunyoro-Kitara: Two Studies*. Kampala: Longman, 1970.
- West, Harry W. *The Transformation of Land Tenure in Buganda Since 1896*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1971.
- *Land Policy in Buganda*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1972.
- Wild, J. V. *The Story of the Uganda Agreement*. London: Macmillan, 1965.
- Wrigley, Christopher. *Kingship and State: the Buganda Dynasty*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

Wright, Michael. *Buganda in the Heroic Age*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971.

### **Journal Articles & Chapters**

Atanda, J. A. "The Bakopi in the Kingdom of Buganda," *Uganda Journal*, 33, 2 (1969) 151-162

Case, Earl. "Agriculture and Commerce of Uganda." *Economic Geography*, 6, 4 (1930) 352-363

Davis, R. Hunt. "Interpreting the Colonial Period in African History," *African Affairs*, 72, 289 (1973) 383-400

Ehrlich, H. "The Economy of Buganda, 1893-1903," *Uganda Journal*,

Emwanu, George. "The Reception of Alien Rule in Teso," *Uganda Journal*, 31, 2 (1967) 171-182

Endefield, Goergina, et al. "The Gloomy Forebodings of This Dread Disease: Climate, Famine and Sleeping Sickness in East Africa," *Geographical Journal*, 175, 3 (2009).

Fallers, Lloyd A. "Populism and Nationalism: A Comment on D. A. Low's 'The Advent of Populism in Buganda'." *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, 6, 4 (1964) 445-448

FitzSimons, William F. "Decolonizing an East African Narrative: Kabaka Mwanga of Buganda and the 1897 Rebellion," paper delivered at Boston University African Studies Society Graduate Student Conference, March, 2011.

Gray, John Milner. "Early Treaties in Uganda, 1888-1891," *Uganda Journal* 12, 1 (1948).

----- "The Year of the Three Kings of Buganda, Mwanga – Kiwewa – Kalema, 188-1890," *The Uganda Journal*, 11, 1 (1950).

Green, Elliot D. "Understanding the Limits to Ethnic Change: Lessons from Uganda's 'Lost Counties'." *Perspectives on Politics*, 6, 3 (2008) 473-485

Hanson, Holly. "Queen Mothers and Good Government in Buganda: The Loss of Women's Political Power in Nineteenth-Century East Africa," in *Women in African Colonial Histories*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press.

Illife, John. "The Organization of the Maji Maji Rebellion," *Journal of African History*, 8, 3 (1967) 495-512.

Jackson, Kennell. "Is Land Merely Property? Notes on the Uganda Agreement of 1900," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 7, 4 (1974) 729-745.

- Kato, L. L. "Government Land Policy in Uganda, 1889-1900," *Uganda Journal*, 35, 2 (1971) 153-160
- Kiwanuka, M. S. M. "Bunyoro and the British: A Reappraisal of the Causes for the Decline and Fall of an African Kingdom," *The Journal of African History*, 9, 4 (1968) 603-619
- Low, D. A. "The Advent of Populism in Buganda." *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 6, 4 (1964) 424-444
- Mair, L. P. "Baganda Land Tenure," *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, 6, 2 (1933) 187-205.
- Marcus, George E. "Land Tenure and Elite Formation in the Neotraditional Monarchies of Tonga and Buganda," *American Ethnologist*, 5, 3 (1978) 509-534
- Morris, H. F. "Two Early Surveys of Native Courts in Uganda," *Journal of African Law*, 11, 3 (1967) 159-174.
- "Sir Phillip Mitchell and 'Protected Rule' in Buganda," *Journal of African History*, 13 2 (1972).
- Mugambwa, John Tamukedde. "The Legal Aspects of the 1900 Buganda Agreement Revisted," *Journal of Legal Pluralism*, 25 (1985) 243-273.
- Nayenga, Peter F. "Commercial Cotton Growing in Busoga District, Uganda, 1905-1923." *African Economic History*, 10 (1981) 175-195
- Reid, Richard. "The Ganda on Lake Victoria: A Nineteenth Century East African Imperialism," *Journal of African History*, 39, 3 (1999), 349-363.
- Roberts, A. D. "The Sub-Imperialism of the Baganda," *The Journal of African History*, 3, 3 (1962) 435-450.
- Robinson, Ronald. "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration," in Owen and Sutcliffe, eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*. London: Longmans, 1972.
- Rowe, John & Michael Tuck. "Phoenix From the Ashes: Rediscovery of the Lost Lukiiko Archives." *History in Africa*, 32 (2005) 403-414.
- Rowe, John. "Land and Politics in Buganda: 1875-1955," *Makerere Journal*, 10 (1964), 1-9.
- "The Purge of Christians at Mwanga's Court: A Reassessment of this Episode in Buganda History," *Journal of African History*, 5, 1, (1964), 55-71.
- "Western Impact and African Response: Buganda, 1880-1900," *Journal of Developing Areas*, 1, 1 (1966).

Scotton, James. "The First African Press in East Africa: Protest and Nationalism in Uganda in the 1920s," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 6 2 (1973).

Staff. "The Uganda Railway," *Economist*, 14 June, 1902 p. 932

Thomas, H. B. "An Experiment in African Native Land Settlement," *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 27, 107 (1928).

Tuck, Michael. "The 'Rupee Disease': Taxation, Authority, and Social Conditions in Early Colonial Uganda," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 39, 2 (2006).

Twaddle, Michael. "The Bakungu Chiefs of Buganda under British Colonial Rule, 1900-1930." *The Journal of African History*, 10, 2 (1969) 309-322

----- "On Ganda Historiography," *History in Africa*, 1 (1974) 85-100.

Wamagatta, Evanson. "African Collaborators and their Quest for Power in Pre-Colonial Kenya," *International Journal of African Historical Studies*, 41, 2 (2008), 295-314.

Wrigley, Christopher. "Buganda: An Outline Economic History," *Economic History Review*, 10, 1 (1957).

----- "The Kingslists of Buganda," *History in Africa*, 1 (1974), 129-139.

Youe, Christopher. "Peasants, Planters, and Cotton Capitalists: The 'Dual Economy' in Colonial Uganda," *Canadian Journal of African Studies*, 12, 2 (1978) 163-184.

### **Archival Sources**

Church Missionary Society. *Church Missionary Society Archives, Sect. IV: pt. 20 & 22 (Uganda, including "Mengo Notes")*. Marlborough, UK: Adam Matthew Publications, 1996.

Ennis, G. F. M. and Morris W. Carter (compilers). *Laws of the Uganda Protectorate in Force on the 31<sup>st</sup> December, 1909, with Appendices Containing Order of the King in Council and the Buganda, Toro, and Ankole Agreements*. London: Stevens & Sons Ltd., 1910.

Kingdom of Buganda. *Buganda Lukiko archives, 1894-1918* [microform]. Cooperative Africana Microfilming Project, the Center for Research Libraries, by OCLC Preservation Resources, Bethlehem, PA, 2005.

Parliament of the United Kingdom. *British Parliamentary Papers: The Uganda Papers 1892-99*. Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press. 1971.

Throupe, David ed. *British documents on foreign affairs: reports and papers from The Foreign Office confidential print. Part I, From the mid-nineteenth century to the First*

*World War. Series G, Africa, 1848-1914 . (v.15, v.16).* Bethesda, MD: University Publications of America. 1995

*Uganda Herald.* African Newspapers, 1800-1922. Collected by World Newspaper Archives, published by Redex, Division of Newsbank Inc. Tampa, FL.