

Protection, Patronage,
or Plunder?

British Machinations
and (B)uganda's
Struggle for
Independence

I have enjoyed reading the book. It is well researched and a welcome addition to D. A. Low and R. C. Pratt's book, *Buganda and British Overrule 1900-1955*.

—*E. F. Ssempebwa S.C., Professor of Law and Former Chairman, Uganda Constitutional Review Commission.*

The work is a master-piece of the forensic recovery of a critical African history. But it is not just about the past. It is also the story of the present situation and how past events created it.

—*Robert Kalundi Serumaga, Writer, Political and Human Rights Activist.*

A remarkable book and a worthy successor to Low and Pratt's *Buganda and British Overrule 1900-1955*. It is successful in presenting an extensive documentary account by providing original material revealing the character of the administrative relationships between the governments of Buganda Kingdom, the Protectorate and Great Britain.

—*Nelson Kasfir, Professor of Political Science and Government, Dartmouth College USA and Author on Africa and Uganda's Politics.*

A timely, essential and sober discussion of how best to re-build Uganda. It is a crucial contribution to our understanding how we came to where we are today and how to forge ahead. It deserves the attention of everyone who has our country at heart.

—*Phares Mutibwa, Professor of History and Author of "Uganda Since Independence: A Story of Unfulfilled Hopes."*

This book helps one understand what colonial Uganda was like, what drove the British to do what they did, the role and place of Buganda then and now and why Uganda and Buganda will be in a tango—until we confront the ghosts of our history. It raises many emotions – pain, sadness and anger at the way things were and how little they have changed in contemporary Uganda. Books like this propel us in the right direction in seeking ways to deal with our future from an understanding of our past.

—*Jacqueline Asiimwe, Lawyer and Women Activist.*

A marvelous and extremely well researched book that uses primary sources to analyse British colonial rule in Uganda. The book will be useful not only to scholars and researchers but also to politicians as well as general readers.

—*Ambassador Mathias Semakula-Kiwanuka, Professor of History and Author on Africa and Uganda's History and Politics.*

With the recent damning discovery of 'migrated files' on Britain's colonial past at Hanslope Park, historians are rewriting histories of the British Empire. Apollo N. Makubuya's book is a pioneering effort in this direction on British rule in Uganda. With more narratives of this kind—from all corners of the Empire—we should begin to understand the true and unsavory character of British imperialism.

—*Samwiri Lwanga-Lunyiigo, Professor of History and Author of "The Colonial Roots of Internal Conflict in Uganda" and "Mwanga II: Resistance to Imposition of British Rule in Buganda, 1884-1889."*

Protection, Patronage, or Plunder?

British Machinations and (B)uganda's Struggle for Independence

By

Apollo N. Makubuya

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing



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To my grandparents:
Ssalongo Shem Walusimbi, who in 1966, paid the ultimate
price for his King and country, and
Kasalina Nakulima Walusimbi, whose love and faith in
Buganda and the Kabaka are boundless.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|---|------|
| List of Acronyms | ix |
| Preface | xi |
| Acknowledgments | xiii |
| A Note on the Toponym (B)Uganda | xv |
| Foreword | xvii |
| Introduction | 1 |
| Phase I | 21 |
| Conquest and Consolidation of British Rule in Uganda (1894-1939) | |
| Phase II | 99 |
| Rattling the Colonial Order and African Agency During and After the Second World War (1939-1952) | |
| Phase III | 142 |
| Decolonisation and the Resurgence of Buganda (1952-1960) | |
| Phase IV | 187 |
| Britain's Scramble out of Uganda and the Struggle for Power in a New Uganda (1960-1962) | |
| Phase V | 291 |
| Anglo-Uganda Relations Under Obote, Amin and Museveni in Post-Independence Uganda | |
| Conclusion | 432 |
| The Legacy of British Rule on Uganda's Integration and the Future | |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Appendix I..... | 442 |
| Uganda's Colonial and Postcolonial Leaders | |
| Appendix II..... | 444 |
| Extract from Lord Lugard's Case for Colonial Rule: <i>Early Efforts in Nyasaland and Uganda</i> | |
| Appendix III | 446 |
| A Memorandum by Oliver Lyttelton, Secretary of State for the Colonies on Britain's Plans to Depose and Deport Kabaka Mutesa II, 17 November, 1953 | |
| Appendix IV | 450 |
| A Memorandum to Queen Elizabeth II Submitted by Members of the Lukiiko of the Kingdom of Buganda Concerning the Termination of British Protection | |
| Appendix V | 463 |
| A Memorandum on the Funeral Ceremonies of Kabaka Mutesa II | |
| Appendix VI..... | 470 |
| Secessionism in Africa: Comparing Buganda, Katanga and Biafra's Struggle for Independence | |
| Images | 472 |
| Bibliography..... | 499 |
| List of Cases | 511 |
| Glossary of Terms | 512 |
| Index..... | 514 |

LIST OF ACRONYMS

| | |
|--------|--|
| ACHPR | African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights |
| BIC | Buganda Independence Committee |
| BIS | British Interests Section |
| BMATT | British Military Advisory Training Team |
| CAT | Convention Against Torture and Other Forms of Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment |
| CBE | Conqueror of the British Empire (a title invented by Idi Amin, not to be confused with the British order, Commander of the British Empire) |
| CBS | Central Broadcasting Service |
| CHOGM | Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting |
| CMS | Christian Missionary Society |
| CO | Colonial Office |
| CRC | Convention on the Rights of the Child |
| DFID | Department for International Development |
| DP | Democratic Party |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| EAD | East Africa Department |
| EAF | East Africa Federation |
| ECGD | UK Export Credits Guarantee Department |
| FCO | Foreign and Commonwealth Office |
| FEDEMU | Federal Democratic Movement of Uganda |
| GCMG | Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George |
| HM | Her Majesty |
| HMG | Her Majesty's Government |
| IBEAC | Imperial British East Africa Company |
| IBRD | International Bank for Reconstruction and Development |
| ICCPR | International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights |
| ICESCR | International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights |
| ICJ | International Court of Justice |
| IMF | International Monetary Fund |
| KAR | King's African Rifles |
| KBE | Knight Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire |

| | |
|--------|--|
| KCB | King's College Budo |
| KCMG | Order of St Michael and St George |
| KY | Kabaka Yekka |
| LEGCO | Legislative Council |
| MBE | Most Excellent Order of the British Empire |
| MNC | Mouvement National Congolais |
| NAC | Native African Church |
| NCNC | National Conference of Nigerian Citizens |
| NPC | Northern People's Congress |
| NRA/M | National Resistance Army/Movement |
| OAU | Organisation of African Unity |
| OBE | Order of the British Empire |
| ODA | Official Development Assistance |
| SAP | Structural Adjustment Programme |
| TNA | The National Archives (at Kew, UK) |
| UAU | Uganda African Union |
| UDHR | Universal Declaration of Human Rights |
| UFM | Uganda Freedom Movement |
| UHCP | Uganda Hereditary Chieftainship Party |
| UMHK | Union Miniere du Haut Katanga |
| UNC | Uganda National Congress |
| UNLF/A | Uganda National Liberation Front/Army |
| UNM | Uganda National Movement |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNC | Uganda National Congress |
| UNUC | United Nations Operations in the Congo |
| UPC | Uganda People's Congress |
| UPM | Uganda Patriotic Movement |
| UPU | Uganda Peoples' Union |

PREFACE

Following the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885, Britain and other Western powers cajoled, conquered and ultimately colonised diverse peoples across Africa. In the scramble for minerals, land, raw materials, cheap labour and markets, they arbitrarily carved out, occupied and controlled the continent. While the conquest and plunder was often justified on the ideology of the “civilising mission” of primitive Africa, the reality was that it was largely intended to service the material interests of the West, as well as, in the case of Britain, to build and control a global Empire.

It is well known how, in setting up an exploitative imperial hegemony, Britain created new countries and, working with Christian missions, disfigured and disempowered traditional and cultural institutions. Only a handful of those institutions survived colonialism. But the survivors, like the once powerful kingdoms of Buganda in Uganda, Kwazulu in South Africa and the Ashanti in Ghana, are largely alienated in the new political order. Thus, many decades after British rule, these kingdoms struggle to find their past position and power within the new colonially-determined geographical and political boundaries.

Despite the prominence of these actors before independence, the historiography of colonial rule in Africa is dominated by narratives of the West. Furthermore, at the end of colonial rule in Africa, British, Belgian and other colonial powers destroyed, burnt or hid vast colonial records. Consequently, African perspectives on how a few men with a few guns quickly imposed imperial rule and effectively occupied a vast continent for several decades are not well documented or known.

For the kingdom of Buganda—considered an intercessor in expanding and entrenching British rule in Uganda, whose leaders believed that the coming of Christian missionaries was at their “invitation” and who had much faith in the sanctity of its treaties of “protection” with Britain—little is known of how, or why, an erstwhile ally became an adversary. Indeed, the British frustrated Buganda’s aspiration for full autonomy and, instead, ensured that the kingdom remained inextricably locked in a politically problematic colonial construct called Uganda.

Relying on some hitherto unpublished and classified records at the British National Archives now at Kew and the National Records and

Archives Centre in Uganda, and with a focus on Buganda, this book unpacks and reconstructs a mostly untold history of secretive plans, events, decisions and personalities that founded, implemented or executed British imperial rule in Uganda. Central to this account is an examination of the notions of “protection”—the bait to the execution of suspect treaties between Buganda and other parts of Uganda with Britain, where Buganda lost its sovereignty and the latter, by hook or crook, acquired or imposed unbridled suzerainty. It also examines aspects of colonial plunder and patronage. Beyond the colonial epoch, the book also reflects on Anglo-Ugandan relations after Uganda was granted independence, to demonstrate both how Uganda’s contemporary politics has been defined by its colonial past and how, under British and other influences, its future is bound by a neo-colonial order.

This account, which is less about grousing over the effects of colonialism and more about unmasking the machinations and politics of colonial and postcolonial Uganda, shines a new spotlight on the historical complexities and a largely shredded legacy of British imperialism. It challenges the misleading narrative on the benevolence and objectives of colonialism in (B)Uganda and elsewhere and interrogates the power relations between Britain and its former colony, and particularly how these have influenced and shaped the latter’s politics and economy for over a century.

It is hoped that this historical study on the objectives and methods of British rule in Uganda will help modern African states and traditional entities—like the kingdom of Buganda—to learn from this history as they struggle to liberate themselves and thrive in a new era.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This book has been a labour of love originating from a yearning for more knowledge about the (hi)story of the ancient kingdom of Buganda, particularly with the puzzle of how it grappled with the complexities presented by the forces of Christianity and, later, colonial rule starting in the late 19th century. My interest was, almost at once, both heightened and satiated by the opportunity to serve in the kingdom and thus to witness first-hand the cultural, political and other dynamics at play for many years. In writing short pieces on some aspects of the kingdom's history—including on the tribulations of Kabaka Mwanga; the coronation of Kabaka E. F. Mutesa II, his deposition and life in exile; and on other contemporary issues of the kingdom—I was encouraged to write a book. Dr Joe Oloka-Onyango, my former law professor, was at the forefront in this regard. By introducing me to the resources of the British National Archives at Kew Gardens, Prince David Wassajja set me off on a long but enjoyable voyage that has resulted in this work.

I thank the Kabaka (King) of Buganda, Ronald Muwenda Mutebi, Omumbejja (Princess) Dorothy Nasolo, Prince Kassim Nakibinge and Prince David Namugala for their encouragement and access to historic family collections. I am equally thankful to Professors Lwanga-Lunyiigo, Mathias Semakula-Kiwanuka, Edward F. Sempebwa, Phares Mutibwa, Fredrick Jjuko and Nelson Kasfir who read and made useful comments on the manuscript. I also thank Jackie Asimwe, Robert Kalundi-Serumaga, Timothy Kalyegira, Jon Elliot and Samantha Stevens for their comments the early drafts. Jonathan Mwesigwa, Dennis Asimwe and Francis Birikadde also helped with the early editorial work. I am particularly grateful to Dr Ginevra House for her enthusiasm and support with the manuscript. I am grateful to the editorial team at the Cambridge Scholars Publishing, who were always available and supportive.

I also thank the staff at the British National Archives at Kew in Surrey, for their help in accessing valuable historical records and Robert Kabushenga and Betty Nakabiito Musoke of the *New Vision* for their help with photographs. I thank my colleagues at MMAKS Advocates for encouraging and supporting me on this journey.

Finally, I thank Stella Mukasa, my wife, and our daughters Athena, Angela and Andrea, as well as my parents, Titus K. Walusimbi and

Monica N. Namubiru, for their comments and encouragement on the work—but mostly for enduring many days of my absence and distraction as I navigated Uganda’s historical records and as I experienced the pains and joys of writing.

I hope that this work will be useful and enjoyable to those that read it. I take personal responsibility for any errors or misjudgements in opinion in the book.

Ssabasajja Kabaka Awaangale!

*Apollo N. Makubuya
Kampala, May 2018*

A NOTE ON THE TOPONYM (B)UGANDA

The kingdom of Buganda straddles the Equator in central Africa and borders the northern shoreline of Lake Victoria. In both geographical and political terms, it lies in the centre of present-day Uganda. Its history,¹ with an unbroken line of 36 kings, dates back to the 15th century. In that sense it predates the colonial construct called Uganda by many years. It has an estimated population of 8 million people, known as the Baganda, whose language is Luganda. The kingdom is currently headed by Kabaka (King) Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II.

Relative to other parts of Uganda, the kingdom had the earliest contact with European explorers, namely, with the explorers John Hannington Speke in 1862 and Henry M. Stanley in 1875. These two adventurers were followed by Christian missionaries starting in 1877. The explorers and missionaries found the kingdom welcoming and promoted it in Britain as a suitable colony. They wrote glowing stories about Buganda, especially about its organizational structure, willingness to embrace modernity and economic potential. Following the Berlin Conference of 1885, the kingdom instantly and unilaterally became a part of the British Empire.

To impose its rule, Britain proceeded by way of a commercial charter granted to the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC) led by Captain Frederick Lugard. Once the foundations for imperial rule were set, and the Company ran into financial troubles, Britain reluctantly took the region over as a Protectorate. From that point on, the kingdom of Buganda became a foothold for the expansion and entrenchment of its rule in the other parts of the territory of today's Uganda.

Because the Arab and Swahili traders from the Indian coast referred to the kingdom of Buganda as "Uganda" and its people as "Waganda," the Europeans, who relied on Swahili porters and guides to penetrate the interior of Africa, used the same to refer to the kingdom of Buganda. In that way, the name Uganda was derived from that of the kingdom of

¹ On Buganda's history see, generally, M. S. M. Semakula Kiwanuka, (1972) *A history of Buganda, from the foundation of the Kingdom to 1900*, Longman; Wright, Michael (1971) *Buganda in the heroic age*, Oxford: Oxford University Press; and Low, D. A. (2009) *Fabrication of Empire: The British and the Uganda Kingdoms, 1890-1902*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Buganda. Consequently, when Sir Harry Johnston signed an agreement with the kingdom in 1900, he referred to it as the Uganda Agreement, and to its infant Kabaka, Daudi Chwa, as the King of Uganda. Later, when the rest of modern Uganda fell under British control, the entire colony was named the Uganda Protectorate. And, due to the centrality of Buganda to Uganda in both geographical and political terms, the name Uganda was sometimes used by the colonial administrators to refer to the kingdom and *vice versa*. In *The Uganda Protectorate*, Johnston writes about the kingdom of Uganda when he is in fact referring to the kingdom of Buganda.²

Similarly, John Roscoe, in his seminal anthropological study on the Baganda, makes reference to the kingdom of Uganda when describing the kingdom of Buganda.³ Thus, the name Uganda was historically used synonymously with that of Buganda. For this reason, in this account, the term “(B)Uganda” is used to refer both to the interchangeable use of the two toponyms in documents from the colonial period, and to express the transition from the entity known as Buganda before and during colonial rule to one that became Uganda in the postcolonial epoch.

² See Johnston, Harry (1902) *The Uganda Protectorate*, London: Hutchison & Co. Paternoster Row, pp. 85-121.

³ See Roscoe, John (1911) *The Baganda: An Account of their Native Customs and Beliefs*, London: Macmillan and Co., Limited St Martins Street, London, p.4.

FOREWORD

The subject of Buganda has long held a particular fascination for scholars, politicians and travelers. Such allure is not misplaced given the central role the kingdom has played throughout the recorded history of the country the British created and baptized Uganda. In revisiting the “Buganda Question,” Apollo Makubuya has not been content with only the “official” story. Instead, he has undertaken a surgical re-examination of many of those facets of the chronicle and provided a fresh, exhaustive and intellectually-stimulating account of the various ways in which the British experience impacted on the kingdom in particular and on the wider territory of Uganda as a whole. Archival literature is married to legal documentation and supplemented with the accounts of some of the main actors in the drama. Indeed, the book provides a far-reaching examination of the question: was British colonial rule in Buganda designed for protection, for patronage or for plunder?

Taken together, Makubuya’s account of the relationship between the British and Buganda should provide some serious cause for a reconsideration of some of the many basic questions which have surrounded this story. To what extent was the elaboration of a “protectorate” over the kingdom simply a subterfuge for what in effect was direct colonialism; how did the British deal with the vast archival material about their sojourn in the “pearl” of Africa on the eve of independence, and lastly what were the facts relating to the death of Ssekabaka Edward Mutesa and (more importantly) the reaction of both the British and Ugandan governments in its aftermath? A number of these questions have been asked before. However, Makubuya not only adds other intriguing inquisitions to the dramatic dance of politics between Britain and one of its most strategic colonial outposts, he also unearths an abundance of new archival material that will have historians, anthropologists and lawyers stimulated and engaged for decades to come.

Lest the impression be created that the book is only about events distant and arcane, Makubuya provides a succinct analysis of the implications of the history of British engagement with Uganda that extends to the present-day. While there is no doubt that the sun has set on the British empire, the ramifications of colonial rule continue until the present time, dictating political and socioeconomic developments relating

to foreign affairs, resource exploitation and the overall maintenance of regime stability. Against this backdrop, Makubuya's book is not afraid to grapple with the vexed issue of Buganda's self-determination, and to ask the reader to envisage a different scenario from the centralized despotism that has been Uganda's experience since independence. Indeed, it is only by asking such hard questions that we can begin to envisage a different future from our past. *Protection, Patronage or Plunder?* sets us well on the path to a further examination of what is yet to come.

J. Oloka-Onyango

INTRODUCTION

“[I]n Africa today we are ... bringing to the dark places of the earth, the abode of barbarism and cruelty, the torch of culture and progress, while ministering to the material needs of our own civilisation ... there can be no question but that British rule has promoted the happiness and welfare of the primitive races.

Let it be admitted at the outset that European brains, capital and energy have not been, and never will be, expended in developing the resources of Africa from motives of pure philanthropy; that Europe is in Africa for the mutual benefit of her own industrial classes, and of the native races in their progress to a higher plane; that the benefit can be made reciprocal; and that it is the aim and desire of civilised administration to fulfil this dual mandate.”

—The Right Hon. Sir Fredrick D. Lugard
GCMG, CB, DSO¹

The first European explorers and missionaries that arrived at the interior of Africa in the 19th century were surprised to find a kingdom with a sophisticated cultural and traditional system of governance that they had not seen elsewhere on their journey of discovery in the “dark continent.”² Having met stiff resistance by groups such as the Nandi and the Maasai in Kenya, their arrival and welcome in Buganda, a kingdom with a history dating back to the 14th century, was surprising. The explorers found the kingdom unrivalled in terms of its unique administration, stately leadership and economic development. Around this time, Buganda was undergoing rapid expansion, mostly at the expense of its weakening neighbours, but also because of the good trade links it had with the Arabs from the East African coast, whose supplies included guns and gunpowder.

Henry M. Stanley arrived in Buganda thirteen years after Speke and Grant, and was awestruck on arrival at the court of *Kabaka* Mutesa I, the King of Buganda.³ On the day he arrived on the shores of the kingdom, he was welcomed by the Kabaka’s ambassador, who arrived in a flotilla of large canoes to accompany him on the last stretch. The next day he was welcomed by the *Katikkiro* (prime minister) and about 2,000 excited followers, who were feasted on chicken, eggs, bananas and sweet potatoes. Ten oxen and sixteen sheep and goats were slaughtered in his honour. He was lodged in a special house. Once the *Katikkiro* cleared him, Stanley

met the tall, 34-year-old Mutesa in a hunting village. He found Mutesa a “most intelligent, humane and distinguished prince,” one with “quiet dignity” and with intelligence superior to that of the Sultan of Zanzibar.⁴ In describing his environs and Buganda’s capital at Mengo, he wrote:

We viewed the capital crossing an eminence commanding a most extensive view of a picturesque and rich country teeming with gardens and plantations and beautiful pasture land ... the vast collection of huts crossing the eminence were the Royal Quarters, around which ran several palisades and circular courts, between which and the city was a circular road, ranging from one hundred to two hundred feet in width, from which radiated six or seven magnificent avenues, lined with gardens and huts.⁵

Here, Stanley paints a vivid—indeed a glowing—picture of Buganda in a promising, heroic and glorious era. Winston Churchill, before he became Britain’s premier, was similarly struck by the Baganda—described as the “Japanese of Africa”⁶—living in a kingdom he called a “fairy tale.”⁷ When he traversed the continent, he found the kingdom of Buganda distinct from “anything elsewhere to be seen in the whole range of Africa,” a “complete and elaborate polity under a dynastic King with a Parliament and a powerful feudal system, an amiable, clothed, polite, and intelligent race.”⁸ The kingdom was equipped with a Court and a regular system of native law, and its peaceful society was characterised by discipline, industry, culture. He urged Britain, of all its East and Central African possessions, to “Concentrate upon Uganda” which had “unequalled fertility with a population of high intelligence and social quality.”⁹ He believed Uganda was bound to “become the most prosperous” colony and that nowhere else in Africa would the results of Britain’s imperial rule “be more brilliant, more substantial or more rapidly realised.”¹⁰

But beyond the impressionistic explorer accounts, historical and anthropological studies show that precolonial Buganda was in fact a fairly advanced African cultural and political entity with a formidable government headed by the Kabaka, a Katikkiro (Prime Minister) and a hierarchy of chiefs. It had a standing army headed by a general (*Omujasi*), a treasury headed by the *Omuwanika* (chief treasurer) and a native judicial system administered by the *Omulamuzi* (chief justice). Its traditional judicial system was well developed and structured with a mechanism for appeals from decisions made by local chiefs or clan leaders to the Kabaka’s court—which was the supreme appellate organ and whose decision was final. The system also respected the rules of natural justice—similar to those recognised and applied in English law—namely the right

to be heard (*audi alteram partem*) and the principle that no man can be a judge in his own cause (*nemo iudex in causa sua*).¹¹

Equally, in the medical field, Buganda had made remarkable strides in the diagnosis and treatment of diseases and had a body of midwives (*abazaalisa*), traditional healers and herbalists (*abasawo*) as well as orthopedics (*abayunzi*). Indeed, according to Dr Robert W. Felkin, a British medical missionary and explorer, by 1879, Baganda surgeons were already performing successful caesarean sections using African medical procedures and anaesthesia.¹²

In addition to advances in the governance, legal and medical spheres, the Baganda had made significant headway in the fields of textiles, dance, music, agriculture, trade, pottery, ironmongery, engineering and road construction, as well as in several aspects of tradition and social decorum.¹³

However, and in spite of these attributes, European observations on the natives in Uganda, and on the Baganda in particular, were not always charitable. For example, some considered that although the people in Buganda had been in earlier contact with civilisation,

They have remained simple savages, and have not absorbed any of the civilisation, except the desire to enslave each other perhaps. The *Waganda* and *Wanyoro* have a more highly developed social system, but they have many vices which have left these people quite untouched. These people have not acquired any wants or tastes yet which render us desirable to them, and, except for a few thousand protected individuals, appear to have the profoundest mistrust of anything calling itself a government.¹⁴

One colonial administrator considered that although the Baganda were intelligent they were at once “a most immoral race” whose women “thought no more of sexual intercourse than [they] did of going to the rear.”¹⁵ Another commentator considered the word Baganda to be synonymous with “sensuality, debauchery, and drunkenness.”¹⁶ Needless-to-say these views were neither value-free nor universal.

Unsurprisingly, the power and promise that Stanley and others found in precolonial Buganda began to fade rapidly once the forerunners of British imperialism such as Captain Frederick Lugard, Gerald Portal and, later, Sir Harry Johnston arrived bearing gifts and laid the foundation for imperial rule in Uganda. Lugard arrived in Buganda in December 1890 when the kingdom, then under Kabaka Daniel B. Mwanga II, was entangled in violent religious wars and civil strife. Lugard found that an embattled Mwanga had signed a treaty of friendship with the Germans, who, led by Karl Peters, wanted to extend their East African sphere of

influence into Uganda.

However, under the Anglo-German Heligoland treaty of 1890, the Germans ceded the Ugandan territory to Britain and paved the way for Lugard, under the Imperial British East Africa Company (IBEAC), to enter into a treaty with Kabaka Mwanga. In that treaty, Lugard promised, among other things, to offer “protection” to the Kabaka in return for Buganda’s sovereignty. Yet, in spite of the said treaties, Mwanga was always wary of the intentions of his new foreign allies and indeed soon revolted against Lugard’s orders. This triggered events where Lugard, with the help of Protestant converts, fought and deposed Mwanga, a development that kick-started a long and chequered relationship between the kingdom of Buganda and Britain. That relationship was sealed in the agreements of 1894¹⁷ and 1900 under which (B)Uganda became a British Protectorate.

British colonial rule fundamentally transformed the politics and economics of the kingdom of Buganda and the rest of Uganda. Working hand-in-hand with the Christian missions, it introduced several foreign aspects of governance to the Protectorate: a British legal system, modern education and health systems, a new land tenure system, an agriculture-based economy producing cash crops such as cotton and coffee, and a new transport network (including the Uganda Railway) that opened up the interior for trade with the rest of the world. It is undisputed that these developments aided the transformation of African societies and plugged them into a global and capitalist economic order.

However, British colonial rule also came along with a dark, self-serving, exploitative and crippling side that was detrimental to the full development of the Protectorate and its peoples. As in India and elsewhere in its vast Empire, the adverse forces of British colonialism either dismantled or destroyed promising African traditional institutions to advance its imperial interests.

Given this history—and the diverse interpretations offered on it by colonial administrators, academicians and political activists—the main goal of this book is to reflect on the British colonial enterprise in (B)Uganda. The book illustrates the methods and machinations of this enterprise and how these impacted upon the colonised polity. It focuses on Britain’s colonial and postcolonial relations with the kingdom of Buganda, whose historiography has been recorded and analysed more by non-Baganda writers and considerably less by the Baganda themselves.

The dearth of literature presenting Buganda’s perspectives on British colonial rule is one of the reasons we revisit the subject using different lenses: to provide another perspective on how the British cajoled,

conquered and occupied the kingdom of Buganda and other parts of Uganda and how, for over 68 years, Britain went about its imperial mission in Buganda and the roles and responses of the Baganda to colonial rule.¹⁸

The periodic declassification of secret correspondence and documents by the British government not only offers a new insight into the perpetration of colonialism but also helps us to better understand the powerful forces and personalities that shaped the colonial and postcolonial history of the kingdom of Buganda and Uganda.

The book is based on the hypothesis that British imperialism in Africa was founded and sustained on three principal pillars: plunder, protection, and patronage. The plunder of resources—mostly land, minerals, and African labour—was achieved either through the work of companies such as the IBEAC or by colonial governments. Plunder was perpetrated either through violence or through skewed and often dubious negotiations and treaty making with the leadership of native populations.

The second pillar—which was the real mission of colonial rule—consisted in the protection of British interests in the form cheap raw materials, cheap labour and markets for British goods and services. As we show below, protection was never about safeguarding the rights or interests of the colonized peoples. Where that happened, it was merely incidental. On this basis, we reassess and deconstruct the concept of “protection” used in the conclusion of mostly *pro forma* treaties with entities like the kingdom of Buganda, to reveal the complexity and true character of British imperialism.

The third pillar was the erection of a system of patronage under which Britain spread its prestige and influence through a paternalistic, undemocratic, unjust and a segregated regime in its colonial domains. Through patronage, Britain effectively influenced the politics and economics of its colonies to further its material and strategic interests during and long after colonial rule. To achieve this, the colonial system invariably undermined traditional leadership and institutions, often deposing and deporting what it considered the most undesirable leaders and leaving the more pliant ones as figureheads.

Original records cited in this study show how British rule, far from Lugard’s narrative of “promoting the happiness and welfare of the primitive races,”¹⁹ in reality was one of aggression and occupation. It was concerned far more with ministering to the material and strategic needs of Britain, and was executed in a manner that was ultimately antithetical to the political, social and economic development of the colonised states. The records show that colonial rule employed five methods to achieve its

mission: i) suppression or replacement of traditional values and institutions with colonialist ones; ii) redrawing boundaries and borders; iii) creation of a socioeconomic system that favoured the interests of the Empire over those of the local population; iv) imposition of a discriminatory legal system that favoured the colonisers and reliance on legally dubious treaties; and v) a highly secretive regime regarding colonial strategy and official documents.

First, colonial rule in Buganda, and elsewhere, undermined and debased indigenous values and belief systems, as well as institutions and administrative structures, and replaced them with alien and paternalistic ones that were best suited to serve imperial interests. According to Captain Lugard, the essential feature of the system was that

the native chiefs are constituted as an integral part of the machinery of the administration. There are not two sets of rulers—British and native—working either separately or in cooperation, but a single Government in which the native chiefs have well-defined duties and an acknowledged status equally with British officials. Their duties should never conflict, and should overlap as little as possible. They should be complementary to each other, and the chief himself must understand that he has no right to place and power unless he renders his proper services to the State. The ruling classes are no longer either demigods, or parasites preying on the community. They must work for the stipends and position they enjoy. They are the trusted delegates of the Governor.²⁰

In the case of Buganda, colonial rule was installed and entrenched through the creation of an oligarchy of chiefs who acted as agents of imperialism in Buganda and beyond. This new class was used to subdue or entirely replace conservative traditionalists whose allegiance and loyalty lay more with the traditional order than the new one. Dominated by Christian converts (mostly Protestants), this class generally looked down upon traditional institutions and values in relation to European ones. The prominent elite members included Apolo Kagwa, Stanislas Mugwanya, Ham Mukasa, Martin Luther Nsibirwa and Sserwano Kulubya, all of whom obtained and embraced an early Christian education and looked up to the British and the church leadership.

These helped, either consciously or otherwise, to dismantle Buganda's traditional leadership and authority and facilitate the penetration of imperial rule into Buganda and Uganda. As we show further ahead, two Buganda kings—Kabaka Mwanga and Daudi Chwa—particularly suffered a great deal because of the divided loyalties of some of their most trusted chiefs. Kabaka Mwanga was in fact deposed with the help of some of his chiefs, while Kabaka Chwa narrowly survived deposition by the British

working with some of his officials. The behaviour of the pro-British chiefs like Apolo Kagwa may be explained under Britain's policy that aimed at ensuring that

[t]he personal interests of the rulers must rapidly become identified with those of the controlling Power. The forces of disorder do not distinguish between them, and the rulers soon recognise that any upheaval against the British would equally make the end of them. Once this community of interest is established, the Central Government cannot be taken by surprise, for it is impossible that the native rulers should not be aware of any disaffection.²¹

In return for their loyalty to British imperialism, many of the new chiefly class were, under a patronising colonial largess, rewarded with material gifts (including *mailo* land grants,²² livestock and other desirable luxuries like gramophones) or, with positions, power, ceremonial titles and insignia of office such as "Your Royal Highness," the Order of the British Empire (OBE) and the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE). The use of material and other inducements to patronise and motivate African chiefs to collaborate with colonial administrators in dominating and exploiting their own people is probably the genesis of the endemic corruption in postcolonial Africa.²³

Through the use of these local agents, which was part and parcel of the policy of indirect rule, Britain maintained the façade that the natives were in control while at once masking the aggressive character of colonialism. Indirect rule and patronage promoted the primacy of the tribe and discouraged the growth of nationalism or a common identity or awareness amongst the diverse peoples of the Protectorate.

Additionally, through African agency, both in and sometimes outside Buganda, colonial rule created a new class of subservient chiefs and landlords whose loyalties were switched from the traditional leaders to the new colonial master. As we discuss below, the resistance to pro-British agency and the resentment to imperial rule resulted in the 1945 and 1949 protests in Buganda and, relatedly, to the tragic assassination of Katikkiro Martin Luther Nsibirwa in 1945.

It is said that in the expansion of British imperial rule in Africa, the flag followed the cross.²⁴ In other words, that Christianity and its self-assigned mission to civilize "primitive and backward" populations in Africa often led the way and opened the doors for the imposition of colonial rule. Walter Rodney succinctly expresses this colonizing role of the missionaries: "the Christian missionaries were as much part of the colonizing forces as were the explorers, traders and soldiers," and they

“were agents of colonialism in the practical sense, whether or not they saw themselves in that light.”²⁵

Generally, Christian missionaries approached Africa with the attitude that all things European were superior to all things African. For example, David Livingstone and Friedrich Fabri of the Rhenish Missionary Society in Namibia believed in their “civilizing” mission, which was centred as much on spreading European cultural values as on the Christian gospel. Fabri particularly viewed mission work as a “useful tool” for trade and colonial annexation.²⁶ The role of missionaries in Uganda was no different. Christian missions—particularly the Christian Missionary Society (CMS) and the White Fathers—acted as interested interlocutors and facilitated the fracturing of Buganda’s political and social structures in order to advance both an evangelical and a colonial agenda.

Among other things, they supplied information to colonial officials which was utilized to plan how to crush local resistance and to effectively impose colonial rule; they raised funds for the IBEAC to stay in the country; they provided their stations for use as military bases from which the colonial forces launched attacks on the resisting Africans; and they lured Baganda chiefs into signing treaties they did not fully understand, which were later used by the colonialists to exert control over their territories. For example, it was Bishop Tucker who lured the Regents of Kabaka Daudi Chwa II into signing the 1900 Buganda Agreement, about which Harry Johnston wrote:

I, Johnston, shall be bound to acknowledge the assistance offered to me by the missionaries, especially the CMS. Without their assistance on my side, I do not think Uganda’s chiefs would agree to the treaty which practically places their country and land in the British hands.²⁷

Prior to the Buganda Agreement, the IBEAC, under Captain Lugard, had sided with the Anglican Protestants to defeat the traditionalists and the Catholics in Buganda. Again, Johnston acknowledged the importance of this turn of events, writing that “from that point on the politics of Uganda assumed a religious character that was, for good or for worse, to perennially influence its political future.”²⁸ It is no wonder that at the time of independence in 1962 the leading political parties—the Uganda People’s Congress (UPC) and the Democratic Party (DP)—had a religious base and, perhaps more tellingly, that the country chose as its national motto the phrase “For God and My Country,” a simple adaption of the British Empire’s own motto “For God and the Empire.”

The entrenchment of colonial rule also entailed a process of disarmament and demobilisation of all traditional defence mechanisms and

their replacement with a detribalised colonial army. Native rulers were forbidden to raise or maintain an army. On this colonial policy, Lugard was categorical:

Native rulers are not permitted to raise and control armed forces, or to grant permission to carry arms. To this in principle Great Britain stands pledged under the Brussels Act. The evils which result in Africa from an armed population were evident in Uganda before it fell under British control, and are very evident in Abyssinia today. No one with experience will deny the necessity of maintaining the strictest military discipline over armed forces or police in Africa if misuse of power is to be avoided, and they are not to become a menace and a terror to the native population and a danger in case of religious excitement—a discipline which an African ruler is incapable of appreciating or applying. For this reason native levies should never be employed in substitution for or in aid of troops.²⁹

Additionally, according to David Adetayo Olusoga, a British Nigerian historian,

for decades' colonial administrators had striven to ensure that modern weapons were kept out of the hands of their black subjects, and it was impressed upon them that the lives of white men (and more so white women) were sacrosanct. Violence against white people in the Empire elicited extra ordinary violent responses—punitive raids and exemplary punishments ... black men were armed only when formed into colonial regiments (often known as *askari*) and used to fight Africans, under the guidance and watchful eyes of white officers.³⁰

In line with this colonial policy, the native army in Buganda was quickly disbanded and replaced with a colonial army—the King's African Rifles (KAR)³¹—comprising mostly Sudanese troops whose fighting skills were excellent but whose general character and loyalty to the colonial government was unsatisfactory to Johnston.³² But even then he could not rely upon black troops for unswerving fidelity to the British Protectorate. Accordingly, he relied more on Indian troops who he thought were more capable of keeping the native government “in order.”³³ Accordingly, because Johnston believed that English soldiers could not be employed in the Protectorate for “climatic reasons,” he depended on Indian soldiers, who represented a “core of absolutely loyal, brave, and practiced soldiers” and whose retention ensured the maintenance of Britain's “chief position.”³⁴

For this reason, and in order to keep the native government in check, Johnston was careful not to recruit and arm many Baganda. He recruited only 500 policemen from among them and sent the rest to other provinces where they mixed with native police comprising diverse ethnicities such as

the Maasai, Swahilis, Lendus, and other negro races. This left the king and chiefs in Buganda and elsewhere vulnerable and defenceless in the face of colonial aggression. They were only allowed to employ a body of policemen who were allowed to wear starched uniforms but not to carry arms (locally called *Bamusirike*). If a situation arose that required significant force, the king and chiefs were expected to look to the colonial government for protection. According to Amone, this was a deliberate policy where

The British did not want their colonial armies to be dominated by societies that lived near the centre of administration. This is the reason they discouraged the Kikuyu in Kenya, the Ndebele in Southern Rhodesia, and the Asante in Ghana from joining the army. Instead these societies were dominant in the civil service ... the British feared an organised and large scale military resistance by members of the dominant communities in respective colonies. Since the Bantu communities especially in Buganda and the Banyoro were well organised under highly centralised societies, the British did not want to arm them. This was why the Acholi were preferred—they were not only too small in population to wage a strong military resistance, but also disunited under several chiefdoms.³⁵

Colonial ethnicisation of the army and the reliance on the army to tackle political differences was partly responsible for the mayhem soon after independence and a militarist legacy in the country's governance. The majority of military coups in Uganda have been led by forces from northern Uganda, which constituted the recruiting ground for the colonial army.³⁶ And, as we demonstrate below, the dominance of a largely ethnicised military in the governance the country has undermined the professionalization of Ugandan forces as well as the development of strong civic and democratic institutions in Uganda.

The second method of implementing the colonial enterprise consisted of earmarking and protecting the boundaries of the imperial territory. Colonialism constructed artificial countries with arbitrary boundaries where none existed before, and brought together diverse and sometimes antagonistic tribes without common aspirations and, almost magically, branded them as “independent” and “united” nations in the dying days of the colonial enterprise. As a part of this process, and based on a policy of divide and conquer, colonial rule reconstituted tribal territorial jurisdictions within the Protectorate, taking away land from the more hostile tribes and giving it to others as a reward for their cooperation. This gave rise to tribal jealousies and enmity where none previously existed and poured oil on the flames of old rivalries, particularly between Buganda and Bunyoro. As we discuss below, the Bunyoro “lost counties” saga, for

example, which took the Protectorate to a dangerous precipice on the eve of independence and beyond, was a direct result of this policy.

The question of national integration constituted a major problem once Britain contemplated decolonisation and when it began its retreat from the continent. With the pressure of African nationalism and the demand for independence, Britain, rather belatedly and half-heartedly, “attempted to arouse the national loyalties it had previously discouraged, to contain and moderate the tribalism which it had earlier encouraged, to enlist Africans more rapidly than it had ever considered necessary, and to introduce the elected institutions which it had earlier judged inappropriate.”³⁷ It is unsurprising that these attempts met with failure and that the problems of ethnicity and the lack of national integration persist to this day. Nsibambi addresses the difficulties faced in the integration of Ugandan communities in a “united” Uganda since independence. He correctly argues that the problems of ethnocultural diversity—particularly in Buganda and Karamoja—have negated the attainment of national integration.³⁸

As a third method, colonial rule engendered and prospered on a socioeconomic system that primarily served and protected colonial—and later neocolonial—interests, but also one that was incapable of spurring the kind of development needed to bring the Protectorate to the high and sustainable levels of human development seen in other parts of the world. The economy was largely agrarian, hence land ownership and control was an important aspect. The right to appropriate land for public and commercial purposes was vested in the colonial government. This explains why the land laws introduced under the 1900 Agreement were designed to consolidate colonial control over land and to create a new African society stratified between a landed gentry and a tenant peasantry.

Under a scheme of plunder, Britain, for no consideration, controlled over fifty percent of the land in the kingdom of Buganda, leaving the remainder in the hands of a few chiefs and members of the royal family. The majority of Africans thus remained as peasants and labourers at the margins of an economy dominated by Europeans and a few Asian traders. This unfair and oppressive land policy culminated in the Bataka uprisings in the 1920s and the passing of the *Busuulu* and *Envujjo* (dues and rent) laws that placed restrictions on the amount of rent landlords could charge their tenants. This problem has persisted to the present day.

The colonial economy was also supported by a tax regime exclusively imposed and controlled by the colonial government. Tax revenues were entirely in the hands of the Protectorate, which had no obligation whatsoever to account to the natives except, perhaps, to the colonial office in London.³⁹

At a social level, colonialism survived on a discriminative and racially regimented order perpetuated through segregated education, housing and health systems. By 1920, there were no schools established or managed by the colonial government. Educational work among the natives was thus left entirely in the hands of the missionary societies which received annual government grants towards expenses. This demonstrates that education of the natives was not a key priority for the colonial government. With time, and as the educational facilities increased, the Protectorate operated a segregated system of education where for example, Europeans and Asians attended different schools from those attended by the Africans. Imparted mainly through Christian mission schools, colonial education was designed to educate a limited chiefly class in schools such as Namilyango, Budo, Kisubi and Gayaza, and the vast majority in other schools where their advancement was limited to the technical and vocational skills required to serve the Empire in technical and clerical roles. Similarly, colonial policy on housing reserved the more affluent and planned neighbourhoods for Europeans and Asians and the unplanned and poorer ones for the habitation of Africans. The health system was equally segregated and discriminative. These policies were all aimed to entrench a culture of racial superiority for the colonial masters, which would in turn keep the Africans at the bottom of the social pyramid and at the margins of colonial society. Under such status, Africans were incapable—beyond the provision of wage labour—of either meaningfully participating in the economic and political life of the colony or questioning colonialism itself. This racial segregation was partly responsible for the trade boycott of foreign-owned shops led by Augustine Kamya in 1959⁴⁰ and, ultimately, for the infamous expulsion of British Asians and others by Idi Amin in 1972.

The fourth method of colonial rule was to construct and entrench an exploitative, oppressive, racist and discriminative legal regime. To start with, Britain purported to enter into treaties with African leaders under which they surrendered their authority, land and labour in return for colonial protection. In reality, however, there was a lack of consensus *ad idem* on the true meaning and legal significance of these treaties. While natives, who had no knowledge or understanding of the legalese in which these treaties were shrouded, genuinely believed that they would get protection. They had no idea of the extent to which, just with their thumbprints, they had forfeited their authority and sanctioned a regime of pillage and plunder of their resources and labour. Yet, on its part and as we demonstrate, Britain did not believe in the legality and sanctity of these treaties.