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## GRANDFATHERS, GRANDSONS, MORALITY, AND RADICAL POLITICS IN LATE COLONIAL BUGANDA\*

*By Carol Summers*

Late in 1948, one of the radical Luganda newspapers in Buganda printed Dionizio Sifirwakange's rhetorical and distinctly aggrieved questions: "Has it become a crime for schoolchildren to evince patriotic sentiments? Why does the Government prohibit the assembly of the Bataka at the houses of their 'grandfathers'?"<sup>1</sup>

Sifirwakange was complaining about the repressive response of the Kingdom of Buganda and its ally, the Protectorate of Uganda, to a political and social movement whose most visible adherents were the patriotic schoolchildren, along with other youth and men of all ages, who assembled by the thousands at the homes of their grandfathers as they learned about politics, organized coalitions, donated money, and prepared to struggle for Buganda.<sup>2</sup> During the late 1940s, activists in the "Bataka Union" expressed themselves as grandfathers and grandsons and mobilized tens of thousands of Baganda to read newspapers, attend mass meetings, donate money for international lobbying, and petition the kabaka (king of Buganda) with a vigor that turned into an armed insurrection. In voicing a rhetoric of grandfathers and grandsons, these activists imagined a new sort of citizenship grounded in local concerns over land, graves, and inheritance. But they deployed that identity to build a mass political movement that understood Buganda's connections to a much bigger world.

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<sup>1</sup> Dionizio Sifirwakange, *Uganda Star* [translated excerpt] in *Fortnightly Review*, 2 December 1948, PRO CO 537/3601. In his writing, he was directly attacking an editorial by "Dobozi" (also translated in the FR 2-12-48) that had asserted "The Editor is 'astonished' when he sees a body such as this, which has been disowned by the Native Government, being given permission to assemble its followers by the Resident. What manner of things are discussed at these assemblies that they cannot pass through the proper channels? How many Governments are there in Buganda to give orders to the people?" The *Fortnightly Review* digest of Luganda newspaper stories, intelligence reports, and local gossip were considered secret, and cyclostyled in English for a limited distribution list.

<sup>2</sup> In this article, I follow standard usage by referring to the kingdom of Buganda, peopled by Baganda (plural) in which any Muganda (singular) would speak Luganda. The kingdom of Buganda was much smaller than the British Protectorate of Uganda, but included the Protectorate's administrative and commercial headquarters, while Baganda administrators played key roles in establishing effective British control over regions outside Buganda proper. The Luganda prefixes mentioned above apply to other nouns as well: thus the Bataka (roughly "clans") fought for control over Butaka lands, and every Muganda is a Mutaka.

Why? What did patriotism have to do with grandfathers? Why did young men—especially young men with education, military service, and a sense of patriotism toward a young Buganda—spend so much time meeting with and listening to senior men? Why were adult men in their 20s and 30s identifying themselves politically as grandchildren? The movement these youth and elders joined was not a culturalist movement emphasizing the past, but (at least in the 1940s) a dynamic, modern mass politics. Bataka activists used the technologies and tactics of modern politics—newspapers and pamphlets, loudspeakers and mass demonstrations, and international lobbying—to critique the power of British-allied chiefs. They called for elections, pursued self-help economic initiatives and discussed Buganda's future. They offered a vision of citizenship full of discussions of responsibilities and rights connecting Baganda with each other within an expansive moral community. Citizenship for Bataka activists was not about acting as loyal subjects to the kabaka; activists were concerned with Uganda and Britain, not just Buganda.

Deploying a vision of citizenship rooted in the rights and responsibilities of grandfathers and grandsons, activists rejected any narrative of time as linear, along which a country might progress from youth to maturity. Instead, they declared Baganda of many generations as linked synchronically and transhistorically in associations without permanent or exclusive hierarchies. They deployed understandings of power, identity, and connectedness rooted in specifically Ganda understandings of the relations between grandfathers and grandsons. These allowed them to reject the inequitable hierarchies of real, figurative, or imagined fathers and sons and imagine a democratic moral community—grandfathers and grandsons bound together as trustees and inheritors of Buganda in a politics shaped by responsibilities and rights, not consumption and competition.

For Bataka activists, the politics of grandfathers and grandsons resonated with older Ganda visions of family, moral responsibility, and good behavior. The participation of living grandparents provided both a source of legitimacy and a sense of grievance as they recalled the ways chiefs and Britons had cooperated to defraud them and their grandchildren. Figurative grandparents provided a basis for a mass politics as everyone—rich, poor, chiefly, schooled, or beggared—had grandparents, and thus all Baganda were grandchildren of the Bataka: members of groups, not simple individuals or subjects, but holders of rights and responsibilities as links in this association. And as grandchildren, Bataka understood their connection not simply to the past, but to the future and the patrimony they were to hand on to their own future grandchildren. The Bataka, with their language of grandparents and grandchildren, were not simply voicing platitudes or sentiment regarding family.<sup>3</sup> Under an administration that worked through an alliance between the kingdom's elite and a British superstructure, that viewed Baganda as subjects of the kabaka and the Protectorate, Bataka activists declared themselves grandparents and grandchildren to proclaim

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<sup>3</sup> In Buganda, family in the sense of fathers and sons had political implications of hierarchy and selfishness that I intend to discuss below.

themselves as citizens and active participants in a more democratic polity.<sup>4</sup> As grandchildren, citizens, and Bataka, they put forward a robust discussion of land, rights, cotton, democracy, and self-determination.

This rhetoric was incomprehensible to British officials and anthropologists intent on seeing Ganda politics as concerned with progress, development, nationalism and anticolonialism. Nevertheless, by rereading the rhetoric of activists, taking their language seriously, and reconnecting it with the context of Buganda's history and circumstances, it is possible to reconstruct a creative indigenous politics that was democratic and local in ways rarely associated with significant modern nationalist movements in Africa. African nationalisms have rarely been particularly coherent or comprehensible as political movements that do more than simply oppose alien rule. But by looking at local political ideals and their historical roots, we can begin to understand the politics of the late colonial era as creative and substantial—something more than simply a derivative of colonialism and its opponents.

### **Bataka: Definitions**

There have been a variety of “Bataka” political and social identities and movements in Buganda. In most histories, both by Baganda and outsiders, the term has been used to refer to clan organizations rather than to the activists of the 1940s. British officials and chiefs critical of Bataka activities also used the term to refer specifically to the individuals recognized as hereditary leaders of the clans.<sup>5</sup> The clans, or Bataka, constituted a hereditary structure for the kingdom that counterbalanced the power of

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<sup>4</sup> In distinguishing between citizens and subjects, I am drawing on (and twisting) ideas from Mahmood Mamdani's *Citizen and Subject: Decentralized Despotism and the Legacy of Late Colonialism* (Princeton, N.J., 1996), 17. Mamdani noted that in high colonialism, colonial powers argued that most Africans were and had to be subjects—ruled, perhaps in segregationist ways, for their own good and that of all others. Citizenship, then, was the privilege of the civilized. Here, I am arguing (in a way that Mamdani did not) that Bataka activists developed, articulated, and sought to deploy their own version of citizenship that bypassed such colonial distinctions as “civilized.” Mikael Karlstrom distinguished Bataka-based citizenship from models of the modern nation-state by noting that in the latter, individuals are in principle related to the state as individual citizens. In Buganda, the idea of citizenship was “collective rather than individual—it was through membership in one of the established clans that any individual could claim a measure of participation and entitlement in relation to the state system” as opposed to the simple relationship of individual subjection to the kabaka. M. Karlstrom, “The Cultural Kingdom in Uganda: Popular Royalism and the Restoration of the Buganda Kingship” (Ph.D. thesis, University of Chicago, 1999), 79.

<sup>5</sup> In other words, “Bataka” (personal plural) or “Mutaka” (singular) functions as both a collective label, and a singular label for leadership. This became politically relevant as individual members of clans tried to sign petitions as clan leaders. These individuals were clearly Bataka as members of the relevant clans. But they were not Bataka in the sense of holding the hereditary leadership positions within their clans. This confusion may well have expressed a fundamental difference in political and identity categories between those who thought in English, and those who thought in Luganda. The Luganda term suggests a degree of collective identification or closeness between self and leader that is confusing when translated.

the king (kabaka) and his appointed chiefs. Apolo Kaggwa, the prime minister/anthropologist/historian whom outsiders consider least friendly to the idea of clan power, nevertheless described royal wives and the chiefs appointed by kings of the past not as individuals, but as clan members.<sup>6</sup> And Ernest Kalibala, like Kaggwa a member of the powerful Grasshopper clan, portrayed Baganda as having two loyalties, neither outweighing the other: loyalty to the kabaka as followers and descendants of Kintu, the first king, and membership in clans.<sup>7</sup> Through their clans, people owed loyalty to the king and participated in the kingdom not as individuals subject to the kabaka (absolute ruler) and his administrators, but also as members of corporate organizations, clans, which had their organization and heads under the king as *ssabataka*, or head of the clans.<sup>8</sup> Oversimplifying somewhat, loyalty to the kabaka and chiefly hierarchy provided the successful individual with the opportunity to struggle for power, because any commoner in the kingdom could theoretically be selected by the king for appointed chiefships, military leadership, or court positions. Membership in the Bataka (clans), on the other hand, provided community, security, insurance, and membership. And clans were—in theory—led not by ambitious individuals who fought their way through pagship and service as deputies to achieve significant status, but by elders who simply acceded to leadership by virtue of age, experience, and seniority. These clan heads acted as the living connection with the past and—in their role of vetting marriages—technical experts in the construction of the future.

Under British rule, the Bataka leadership mobilized politically to try to reclaim lands in the 1920s, charging that their patrimony had been stolen in the Uganda Agreement of 1900, which had led to the domination of Buganda by Prime Minister Apolo Kaggwa (and his associates in the new Protestant chiefdoms), at the expense of clans.<sup>9</sup> Kaggwa's opponents and critics of the Agreement revitalized and,

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<sup>6</sup> For example, Apolo Kaggwa, *The Customs of the Baganda*, trans. Ernest Kalibala (New York, 1934), 51–62. In his role as prime minister, regent, and signer of the Uganda Agreement of 1900, Kaggwa was remembered as a thief of butaka (clan lands). James Kibuka Miti Kabazzi (Jemusi Miti), "History of Buganda," undated typescript, English version, Makerere University Library AR MI 8/3 Files 1–3, 781, 993–94, 1059–1060. Holly Hanson, *Landed Obligation: The Practice of Power in Buganda* (Portsmouth, N.H., 2003), 143.

<sup>7</sup> Ernest Balintuma Kalibala, "The Social Structure of the Baganda Tribe of East Africa" (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1946), xiv, 8, 19–25, 178, 272, 363–407.

<sup>8</sup> This notion of the king as simultaneously kabaka and *ssabataka* was the most common expression of his powers, but not the only aspect of his power or closeness to his people. The king was also, in political terms, the "sabasaja" or man above men; the "empologoma" or lion who devours his prey in warfare; "mawanda," handsome; and "omufumbo" or husband to his chiefs as well as his wives. See discussion by Ernest Balintuma Kalibala, "The Social Structure of the Baganda Tribe of East Africa" (Ph.D. thesis, Harvard University, 1946), 57.

<sup>9</sup> Holly Hanson discusses this complex debate in *Landed Obligation*, 127–233.

in some cases, invented clan identities as a form of traditional solidarity that the British rather reluctantly saw as potentially legitimate though horrifically disruptive.<sup>10</sup>

During the 1940s, though, particularly in the aftermath of the 1945 general strike, the assassination of Prime Minister M.L. Nsibirwa, and a series of deportations of Ganda political activists, the name Bataka lost many of its historical connotations and came to refer to those who sought to reimagine and redirect British and Ganda policies in radical ways. Conservative critics claimed that activists had stolen “the dignified and traditional title of Bataka” as a public relations ploy, declaiming “Cheek had never before reached such pretentiousness!”<sup>11</sup> With leadership from Jemusi Miti (a recognized clan head and retired Protectorate official) and other grandfathers, the activists used the label “Bataka” to refer to the association of activists who organized, raised money, and agitated for change. While activists openly discussed and agitated over a wide variety of issues, they distilled their concerns into five demands when, as “the Grand-fathers of Clans for the whole of Buganda,” they submitted their petition to the king in 1949, asking for (1) democracy, so that people could choose their own chiefs; (2) more elected members of the Lukiiko (the Ganda parliament); (3) dismissal of the prime minister’s government; (4) the ability to gin their own cotton; and (5) free trade—the opportunity to sell Buganda’s produce in other countries.<sup>12</sup> These demands were notably the demands of grandfathers and clans agitating for safeguards against abuse rather than efforts by specific individuals to achieve offices within existing structures.<sup>13</sup> But grandfathers such as Miti were far from being the most prominent participants in Bataka activism at that time. The Bataka movement of the late 1940s had three major parts: the self-declared grandson Ssemakula Mulumba who lobbied in Britain; crowds of all classes and ages who greeted each other with

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<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 216–28.

<sup>11</sup> Unsigned analysis of events provoking 1949 disturbances, PRO CO537/5463.

<sup>12</sup> Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Disturbances in Uganda during April 1949 (Entebbe, 1950) [hereafter Report], 21.

<sup>13</sup> Both in the 1945 general strike and in the 1949 unrest, British observers tried to shoehorn radical activism into the model of faction fight—opposition by a specific political clique to another clique, with the aim of securing more jobs, offices, resources, and power. Activists did clearly hold animosity to specific government figures—J. Kivu, for example, gleefully (if not entirely credibly) depicted his plotting against Omwanika (treasurer) Serwano Kulubya in his autobiography (J. Kivu, autobiography (195?), Audrey Richards’ Papers, London School of Economics [hereafter Richards Papers], 6/16; and Jemusi Miti clearly despised both Apolo Kaggwa and his son Kawalya Kaggwa, who served as katiikiro in the late 1940s. Some radical Baganda did end up working for the Buganda government (A.K. Sempa, for example). The activists, however, were clear that their demands were structural—improving the processes through which people could shape their lives both politically and economically—rather than partisan in the sense of being for a specific coterie of people. See, for a rejection of the claim that Bataka sought offices, Enosi M Sekamabira, “Stir up strife in order to rule,” from *Gambuze*, 14–5–49, Report, 117–18 who argued “Let us give up the idea that the Bataka are looking forward to attaining chieftainships in Buganda” and emphasized that those who gave money to the bataka did so entirely of their own free will.

“BU” (pronounced “boo”) and participated in mass and open political agitation in Buganda; and more covert networks and associations that spread rumors, threatened and organized violence, and survived the movement’s banning after the 1949 disturbances to continue as a significant factor in electoral politics during the early 1950s.<sup>14</sup>

The participants defined each of these three aspects partially in the language of grandchildren and grandparents. The movement’s London lobbyist, for example, was a grandchild sent by his grandfathers in the hope of reconciliation and reform.<sup>15</sup> The egalitarian and “patriotic” “BU” greeting was a radical reformulation of greetings that normally acknowledged the other individual’s status, inquired into their activities and health, sought news of home, family and nation, and above all else acknowledged relations of hierarchy and power.<sup>16</sup> When children—or even women—greeted chiefs and British government officials with “BU,” they declared an egalitarian status as “Bataka of Uganda” rather than acknowledging the achieved status of the powerful. Radical activists defined Buganda itself as “the land of your forefathers and your grandchildren” and emphasized that Baganda had a responsibility to preserve it “and bequeath it to your grandchildren.”<sup>17</sup> The mass meetings, endless newspaper reports, and political mobilization of the late 1940s responded to calls to “rise up with the ghosts [spirits?] of our grandfathers”<sup>18</sup> and used grandfathers—dead, living, and figurative—as a way of thinking about Baganda as a group of people with both rights and responsibilities. Chiefs acting as fathers had demanded loyalty and demonstrated their power over their subjects through consumption. Thinking about grandfathers and grandchildren through time enabled Baganda of all ages to think about, imagine, and act with others out of loyalty to a larger Buganda.<sup>19</sup> In emphasizing responsibility not to the British administration, or even to Buganda’s government headed by its king, but to grandfathers of the past and the grandchildren of the future, Bataka

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<sup>14</sup> Carol Summers, “Young Africa and Radical Visions: Revisiting the Bataka in Buganda, 1944–54,” presented at the annual meeting of the African Studies Association, New Orleans, November 2004.

<sup>15</sup> “The Hereditary Bataka” to Secretary of State [S of S] for the Colonies, 12–7–47, PRO CO 537/3592 (Private).

<sup>16</sup> See Kalibala, “The Social Structure of the Baganda,” 304–309.

<sup>17</sup> D.S.K. Musoke, “Buganda Nyafe” (1944, trans.) reprinted in Donald Anthony Low, comp., *The Mind of Buganda: Documents of the Modern History of an African Kingdom* (Berkeley, 1971), 119.

<sup>18</sup> Telegram from Mulumba to Bataka [translated], printed in *Uganda Star* 8–3–49, Documents, 112.

<sup>19</sup> They acted, in other words, like modern patriots. Here I’m using Benedict Anderson’s discussion of the problem of patriotism as I think about what these men were up to. Buganda may or may not have been an actual nation in the 1940s. The modern, imagined mass identity that the Bataka created and acted upon, though, was clear to its adherents and, while full of anti-Indian rhetoric, did not reflect simple racism or xenophobia. See Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* [1963] (New York, 1991), 141–54.

activists built a logic for both peaceful and violent opposition to their rulers, thinking as citizens rather than as subjects.

### Defining Kin and Expectations

In addition to locating the label “Bataka” by pinning it specifically to the movement of the late 1940s, it is important to have some sense of what Baganda meant—both politically and otherwise—when they discussed grandparents, grandchildren, and related ideas of family. The first problem is one of language. Since this paper is based on sources in English, translated from Luganda under a variety of circumstances, it is hard to know whether the English terms “grandparent” and “grandchild,” or the specifically gendered “grandfather” and “grandson,” accurately reflect the Luganda intent. Judging from usage, original Luganda terms differed from English at the very least in specifying patrilineal relations (thus relations within a given clan) rather than bilateral ones (relations that would by definition cross clan boundaries). Given these uncertainties, this article is thus not necessarily about biological grandparents and children, though it sometimes includes them. It is about the idea of elder and child or youth, bound together in a clan relationship. Sometimes both parties were living; other times they were dead, hypothetical, figurative, or imagined, including both ancestors and descendants.

The second problem with sources is that Ganda anthropology, both written by Baganda and by outsiders, has passed on a range of structural and normative discussions of Ganda relationships and social rituals but no particular studies that emphasize grandparent/grandchild associations. This is not entirely surprising since many of the articulate interpreters of Ganda society in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century were Christians, sometimes alienated from their own grandparents through the process of conversion, and intent on fitting Ganda society into categories appropriate to Christian family life and achievement. Furthermore, as Holly Hanson and Neil Kodesh have pointed out, the classic studies by Apolo Kagawa, Ernest Kalibala, Bartolomayo Zimbe, and John Roscoe were political documents that reflected specific sides of an intensely factionated Ganda elite.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, these works, and the notes and narratives collected by the anthropologists of the East African Institute for Social Research, provide hints that reinforce the significance and texture of connections between grandparents and grandchildren within the Ganda polity. It is thus possible to use these materials, with care, to explore pre-mission expectations of grandparent/grandchild relationships and the changing significance of these alliances and roles.

At the top of society, stories of past grandparents marked out a spectrum of kingly conduct that ranged from beneficent to horrifying. Kings, by definition, lacked living grandfathers and were chary of ambitious grandsons. But kingly grandfathers could be beneficial in a way that fathers rarely were, and royal grandsons could value

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<sup>20</sup> See, for example, Hanson, *Landed Obligation*, 204, 210–28; and Neil Kodesh, “Reimagining Tradition: The Politics of Succession in Colonial Buganda,” Northwestern University Program of African Studies Working Papers No. 9, 2000.



their grandfathers as sources of protection, generosity, and support, while fearing their fathers. More malignantly, a young king's treatment of old men marked him out as either a grandchild who nurtured his elders, or a predator who consumed and endangered the nation. The first king, Kintu, in Apolo Kaggwa's narrative was a hero in his ability to provide parts of the country not simply for his children, but even for his grandchildren, enquiring into their maturity and then settling them on estates.<sup>21</sup> More problematically, the 19<sup>th</sup> century king Mwanga provided a horrifying example of bad kingship. Rev. Bartolomeyo Zimbe could forgive many of Mwanga's acts of violence and erratic power, but "Mwanga's plunder of his grandparents and the young men's mistreatment of the people ... estranged the hearts of all and were a big factor in bringing about the wars [the civil war that ended in the Uganda Agreement of 1900]."<sup>22</sup> For Zimbe, who as a youth fought alongside Mwanga and at times benefited from his violations, young men plundering grandparents signified a world gone mad. In dispossessing old chiefs for young men, Mwanga was no progressive: he spoiled the kingdom by taking what should be managed and gradually given. Mature men expected to struggle for positions, compete, and sometimes lose and be plundered. Tensions between fathers and sons were absolutely ordinary. But the truly old held resources to give away, not to hoard for personal aggrandizement and use. Attacking them was thus counterproductive. In mocking the grandfatherly vision of power, resources, and giving, Mwanga erred. "Mwanga did not care for old chiefs. Since he had taken power from them and given this and their villages to young men. When after a war the old chiefs came back defeated, the ... young men jeered..."<sup>23</sup> The resolution was messy: chiefs informed the young men that Mwanga intended to execute the Christians by drowning—acting benignly toward youth even when under pressure—and joined young Christians in deposing him, thus demonstrating a successful, constructive, alliance of grandfathers and grandsons against the despotic power of a king who could appeal only to youth's hedonism and self-interest.

Beyond kings themselves, early compendia of "tradition" recorded grandchildren, grandfathers, and grandmothers as filling specific roles in the king's court, where they were valuable for their simultaneous weakness as individuals and substance in offering kings connections to clans, cliques, and patrons. Grandsons as pages and grandfathers as guards were among the most permanent male residents of

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<sup>21</sup> Apolo Kaggwa, *The Kings of Buganda*, trans. M.S.M. Kiwanuka (Nairobi, 1971), 3–4. Incidentally, it is even more impressive that Kintu reputedly provided not merely for grandsons, but also for granddaughters (sons' daughters). Nor was this bond entirely one way. Kaggwa also depicts a grandson, Kalemeera, so traumatized by the disappearance of his grandfather Kintu that he watched his father unceasingly, driving the father (Chwa I) to plot against Kalemeera with the help of his chiefs. (p. 10).

<sup>22</sup> Rev. Bartolomayo Musoke Zimbe, *Buganda ne Kabaka: Ebyafayo Eby'obwa Kabaka bwe Buganda*, trans. Simon Musoke [Mengo, 1939; translation unpublished], 162. Zimbe rejected standard British demonizations of Mwanga, emphasizing that the people really did love him enough to install him as kabaka three different times (p. 382).

<sup>23</sup> Zimbe, *Buganda ne Kabaka*, 173–74.

the king's court. Youth sent as pages lived at court, followed orders, observed, and prepared to take on significant offices.<sup>24</sup> It was difficult to be noticed as a candidate for public office in Buganda without an extended stint as a child page (*mugalagala*). These boys were sent to court by their families as declarations of familial loyalty and affiliation with the king, and pages found risky opportunities at court as individuals.<sup>25</sup> Grandsons, elders declared in yet another highly political context, were a customary sign of reconciliation and affiliation, bringing together chief and clan through the potential of a child.<sup>26</sup> Elderly men, too, could live at court for years rather than simply visit occasionally as mature men did. Kaggwa tersely explained that kings brought aged men to the royal palace to serve as guards for the king's wives.<sup>27</sup> Kalibala, amplified this discussion, explaining that "The guards or abatete were sexually examined and proved to be totally incapacitated; then they were assigned to the task of guarding the wives [of the king]."<sup>28</sup> Grandsons and grandfathers were thus not important at court because of their power. They were essential to its function because, whether as children or old men, they were personally vulnerable and impotent but

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<sup>24</sup> The court was their education, and their tasks could include the very humble. Mukasa, Mutesa I's last prime minister, for example, first held the task of guarding the royal lavatories, moving up through a minor chiefship and eventually ascending as chief of royal cooks and butchers, before being appointed prime minister at the prompting of the queen mother in the 1870s. Kaggwa, *Kings of Buganda*, 183. As late as the 1950s, one of the leading "traditional" experts on court procedure proudly declared in court that he knew tradition because he had prepared clothes and maintained the wardrobe of King Kalema. Another emphasized that being a page meant that on his visits to his parents' home, all questioned him on proper behavior. Thomas Kibuka Lwabidongo and Andrea Kyemwa, "Mukubwa and others v Mukubira and others," Uganda High Court 1954, "Procedures and Evidence," Civil Case No. 50 of 1954. Institute for Commonwealth Studies (ICS) Hancock Papers, 110. Both men had served as pages.

<sup>25</sup> Girls could also be sent to court as potential wives, or at least as servants to court women. Richards and other anthropologists describe the sending of both boys and girls as forms of *kusiiga*, giving children to the court. This process transferred the child more thoroughly to the court than the more conditional loyalties associated with adults' relations of affiliation (*kusenga*). Thus, the individual transferred through a "siga" relationship was closer, and theoretically more trusted and more closely identified with their patron (whether as page, client, deputy, or wife) than a merely "senga'd" individual could be, although the latter had a certain bargaining power implicit in his implicit ability to leave and find a new patron. See Richards Papers, 15/2, where the distinction among relationships is spelled out in an interview with Isaya Yalyakumanya (1956): he described his own experiences, and then concluded "Kusenga was different from kusiga because it was voluntary and a boy could leave his patron if he wanted to. People were afraid of kusiga because of the danger of being killed by the king. They tended to send slaves instead of their own sons and this went on until Mutesa turned the table on them by making a slave the heir of the man who had sent him to court as a page. He said 'You told me he was your son. Well then he can be your heir.'"

<sup>26</sup> "The Hereditary Bataka" to S of S for the Colonies 12-7-47, PRO CO 537/3592 [Private]. The status of pages (*bagalagala*) was risky because they could be killed on any occasion, or ordered to do anything, even the impossible.

<sup>27</sup> Kaggwa, *Customs of the Baganda*, 95.

<sup>28</sup> E. Kalibala, "The Social Structure of the Baganda," 131.

connected in significant ways to people, clans, and concerns beyond the king's palace.

Beyond the court and precedents involving kings, the grandparent/grandchild relationship seems to have been important but little noticed by observers. Missionaries in particular often sought to remove youth from their grandparents, and sometimes even their parents, rather than to validate the relationship.<sup>29</sup> They justified this by arguing that grandparents—and, in the case of deceased grandparents, their ghosts—were central to non-Christian religious practice.<sup>30</sup> Missionary turned anthropologist John Roscoe described “ghosts” (*mizimu*) as significant both as “national gods” in a cult of the state, and “private gods ... connected with some particular clan.”<sup>31</sup> The principal gods, he noted, had once been important human beings. Random heroes and spirits could be important, associated with the state, with amulets, or with specific shrines, but “possibly the most venerated ... class of religious objects were the ghosts of departed relatives. The power of ghosts for good or evil was incalculable.”<sup>32</sup> Kings, Roscoe argued, sent gifts to the spirits in thanks for their protection of king and state but viewed national protection as a godly duty. Spirits who failed in their tasks, like living officials, were subject to his plunder and destruction. Kings, though, were the only people in Buganda capable of holding the spirits to account. Apart from the kabaka, the spirits—often understood as grandparents within a specific clan—were the protectors and guarantors, of clan, state, and nation.<sup>33</sup> They did not require worship. They simply *were*, as a feature of the people who had lived and been buried in a place and continued to maintain an interest in

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<sup>29</sup> One of the motives of the mission emphasis on midwifery, for example, was to ensure from the start of a child's life that it was under professional, Christian domestic supervision, rather than that of a grandmother. See Carol Summers, “Intimate Colonialism...” *Signs* 16:4 (Summer 1991), 787–807. It is also possible to see early missionary obsessions with the conjugal family in the discipline books of the Native Anglican Church, e.g., “Minute Book Church Council 1893 Onward,” Native Anglican Church of Uganda Archbishop's Office Archives Makerere University Library, AR N 3/2.

<sup>30</sup> For example, Lucy Mair described naming practices, but noted that they were specifically condemned by Christians, who sought to substitute baptism and give clan names not after grandmothers' ceremonies, but as a simple part of christening. Mair, *An African People in the Twentieth Century*, 59.

<sup>31</sup> John Roscoe, *The Buganda [1911]*, 2d. ed. (New York, 1966), 271. For a discussion of the etymology and significance of the term *mizimu* (s. *muzima*) see Benjamin C. Ray, *Myth, Ritual and Kingship in Buganda* (New York, 1991), 150–51. Ray prefers the term “ancestral spirits” to Roscoe's “ghosts.” And he notes that the Luganda word *muzimu* does not belong to the noun class for people (e.g., *muntu*, *bantu*) but to the class of nonhuman nouns. But—to further confuse matters—he also notes that in the case of kings, Baganda will use the nonhuman term *muzima* interchangeably with the human term for the deceased king, *ssekabaka*.

<sup>32</sup> Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 273. The statement, taken literally, is interesting. It can be read as a hyperbolic assertion of godly power, or as a literal acknowledgment that neither Roscoe nor, perhaps, his Ganda colleagues, could calculate or be certain of the spirits' powers.

<sup>33</sup> Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 273–75, 282–88.

their grandchildren. This understanding of the ongoing significance of deceased grandparents was maintained by families that, while nominally Christian, sent children to live with their grandparents. Even in the 1940s, an elite Christian observer could remark that “few Christian chiefs ever pretended to give up all their Baganda forms of religion.”<sup>34</sup>

Roscoe’s depictions of grandparents and ancestors were not limited to the realm of faith or religion, however. He also described various normative interactions that explicitly involved grandparents and defined a “family system” that he saw as exotic, based in a clan unit rather than a nuclear family.<sup>35</sup> A chief’s wife, he argued, was attended by her husband’s father’s mother, or another old woman of the husband’s clan as she prepared to give birth. This grandmother would smear her with butter and rub her to increase flexibility, but she was also present at the birth to prevent a wife angry with her husband from killing the baby. After the baby was born and the afterbirth buried at the base of a plantain, the grandparent’s role was to consume the beer and plantains from that tree, lest a non-clan member consume the spirit in the afterbirth, and the child die in an effort to follow its twin out of its clan.<sup>36</sup> A child’s paternal grandmother was also responsible for testing its umbilical cord to determine whether her son had truly begotten the designated infant. She was thus an essential guardian of admission to clan membership.<sup>37</sup> Another anthropologist argued

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<sup>34</sup> Kalibala, “The Social Structure of the Baganda,” xiv.

<sup>35</sup> Anthropologists from the East African Institute for Social Research at Makerere investigated the Baganda “family system” as a way to understand social change. They paid little attention to generation, more to breadth (brothers, sisters, cousins, etc.) and noted that “clan heads are recognised as important leaders working, as it were, behind the scenes,” particularly in times of crisis. “The Kinship System and Political Organisation,” Richards Papers, B112. A more statistical work discussed people’s ambivalence about the costs of maintaining family connections but noted that they nevertheless did so and considered “home” to be where they were brought up. The study noted that people’s actual contacts with kin were less lateral (to brothers, cousins, etc.) than based in the home (where adults’ parents, now the grandparents of their own children) had retired. “The Changing Marriage and Family Structure in Uganda,” Richards Papers, 6/1.

<sup>36</sup> Placentas were regularly referred to as twins. Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 54–55. Incidentally, the problem with this explanation is that the child’s great-grandmother could not, bar incest or adultery, be a member of the child’s clan. Women did not take their husbands’ clan memberships when they married. The notable aspect of this problematic “custom” is the grandmother’s explicit role as the guardian of her son’s clan both in safeguarding its past (the spirit) and its future (the baby) from a new mother who is an alien.

<sup>37</sup> Roscoe, *The Baganda*, 62. Kalibala echoed his description of how the infant’s cord was floated to determine legitimacy, though, somewhat skeptically, he also noted that the grandmothers smeared it with butter first to ensure buoyancy. If true, this is even more interesting, as it implies grandmothers didn’t just perform a ritual to determine clan membership, they were widely understood as making a judgment that determined a child’s life, including whether it could be given a clan name.

that the child's paternal grandmother even gave it its name, a name selected by the father's sister as a clan name attached to an ancestral spirit.<sup>38</sup>

According to Roscoe, Kaggwa, Kalibala, and others, clans were critical sources of identity even as Buganda changed. Through them, one was related to others—even an individual's name was bestowed as a clan name rather than a patronymic or personal name. Only through clan membership could land be effectively secured: it took three generations buried on a plot to make permanent butaka ownership (before *mailo* and Protectorate rule). Only through clans could a man marry and produce children.<sup>39</sup> Kalibala, writing later and ambivalent about clans, argued that primary responsibility for a child belonged to its parents, especially the father, saying "Children, like women, had no legal status in Buganda. They were 'owned' by their parents ... [and thus not responsible for their own crimes or contracts]."<sup>40</sup> Nevertheless, he found himself, like the men interviewed by EASIR researchers, stating his own identity not simply in terms of paternity, but by invoking his grandfather (and grandmother), and noting that while his mother was a wonderful Christian woman, and his father a prominent chief in Kampala, he spent part of his time growing up living with his grandparents in a village.<sup>41</sup>

The bonds between grandparents and grandchildren within the context of clans persisted even under colonialism, enhanced by clans' ongoing resilience as social networks in crises, renewed on a regular basis by norms of inheritance and fosterage. Good inheritance that strengthened a clan was inheritance from grandparent to grandchild, or at least from uncle to brother's son, rather than a straightforward transfer of resources from father to son.<sup>42</sup> According to Kalibala, this fit a larger norm in Ganda political and social life that blocked an individual from choosing his successor. Whether for the kabakaship (where the new kabaka was chosen by the

<sup>38</sup> Mair, *African People*, 54–55. Mair emphasizes that the *sengawe* selected a name for the grandmother to bestow to ensure that ancestors should all have a "fair share of remembrance," but that the practice was neither a designation of a guardian spirit nor a marker of reincarnation.

<sup>39</sup> Women, on the other hand, could be taken as individuals, especially by the kabaka. But unless the child's father was the kabaka, their child would belong to a clan different from their own.

<sup>40</sup> Kalibala, "The Social Structure of the Baganda," 106.

<sup>41</sup> Kalibala's grandfather was Isaya Busiriba, and grandmother Damari Banjagala. As his father's name was Paolo Balintuma, his family's use of clan names (rather than patronymics) is clear. As for his training, he mentioned his own residence with his grandparents, regretting that his grandmother, a notable healer, had refrained from teaching him lest her tutelage conflict with his schooling. And he noted that clans were important, as "This clan system closely followed religious practices and beliefs. Although I learned a great many religious rites firsthand, it was not very long before most Christian fathers began to keep their children away from them. Nevertheless few Christian chiefs ever pretended to give up all their Baganda forms of religion." Kalibala, "The Social Structure of the Baganda," x–xiv.

<sup>42</sup> See, for example, Mair, *African People in the Twentieth Century*, 212. Mair also provides an elaborate discussion of inheritance ceremonies that emphasized that an individual could not inherit by himself (or herself). He or she needed a *lubuga* (a female clan member standing as a fictitious wife or attendant) as "he cannot stand alone," 212–18, 221.

Lukiiko) or a chiefship (a wholly appointive office that was attached to lands and privileges to support the officeholder) or even a butaka holder (a mutaka as head of clan), a higher official (e.g., the king) or a larger range of people (e.g., the Lukiiko, or clan council) chose for itself.<sup>43</sup> Complex patterns of inheritance undermined tight father/son associations—defusing structural animosities that would otherwise support customary beliefs that for a man's first child to be a son indicated that he was to die soon.<sup>44</sup> Complex patterns of inheritance were radically simplified in the first 50 years of colonialism; under the Uganda Agreement *mailo* was defined as freehold land that could be divided and directly inherited by sons.<sup>45</sup> Bataka activists considered this a potentially serious problem and attempted to reassociate grandparents, land, and future stewardship.<sup>46</sup>

As inheritance gradually changed, though, the prevalence of fosterage, especially among elite Baganda, continued well into the 1950s and meant that young people regularly spent months or years living with grandparents or an older aunt (usually father's sister, *ssenga*) or uncle (father's brother). A 1934 study emphasized that this was partly a system of elder care: old people, even those who had lived in Kampala and had official careers, wanted to retire to a plot of land in a village. And each older person would have a house where a child would "live with him to help him and keep him company," taking on roles that might once have been performed by a slave.<sup>47</sup> Children were not simply sent to help out, though. Children lived with grandparents in order to learn. A 1956 survey, for example, questioned 177 boys from good schools about their experiences and found that 56 percent of Ganda boys had been sent away from home before their twelfth birthday, generally between seven and eight years of age, and that the average time away from mother and father was just over three years. Interestingly, of those sent away, almost 90 percent considered their sending a good thing, offering reasons that included "I reformed my character when I was there"; "When I was with my mother I was rather foolish and she loved me too much that I used to disobey"; and "It was good because I went to serve my relatives."<sup>48</sup> EISR researchers were taken aback not simply by fosterage as a historical

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<sup>43</sup> See, for example, Kalibala, "The Social Structure of the Baganda," 178.

<sup>44</sup> The implication is that the son was impatient to be his replacement. Roscoe, Kalibala, and others mention this belief.

<sup>45</sup> Kalibala, for example, emphasized that his own father had divided his *mailo* holdings among his children, since it was now possible to do so.

<sup>46</sup> The clearest statement of this is D. Musoke, "Buganda Nyaffe" (trans. 1944), in Low, *The Mind of Buganda*, 119–24.

<sup>47</sup> Mair, *African People in the Twentieth Century*, 30–32. Older women, too, seem to have retired to their own houses, with a child to run errands for them. See Kalibala.

<sup>48</sup> "Discipline and Attitudes to Authority in Buganda Schools," 4-2-56, Richards Papers, 6/26. In results from 75 surveys labeled specifically as returns from students in Forms V and VI at Buddo School (the most prestigious in Buganda), only 47 percent of Baganda youth were sent away, they

phenomenon, but by widespread approval for it, and its vigorous practice even at elite levels of Ganda society. Baganda interview responses, however, made clear that the nuclear family might be a place of love (particularly from mothers) but that children had many more lessons to learn—responsibility, duty, manners, hard work, for example—to achieve adulthood.<sup>49</sup>

Whatever children thought of the phenomenon of staying with their grandparents rather than their mothers and fathers, Ganda tradition and practice legitimized not simply parents' option of sending children to elders, but elders' authority simply to take children, even against a mother's wishes. "A man could not refuse a request of his parents to send them a child," one anthropologist asserted, even if the grandparents wanted that child simply "to have a child about the place" rather than for any material motive.<sup>50</sup> And the obligation was not contingent on the grandparents' willingness to take on the training and disciplining of the child; Kalibala argued that they did so, but Lucy Mair argued that "in the home of the grandparents severity was not even theoretically expected. Here a child was free to behave exactly as it liked, and able to count on infinite indulgence." Mair also noted that a grandson taken into his grandfather's home was often made his grandfather's heir.<sup>51</sup>

I am not claiming that these relationships provided a child's primary identity or an elder's principal affiliation. Nor do I suggest that nuclear family relations were irrelevant to either the theory or practice of Ganda families. But in the challenging environment of the 1940s and 1950s, the mission-sponsored nuclear families could be tense, particularly in relations between fathers and sons. Teachers in Christian schools

were sent younger (between 3 and 5 years old) and for longer periods (average 4.4 years away). Statistics were comparable from Aggrey School, which was less elite and emphasized self-help.

<sup>49</sup> The clash with the domestic ideology of the 1950s was particularly sharp. It is likely that the very young age at which elite students at places like Buddo had been fostered had to do with the pressure on parents to meet two different sets of standards regarding good childrearing: a traditional model, that taught duty, responsibility, and usefulness through fosterage with senior clan members; and a modern Christian model, that saw the child as needing schooling. Children sent to rural grandparents at age three could spend four years learning proper behavior and attending very basic rural schools without serious interference in the more systematic schooling they would need once they reached the age of 8 or 9.

<sup>50</sup> Mair, *African People*, 60.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 60–61. Kalibala noted that "Moral training consisted first of direct instruction such as how to obey parents, to receive guests, to behave before aged people, to respect people of the other sex, to respect chiefs, clan elders, not to spit in public, not to kiss people, not to become too familiar with the opposite sex, never to ask questions that are far-fetched, to keep secrets, not to take things that did not belong to one, never to absent oneself without permission. Obedience and respect were the two premises of moral training. A disrespectful and disobedient child was a curse to his family and no relative wished to be bothered with such a child." He asserted that while parents loved children, the style was different than in America, as children were "taken away" by grandparents when 7 or younger. A handicapped or elderly relative could simply demand a youngster to run errands for him or her. "The Social Structure of the Baganda," 194–200.

reported that sons feared their fathers, who were often somewhat distant, coming near mostly to punish or enforce.<sup>52</sup> Thus, the existence of larger clan relations—and the possibility of an inheritance that was not limited to what one could receive from a father—provided grandsons more security than they could get from a solitary and often distant or inaccessible father, and marked them as members in a group rather than sons owned by a father in a fashion similar to the owning of slaves.<sup>53</sup>

### Politics, Grandfathers, and Grandsons

When the normative anthropological discussions of grandfather/grandchild relations, along with material from EAISSR studies, are juxtaposed to the political rhetoric of the 1940s, it is clear that Ganda normative ideas of family—rooted in clan and reinforced by ritual and practical webs of connections between grandparents and grandchildren—were active in Ganda radicals' political imagination. Here I take Bataka rhetoric seriously. And in the process, I want to suggest ways in which Bataka concepts and practice challenge current accepted wisdom regarding both the nature of nationalisms and the nature of generation and youth as historical categories.

The Bataka were not exactly nationalists. Despite reportedly singing a Buganda national anthem as a regular feature of mass meetings,<sup>54</sup> the rhetoric they spoke was not simply anti-imperial or intended for an independent Buganda or Uganda. Bataka activists opened meetings with addresses to the “grandchildren of the Bataka”<sup>55</sup> and implied that the actions the movement's envoy Ssemakula Mulumba took in London were subject to the review of the “grandchildren of the Bataka.”<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Richards' 1956 surveys are included in Richards Papers, 6.26. Her conclusions on the shape of families and the results for ideas of Ganda leadership are in A.I. Richards, “Traditional Values and Current Political Behavior,” in Lloyd A. Fallers, ed., *All The King's Men: Leadership and Status in Buganda on the Eve of Independence* (London, 1964), 294–335.

<sup>53</sup> Two other significant elements here: first, daughters' relations with their fathers were reportedly much better than sons' relations. By the 1950s, some fathers were even leaving their burial plots to daughters they considered more responsible stewards than any son could be. Thus, I expect the political significance of being a granddaughter (and unable to carry on the lineage in one's children and grandchildren) might be markedly different from being a grandson. Second, the abolition of formal slavery combined with the expansion of Christian schooling for elite children meant a serious labor shortage for elite Ganda families. By the 1950s, the problem was being solved through recruitment of Banyarwanda workers for farming, and continued reliance on children for intimate elder-care. The possibility of a child's labor being mistaken for that of a slave meant that a good grandparent had to emphasize their gifts to the child, and the preparation they offered for the clan's future, rather than simply take advantage of a potentially exploitative relationship. Thus, arguably, the significance of the relations of alternate generations may have expanded in the 20th century even as missionaries emphasized the nuclear family.

<sup>54</sup> For example, report of meeting from Buganda, Mengo, *Fortnightly Review* for 20–5–48, PRO CO537/3600.

<sup>55</sup> I.K. Musazi, speech reported in translated extract from *Gambuze*, 16–7–48, Documents.

<sup>56</sup> Extract from *Uganda Star*, 23/3/48, Reports 93.



Their political categories and concepts were discontinuous with nationalisms as delineated by Benedict Anderson.<sup>57</sup> At the same time, however, they provide an excellent example of a locally rooted, indigenously imagined identity that offered a transformation of Ganda political affiliations from king, family, and locality into coalitions among clans, election by clan members, and opportunities for responsible heirs in a world that had expanded from Buganda to include Uganda, Egypt, and the Soviet Union, the global cotton market, and the United Nations.<sup>58</sup>

In his highly influential study of Buganda's political history, David Apter labeled the Bataka as "the most traditional and most violated group in Buganda. They identified completely with 'old Buganda.' They became the keepers of custom...."<sup>59</sup> But he also acknowledged that the movement became a central political initiative of the *bakopi* (commoners), as "it was the Bataka who represented the people," who were then joined by those who advocated opportunities for "young blood," including some sympathetic British officials and missionaries.<sup>60</sup> Apter's assessment repeated several colonial assertions—that the "Bataka Party" was distinct from the earlier Bataka Association, or older visions of clan; that it "was not representative of the clans"; and that its "formal membership never amounted to very much"—that in hindsight seem dubious.<sup>61</sup> The problem may have been one of political categories.

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<sup>57</sup>Anderson, *Imagined Communities*. None of Anderson's categories—either for prenationalist models of identity such as blood or religion, or nationalist identities based on creole consciousness, bourgeois print-nationalisms, official and imperial nationalisms, or anti-imperial nationalisms seem to fit. Nor do newer models of African nationalism such as Frederick Cooper's ideas of labor-based nationalism (see his *Decolonization and African Society*, Cambridge, 1996). But there are interesting points of contact. Print was clearly important to Bataka whose meetings were reported in vernacular newspapers. And labor—at least its suppression—was one of the movement's triggers as the 1945 general strike's suppression opened the space for a larger mobilization leading up to 1949.

<sup>58</sup>Clan, in Buganda, was explicitly not defined as a collection of people related by blood, not a family (e.g., wives and husbands were never of the same clan, and in most cases it was impossible for a mother and child to share a clan) and a clan was an association that extended beyond any particular locality. Both Kaggwa and Kalibala rooted it in collections of people with similar dietary practices. Blood, ancestry, and inheritance were thus less significant in clan identity than the simple ongoing practice of clan identity, confirmed through eating together. Thus a clan could also come to incorporate strangers. Indeed, in contemporary Buganda, I have been told that an alien (e.g., someone from Rwanda, a Munyarwanda) can become Muganda by becoming a member of a clan. This need not be an adoption: it can be an affiliation if a client comes to live on Butaka land. And EAISR anthropologists clearly heard similar discussions, for example, "People of other tribes who were not Baganda originally have since joined the clans with large divisions, such as Mmamba, Ngabi, Nvubu and Nnyoni." Richards Papers [1957?], A/50.

<sup>59</sup>David Apter, *The Political Kingdom in Uganda* [1961] (London, 1997), 124. In fairness, Apter's characterization makes much more sense when applied to the banned, increasingly parochial Bataka of the 1950s, as opposed to the mass movement that culminated in the 1949 uprising.

<sup>60</sup>*Ibid.*, 125.

<sup>61</sup>*Ibid.*, 249. Apter himself partially contradicted this in his note that the movement grew through clan organizations whenever possible (p. 232) and meetings occurred in many areas, involved a range

Apter worked hard within ideas of “traditional” and “modern” to try to explain a Buganda challenged by the Kabaka crisis of 1953, and invoking history in a variety of ways as part of everyday politics. Instead of simply looking at the institutions of the kingdom—the bureaucracy—that Apter and others have emphasized, though, some events make more sense through a moral normative language of familial expectations that operates outside judgments of “tradition” and “modernity.”

By the late 1930s, and even more powerfully by the 1950s, Baganda critics of British administration had rejected paradigms of tradition, progress, and modernity in favor of understanding moral behavior as an essential category of Ganda political life—and the moral community as a treasure of the people that was in danger of being lost. In an influential 1935 pamphlet, Kabaka Daudi Chwa argued that education and civilization need not come in the form of “foreignisation.” Instead, he argued that true Ganda civilization was based in an indigenous morality similar to that of the Ten Commandments, and enforced by the emphatic punishments of offenders. The kabaka placed family values and ideas of family enforcement very firmly in the center of this civilized, moral world, arguing that “Filial obedience was most honoured” and that disobedience or disrespect was “punished by some higher power by the infliction of some horrible or incurable disease.” Nor was filial obedience an abstraction; the kabaka emphasized that it was encoded in etiquette that marked out neighbors as relatives, and structured greetings, hospitality, and emergency policing and firefighting. His injunction to “the young generation of Buganda” was that they must not “foreignise” but should instead pursue proper education and civilization by adhering to community rules, etiquette, hospitality, and familial loyalties.<sup>62</sup> Jemusi Miti, the “grandfather” who hosted Bataka meetings, wrote even more emphatically of the civilized nature of communal obligations in the past and how they must not be wholly lost lest injustice triumph. In his Luganda manuscript of almost 2,000 pages, Miti discussed how people had once ruled themselves in highly effective, very moral ways, enforced with dire punishments. Only recently, as he explained, had youth been led astray by corrupt officials such as Kaggwa and Mugwanya, and the people undermined by an increasingly powerful ideal of selfishness.<sup>63</sup> More emphatically yet, Paolo Lukongwa explained to a (white) anthropologist in 1955 that while God had given Europeans cleverness to make what they needed, they had instead come with that cleverness to take Ugandan lands, offering only two new things—writing

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of people and issues, and connected small-scale miruka organization to larger level mobilization around cotton, elected lukiiko representatives, and complaints about Indians (p. 246).

<sup>62</sup> Kabaka Daudi Chwa, “Education, Civilization and Foreignisation in Buganda” 1935, in David Anthony Low, ed., *The Mind of Buganda* (Berkeley, 1971) 104–108. Note: both Daudi Chwa’s image of himself and his subjects’ memories of him seem very different from British characterizations of him as a sexually debauched drunkard who died relatively young, possibly of his alcoholism, while refusing to perform the obligations and duties of kabaka for the British Protectorate administration. CO536/197/4008; CO536/202/40080.

<sup>63</sup> James Miti, “History of Buganda,” trans. G.K. Rock, undated, Makerere University Library, AR MI 8/3 Files 1–3.

and transport by bicycles (and occasionally cars)—to a Buganda that already had everything it needed. As Martin Southwold, the anthropologist, attempted to point out that clocks, radios, and gramophones were also innovations, Lukongwa pointed out that they didn't do anything that wasn't done already, effectively, by other means. Instead, each of the European innovations took away from the connectedness of the community and facilitated European-style individualism and theft.<sup>64</sup>

Senior men such as Daudi Chwa, Jemusi Miti, and Paulo Lukongwa, who rejected government or mission characterizations of the past as impoverished and backward, were not simply nostalgic for simpler ways; they were nostalgic and political in putting forth a moral view of politics rooted in a familial connection among Baganda and between generations, within a set of expectations that conserved and prepared resources and people for the future, rather than consuming, using, and manipulating them in the present. One newspaper, critiquing government and church, emphasized that, unlike in the past,

Buganda is reeking with the effluvium of cruelty.... Every man dreads his fellow man, and every man is prepared to do harm to his fellow man.... The people are looking for cooperation and unity for the sake of the well-being of the tribe, but the lying, self-seeking envious nature of the leaders of the people is still the stumbling block... The Buganda Government disowned the people [the Bataka, in the present sense citizens].<sup>65</sup>

With leaders unconstrained by older attachments, systems of election, or even ordinary respect and dignity, the young could not thrive.

What, then, do patterns of Ganda family life and sociability tell us about the potential significance of "grandson" as a *political* status? The first reality that Ganda activists seem to have associated with grandchildren was that of vulnerability, a vulnerability that marked grandchildren as uniquely well suited to evoke reconciliation, tutelage, and gifts from the powerful. This invocation of vulnerability as an invitation to benevolence paralleled a clan's sending of a son to court as a servant or a page (*kusiga*). The "descendants of Kintu" (sometimes translated as "grandchildren of Kintu"), a group whose membership overlapped with that of the later Bataka movement, petitioned the Colonial Office in the late 1930s, humbly begging for free schools and advocating free trade rather than a government monopoly on bus service. In petitions, the emphasis is on the need for the powerful to provide nurture and

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<sup>64</sup> Martin Southwold, visit with Paulo Lukongwa 31–8–55, Richards Papers, 6/4. Other interviewees offered similar sentiments.

<sup>65</sup> Extract from *Mugobansonga*, 21–10–48, in Documents, 98. In other articles, *Mugobansonga* went further, implying that European maternity centers had increased infant mortality to the point where three out of four babies died. B. Sonko, *Mugobansonga*. 9–12–48, Documents, 100. The awkward translation elided the explicit denunciation of how the government betrayed the Bataka/people.

opportunity to their clients.<sup>66</sup> Activists thanked “All our friends and grandchildren ... for your prayers to our Lord Almighty God who has heard our supplications and lamentations and abolished Papers 191 and 210 [on East African Union].”<sup>67</sup> Vulnerable grandchildren sought help, lamented, and followed instructions. Ssemakula Mulumba, the movement’s most important publicist and lobbyist, an articulate and highly egoistical man, invoked this sense of the grandchild as vulnerable possibility by declaring

My grandfather, Omutaka Ndugwa .... always repeated the same thing to me. “My Grandson,” he said “learn and master the language of these white people in our country. You will make my spirit happy in the grave, if you one day tell them clearly that they robbed the land of your fathers and grandfathers.”<sup>68</sup>

Mulumba’s sponsors initially introduced him to the British authorities as a grandson available to facilitate the restoration of what had been stolen and the proper governance of the future Buganda. “We, as Elders of the people,” they noted, sent Mulumba as their grandson because they considered it

our undeniable right and bounden duty to submit a contribution of recommendations which, we honestly believe, will help you [Britain] effectively in immediately re-establishing friendly relationships, peace and contentment in order to ease the tension of the present situation.<sup>69</sup>

Mulumba’s declaration of himself as vulnerable grandson and elders’ proclamation of their frailty and desire for familial reconciliation evoke a model of political power rooted *not* in bureaucracy, the military, demography, or economics, but in a sense that the powerful and powerless are bound together through a sort of moral empathy. Holly Hanson has written of how in precolonial contexts, Baganda sought favors by giving gifts, making a relationship that effectively obliged the rich, powerful, and elite to give back what was needed.<sup>70</sup> Elders sent Mulumba to Britain to oblige Britain to send them the administration reforms they needed. They sought this not from strength but from weakness, like the guards of the precolonial kabaka’s courts. The language of grandchild and grandfather was deferential in seeking to call Britain to act as a protector rather than to ally itself with the movement’s targets—the chiefs, the government, the governor, the Church of Uganda, the Indians, and others.

Bataka invocations of grandparent/grandchild status were both forms of petitioning and deference and a language about the proper inheritance and stewardship of

<sup>66</sup> Petition by Descendents of Kintu to S of S for Colonies, 17–12–38. Later petitions were more explicitly political, emphasizing a need to protect the descendents from the abuses of the ministers. “Kintu Descendents” to Governor 30–8–39 and Kintu Descendents All Buganda to Governor, 29–9–39, all from CO536/202/40127.

<sup>67</sup> *Uganda Star* excerpt, 27–7–48, Documents, 123.

<sup>68</sup> Ssemakula to Boyd, British resident in Buganda, 31–3–49, PRO CO537/4666.

<sup>69</sup> “The Hereditary Bataka” to S of S for the Colonies 12–7–47, PRO CO 537/3592 (Private).

<sup>70</sup> Hanson, *Landed Obligation*, 1–7.

human and material resources. The vulnerable grandchild was an ideal precolonial gift to the king not simply because of the child's weakness, but because of his or her potential. He could learn; she could give birth to a future kabaka. The grandchild could be taken by a grandparent as a potential heir and not simply for company and assistance. Politically, the emphasis on grandchildren focused on the future and acknowledged that elders held resources to pass on for another generation. At the same time, even as they embodied a respectful, connected future, grandchildren also embodied a form of history and memory, bearing the names of clan members who would otherwise be lost.<sup>71</sup>

Aimed at Buganda's elite, the Bataka's invocation of these relationships had additional implications. Bataka actively characterized themselves as grandfathers and grandchildren—responsible, moral individuals very different from the elite chiefs whom they saw as abusive fathers supported only by disrespectful sons. Bataka activism was a collective activism about people's moral connections with each other, rejecting visions of *individual* achievement, wealth, or consumption. This can be seen clearly in the rhetoric deployed at mass meetings as fundraisers called upon crowds that in Kampala reportedly ranged from several hundred to a high of about 10,000. Give, people were told, to support the child Ssemakula in his work of representing *us* in Britain and to the world. Give, to support *our* child on our journey. Give, because money is a weapon to prepare for *our* future.<sup>72</sup> Bataka public activism built to a crescendo in 1949, presenting a petition to the king, encouraged with Mulumba's telegram that simultaneously spoke and transformed the metaphor of grandparents and grandchildren. Mulumba's call was "Sons of Kintu, rise up with the ghosts of our grandfathers. You are no longer children.... BU is hated because it is fighting for the people."<sup>73</sup> The Bataka imagined and built a collective, with common interests, hopes for the future, and a willingness to fight.

Grandsons and grandfathers were vulnerable to individualism, selfishness, greed, ambition, and cruelty. Through the Bataka party, however, they transformed the political landscape with grandfatherly leadership and the willingness of all to sacrifice for common interests; the young were willing to fight if necessary. Even as greedy and abusive chiefs tried to hunt them down, one editor noted, "all over the country now, the spirit of nationalism has spread," and chiefs tried to block it by promoting "estrangement and hatred." But, the editor argued,

Buganda can no longer operate on hatred. Those chiefs who are looking for the creation of animosity among the people ought to go as quickly as possible

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<sup>71</sup> Ganda grandsons by the 1940s did not simply bear clan names after all; they carried names that evoked both general cultural connections to the Catholic or Protestant church (e.g., Benedicto Kiwanuka or Martin Luther Nsibirwa) but also specific references to British missionaries and officials.

<sup>72</sup> See, for example, extract from *Uganda Star*, 23–3–48 that reported a "Bataka Meeting" and raised thousands of shillings. Copy in Documents, 93–94; *Mugobansonga*, translated and reported in *Fortnightly Review*, 27–1–49, CO537/4682.

<sup>73</sup> "The Meeting of the Bataka: Precis of Telegram to Bataka from Mulumba," *Uganda Star*, 8–3–49, Documents, 112.

to where the bad things go ... the spirit which has been instilled by the Bataka will grow—and the chiefs really should look for other work.<sup>74</sup>

The chiefs, backed by the Protectorate government, persecuted and prosecuted Bataka activists precisely because of the devastating effectiveness of grandfathers and grandsons working together to imagine a new identity rooted in a moral, community politics. As Sifirwakange suggested, within the movement children might learn not ambition or obedience, but “patriotic sentiments” that reflected both their own vulnerability as individuals and their collective entitlement as citizens to inherit the resources—from land and cotton ginneries to schooling—that could allow them to build a future for everyone. When the Bataka assembled at the houses of their “grandfathers,” their condemnations of greed, calls for protection of the people’s inheritance, and evocation of a future rooted in their own history constituted a fundamental repudiation of two basic Ugandan ideas: that Baganda were the political subjects of the kabaka and chiefs and that children should be guided toward modernity and progress under a British Protectorate. Whether the Bataka were nationalists or not, they were imagining a citizenship for Baganda that declared people’s rights, belonging, and membership. This was not a simple youth or adolescent politics of discontented, amorphous protests, of the sort that government and mission observers condemned as immature selfishness. The cross-generational alliance of age and youth, past and future, elders and inheritors, defined a rhetoric of community and perhaps even nation. In Buganda, grandfathers and grandsons were, indeed, dangerously democratic, militant, and radical.

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<sup>74</sup> Extract from *Gambuze*, 7–1–49. Documents, 100–101.