

2015

Slander, Buzz and Spin: Telegrams, Politics and Global Communications in the Uganda Protectorate, 1945-55

Carol Summers

University of Richmond, lsummers@richmond.eduFollow this and additional works at: <http://scholarship.richmond.edu/history-faculty-publications>Part of the [African History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Summers, Carol. "Slander, Buzz and Spin: Telegrams, Politics and Global Communications in the Uganda Protectorate, 1945-55." *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 16, no. 3 (2015): 1-13.

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the History at UR Scholarship Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in History Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of UR Scholarship Repository. For more information, please contact scholarshiprepository@richmond.edu.

Slander, Buzz and Spin: Telegrams, politics and global communications in the Uganda Protectorate, 1945–55

[Carol Summers](#)

Abstract

Ugandans, from the earliest days of empire, did not simply receive information and messages from a distant Britain. Instead, with methods rooted in pre-colonial understandings of communications as establishing personal, affective, social closeness and reciprocities, they invested in education, travel and correspondence and built wide-ranging information and communications networks. Networked, they understood imperial institutions and pushed their own priorities via both official and unofficial channels. By the 1940s, political activists combined these information networks with the modern technologies of newspapers, telegrams and global press campaigns to destabilize colonial hierarchies. Generating slanderous allegations, repeating them to generate popular buzz, interpreting and constructing evidence through repetition and spin, Ugandan information activists shaped the politics of the 1940s and 1950s through lobbying. The formal, structural characteristics of Ugandans' late colonial information activism help explain the failures of Britain's post-World War II scientific, progressive, centrally planned initiatives for development and control.

Preparing to inform all Ugandans of the end of World War II, colonial officials and chiefs planned a hybrid system of message transmission. District Commissioners would get telegrams, then send runners to mission stations. Missions would ring bells. Hearing bells, police stations would beat drums, and hearing the drums, people were to carry wood and make “really big” message bonfires on hills to spread the news everywhere. Thus, a peasant in rural Toro should experience ceasefire in Europe as she carried the wood to the hill for a bonfire to pass the message onward.¹

This model of information transfer, from the imperial center to hinterland through increasingly exotic and low-detail links, is exactly what students of empire have conventionally expected. Practices, though, were notably more complex. Ugandans in the late colonial era used information in intricate, targeted efforts toward political, economic, social and cultural change. In methods rooted in pre-colonial information technologies, such as slander and whispering campaigns, made modern through new technologies including newspapers and telegraphs, these activists from the geographical periphery of empire rejected metropolitan hierarchies of knowledge and control, and in doing so shaped buzzing publicity that spun new stories and sometimes destabilized imperial power. In the post-World War II era, Ugandans spun connections and acted on multidirectional webs of information whether or not the centrally planned imperial bonfires actually burned.

In practice, communications linkages were not constrained to an orderly, unidirectional imperial hierarchy, transferring a simple message of victory from the imperial core to the far-flung hinterland. Uganda did have government-controlled newspapers, both in English (*Uganda Herald*) and Luganda (*Matalis*), and by the late 1940s the information office had vehicles that could travel around the capital and countryside with loudspeakers proclaiming news and propaganda. But in the crises of the 1940s and 1950s, Ugandans responded critically to such information initiatives, to the point that a Luganda newspaper summarized how, in 1953, “the people have told the mobile news vans to go away,” turned off radios broadcasting official news, and regarded official leaflets as “disgusting.”²

Unwilling simply to accept the words of colonial Information Office, a wide variety of Ugandans mobilized information networks in different directions, competitively passing information among Ugandans, and reaching up and across imperial hierarchies of mission, state and beyond. Publicists of today's ongoing information revolution may see networking, virtual community-building and the manipulation of public opinion as new phenomena, but they have a history.³ Both Ugandans and colonial officials in the 1940s and 1950s used telegrams, newspapers, loudspeakers and propaganda shows to enhance older styles of communication, building wide-ranging communities and shaping both local and transnational public opinion.⁴

Colonial rule in Uganda drew on a complex cultural past in which Ugandans negotiated power through information, messages, rumor, gossip, slander, connections and carefully maintained polite and powerful associations. New technologies did not, despite what Colonial Office officials sometimes intended, allow London to advise Ugandans into a generic pattern of development or progressive change. Instead, what emerged was a local “conversation with colonial modernity.”⁵ Ugandans blocked or re-made plans that interfered with local priorities. The initiatives and technologies that British agents facilitated, such as postal services, printing presses, bicycles, wireless, films and telegrams all became additional resources, rather than substitutes, for Ugandans’ efforts at engineering personal connections and the wealth and power those connections could bring.

Ugandans who understood information and connections as opportunities to achieve wealth and power, enthusiastically embraced new systems of communication and information. The story of literacy in Uganda has been discussed elsewhere.⁶ Here, I focus on telegrams, press campaigns and political provocation in the 1940s and 1950s. In Uganda, documents from this period demonstrate Ugandans’ creative use of both private and public information. By the 1950s, Ugandan information entrepreneurs may even have taught local British officials advanced forms of local information manipulation and networking that those officials came to wield in their associations with London-based offices and leaders of the Church of England, the Colonial Office and Parliament.⁷

Knowledge, Information and Power

Studying “intelligence,” scholars have suggested that the new imperialism of the twentieth century was rooted in spying and the social sciences, along with more conventional economic and military might, rather than a reductionist orientalism.⁸ Knowledge of the colonial context, they suggest, became potentially powerful not through heroic stories of individuals, however peculiar, but as part of relationships and institutions that made observations useful. Students of anthropology’s history have increasingly understood anthropology and empire as mutually constitutive, and shaped not simply by colonial planners, but also by African informants, interpreters, and intermediaries who made the hinterland intelligible to the imperial core.⁹ Historians of science, too, have emphasized how scientific knowledge in reality is routinely created through networking and collaborative communities, rather than through individual discovery. Whether writing about the growth of botanical knowledge in the nineteenth century, or about the science behind the Green Revolution in the twentieth century, they emphasize metropolitan scientists’ ability to pull together knowledge from around the world, order and systematize it, and then shape it for re-export.¹⁰ Thus science, like governance, has required complex systems of correspondence between center and hinterland in a metropolitan hierarchy usually seen as centered in Europe (especially Britain). Imperial metropolitan institutions have used this status as the nexus of powerful and expert communications and knowledge to both move forward technically, and to plan technical, scientific or political progress. Few have questioned the primacy of imperial centers as the places where officials, scientists, and experts draw on their privileged access to cultural and political intelligence and scientific resources to make key decisions shaping imperial governance.

Ugandans’ correspondence, though, rejected such metropolitan hierarchies. Instead, Ugandans had a history of writing and telegramming to London with intensity and sophistication and in pursuit of their own agendas. They built their own corresponding networks and relationships with varied groups of British associates rather than relying on the Colonial Office. Relationships rooted in half a century of personal exchanges, letters and occasional voyages were sustained and intensified not simply by letters and reports, but by telegrams that emphasized the significance (and wealth) of the senders and the close connectedness of senders and recipients. Telegrams were more than simply their content. Uganda’s notables sent bags of them to congratulate Britain on its victory in the Second World War.¹¹ Detainees sent them to mission patrons to protest detention and deportation without trial in the aftermath of political upheaval.¹² Activists used them to demand their own meetings with high-ranking visitors to Uganda and Colonial Office personnel.¹³ And telegrams, read aloud to crowds, became part of mass politics from the late 1940s onwards. Ugandan groups also collected funds to send telegrams to London and the United Nations in New York, using their money to seek access to

international discussions. These went so far beyond the older petitions characteristic of the 1920s that Colonial Office authorities in London explicitly acknowledged a new type of engagement with public opinion, noting “we must... get a little away from the old way of replying.... I don't think a brief reply is enough. ‘What and why’ must be given to the African if we expect him to understand.”¹⁴ Telegrams were so valuable in establishing routine connections of patronage, shared responsibility and security that by the 1950s, the Colonial Office in London, inundated not simply with telegrams from Ugandans but also communications from Protectorate officials marked “urgent,” chided officials in Entebbe and asked for less demanding connections.

Both Ugandans, and increasingly their British Protectorate administrators, participated actively in making a routinely networked and corresponding imperial world. Ugandans' goals, though, were not to educate British analysts or construct a normative and progressive empire of bilateral exchanges centered in London. Instead, they shaped an interlocking network that deployed routine polite exchanges to establish intercontinental social communities of obligation and affect. In both routine and exceptional communication, Ugandans' information—fictional, spun or accurate—built influence within the empire and beyond.

Beginning in the mid 1940s, telegrams were part of a technologically transformed web of relationships that reshaped what it meant to be a British Protectorate. Their senders, censors, recipients, translators, funders and prosecutors came to see communications networks as offering not metropolitan direction, but a significant affective closeness between Uganda and Britain. Their significance was less the speed with which they could transmit factual information between Entebbe and London than the social cachet that they brought, and the ability of those with access to this technology to jump the queue of petitioners and be decoded (sometimes literally) and attended to, whether they were British or Ugandan. In the 1940s, activists built on this foundation of routine messages, adding content that shaped the relationships messages established, and that moved from slander to evidence through repetition and transmission.

During political mobilization in late colonial Uganda, activists and administrators developed and deployed informational networks. The dense sources that record the relationships of the period raise comparative questions about empire, and particularly about lobbying. In the Ugandan case, Ugandans managed to effectively lobby Britain, mobilizing a startlingly diverse British public for Ugandan goals and against the Colonial Office and its parliamentary leadership.¹⁵ Instead of delineating empire as a powerful metropole resisted and accommodated by its exploited hinterland, the informational networks produced and manipulated by a range of actors linked political, social and economic entrepreneurs in complicated, asymmetrical ways, with relationships that individuals and groups manipulated.

Background

Uganda is about 1,500 km by land from the nearest ocean port, but from the nineteenth century onward, British imperialists agreed with the Kingdom of Buganda's leaders that the country was not remote. From early interactions onward, Buganda's reputation was as a place where usual imperial frictions of incomprehension, exotic politics and poverty were minor. In the 1870s the court of King Mutesa I hosted Muslim traders and recruited missionaries from Britain and France, encouraging literacy and technologies, and establishing a relatively modern postal system. By 1879, British planners already sought a telegraph line down the Nile to Mutesa's court, from whence additional lines could be built to locations in the interior.¹⁶ By the early twentieth century, Uganda emerged as a model protectorate. Observers touted it with publicity slogans used to this day.¹⁷ In 1907, George Wilson, the protectorate's Deputy Commissioner who had first arrived in 1894, was able to portray the region as one with impressive material and human infrastructure. He emphasized dignified clothed people and literate bureaucrats, “enterprising and willing” in coordinating development and capable as well of producing cotton and buying imports. Ugandans moved quickly to adapt techniques and ideas, such as literacy and Christianity, and products, drinking imported tea and abandoning bark cloth clothing for “Arab style” cottons cleaned with imported laundry blue.¹⁸

Like others, Wilson praised such modernizing development. He also foregrounded new communication technologies, celebrating as the telegraph line through the Sudan neared completion, and as the Uganda railway shortened the journey to the coast from a grueling multi-month walk to a four day train ride. Quick accessible connections were foundational to imperial progress and control.¹⁹

The Ugandans that Wilson encountered had a history of considering close connections as foundations of both personal and collective success. Holly Hanson's history of Buganda emphasized local politics and economics as rooted in intimately performed reciprocal obligation, where power emerged from being close to the powerful, rather than from more abstract or economic qualifications.²⁰ With such advanced networking skills, Ugandan elites responded to Britons by seeking to learn and connect. They sent their children and wards to schools.²¹ Eminent men even travelled to Britain to ensure a personal impression on not just young District officers or missionaries in Uganda, but on Queen Victoria, Parliament, industry, church, and press that they viewed as important to Uganda's future.²² Such connections contributed to a successful colonial Uganda as elite Ugandans and Britons working together established Buganda-style administrative structures throughout the protectorate, transformed agriculture to feature cotton and coffee cash crops, and supported local schools, development and administration.²³ Ugandan styles of networking worked effectively on a British elite held together through its own strategies of schooling, clubs, associations and expectations.²⁴

Over several decades, protocols developed with regard to messages. Ugandans channeled telegrams of condolence and congratulation to Britain's leadership via the governor of Uganda and the Colonial Office. Likewise, the King of Britain officially responded through the appropriate channels of Colonial Office, governor, and protectorate administration. These messages offered little content. But conveyed in telegrams that signaled significance, they reinforced the relationship between all parties to the message.²⁵

From Rumor and Association to "New" Information Technologies and the Public Sphere

By the 1940s, though, both in the context of World War II and after, Ugandan elite networks grew and Britain lost its status as *the* imperial center, diminished by war and austerity.²⁶ Ugandans, whether cotton growers, military recruiters or veteran soldiers, understood the war—especially its mobilization, informational, and technological aspects—as their initiation into modernity.²⁷ Having won, they expected rewards, and complained vigorously when, for example, Ugandan servicemen failed to receive booty and reparations.²⁸ Thoughtful observers in Uganda were proud of victory but they saw that victory as their own, rather than as a sign of imperial power.

British officials, stretched thin by military drafts, understood the fragility of British administration. Historian Gardner Thompson argued that Britain all but lost control of Buganda, Uganda's central and wealthiest province, during the war. A wartime propaganda expert proud of his shows conveyed the tense atmosphere to his correspondent by noting a profound lack of loyalty toward Britain and that "almost every DC expressed anxiety.... There was something unpleasantly sinister in the way Administrative Officers would frankly urge us to fire our weapons so that Africans might appreciate the futility of arguing with Bren guns."²⁹

The late 1940s and early 1950s, therefore, as British officials sought to re-engage with economic, social and political development, were years of conflict.³⁰ Government planners stopped describing Ugandans as progressive leaders and dismissed them as backward, with Governor Sir John Hall asserting "the Africans of Uganda are indolent, ignorant, irresponsible and not infrequently suspicious of foreign intervention."³¹

Within this context, the 1945 general strike, as both an economic effort to gain access to war bonuses and a political assault against a system of administration by corrupt chiefs, was also a struggle over information and interpretation. It set a pattern of informational and interpretive struggle

that persisted at least into the 1950s. The general strike was followed by the assassination of Buganda's prime minister, Martin Luther Nsibirwa, in September 1945 with subsequent detentions. After the strike, political mobilization intensified, led by the Cotton Growers' Association and the Bataka Union. Aggressive, provocative lobbyists (Ignatius Musazi and Semakula Mulumba, respectively) spoke for both organizations, extending their reach beyond popular mobilization in Uganda. Musazi and Mulumba worked in London and spoke directly with British activists, religious leaders, businesspeople, development experts, metropolitan Colonial Office and Labour politicians, diplomats and journalists. Their campaign was central to the popular politics that coordinated the 1949 uprising.

The activism and unrest of the late 1940s involved strikes and violence, but it was most innovative in its use of communications. Prior to the 1945 uprising, Ugandans had circulated and sold pamphlets, particularly the banned pamphlet *Buganda Nyaffe*—inflammatory propaganda that accused local chiefs of acting as the loyal dogs of Britain in selling off Buganda's land and transforming its people to slaves.³² Local printing presses, initially associated with missions, had expanded in the early twentieth century, becoming available not just for devotional materials, but for the explicitly political. This included Luganda language pamphlets and newspapers that could express views of individuals or groups.³³ These were sold to government spies, but also to Ugandans who read them in Kampala and Masaka, and sent them further afield via bus routes to rural locations where literate traders or sons of chiefs would read them to broader audiences. By the mid 1940s, at least some Ugandans had come to define spreading information from newspapers—not simply government propaganda—as one of the duties of a *good* chief, as opposed to one that simply worked for the British.³⁴

When they struck in 1945, Ugandan activists targeted the telephones and telegraph connecting Entebbe with outlying areas, stopped the trains and set up roadblocks, seizing lorries and blocking police and military transit, as well as halting bus traffic. They even attacked the printing presses of the *Uganda Herald*, the government-friendly English language local paper of record.³⁵ The British commissioner who investigated the unrest noted that informed planning had shaped events: a suspicious number of chiefs (including the young king himself) were absent from their posts at the time. Tactics centered on breaking the communication systems that facilitated Protectorate control. The commissioner acknowledged that the “Government and police were taken completely by surprise.”

The commissioner's suggested reform measures emphasized the need for closeness and connections between administration and Ugandans. He called for reforms of Uganda's intelligence and Special Branch activities, supported a new Public Relations office, and advocated a series of precautions, including a private telegraph line between Kampala and Entebbe and plans for guards on infrastructure “vital points.”³⁶

Strike leaders and those officials accused of organizing the prime minister's assassination ended up in detention. But from their remote locations they nevertheless managed protests that reconnected them with a broader political world: they wrote careful and well-informed legal briefs against detention without trial that were hand copied in school notebooks and sent to potential readers and patrons, ranging from missionaries and church officials to the Colonial Office. The government's case against the alleged assassin, appealed to Britain's Privy Council in a volume replete with red seals and formal paperwork, also indicated continued older forms of information and paperwork, particularly as it culminated in a hanging.³⁷

By 1946, though, after such contests over information and interpretation, Ugandan activists mobilized through modern associations.³⁸ These newer associations, particularly the Bataka Union (BU), worked through informational and communications tactics rooted in Ugandan tradition, but they also deployed new technologies for print, travel, and communications. They began with a “whispering campaign,” to spread strategic rumors.³⁹ Over time, rumors created their own reality. Specific economic grievances did not lead to unrest until “nothing more tangible than the fairy-tales of the agitators” played on “gullibility” and “suspicion” coordinated through rumor, sometimes provoking

dramatic consequences.⁴⁰ Rumors could be both repeated and explained in vernacular pamphlets, posters and newspapers. By discussing rumors, rather than stating observations, activists may have sought to avoid increasingly energetic protectorate prosecutions for slander and libel.⁴¹ And in the aftermath of 1945's upheaval, Ugandan political activists intensified efforts to shape reality through oral and printed materials, both in Buganda and beyond, venturing into new genres of open letters, telegrams and lobbying, all well represented and reported on in vernacular newspapers.

These efforts coalesced in 1948–49. During these years, Semakula Mulumba, the Bataka Union's London lobbyist,⁴² was one of the most energetic practitioners of this sort of inflammatory informational politics. Building on generations of expectations around routine communications, he acted through available technologies of information, from open letters, pamphlets and vernacular newspapers to strategic telegrams. Mulumba understood the manners of petitioning. He initially used these manners, portraying himself as a humble grandson sent to London by grandparents seeking to save Buganda. He also, though, nearly simultaneously, tactically violated convention with disruptively vulgar language in provocative slanders. In telegrams, letters, pamphlets and speeches, he provoked and then skewered British hypocrisies, denouncing the many bases of colonial control, including treaties, aristocratic relationships and missions, and not excluding individual greed, sin and maliciousness. Though occasionally condemned as a communist, Mulumba's approach was far from scientific Marxism. His style mixed Ganda-style personal slander with Catholic Action-style moralizing diagnosis and call to action.⁴³

Mulumba proved gifted at amplification, the transformation of a dull message into vitriol: "HELL HALL BILLS DISPLAY HIS [Governor Hall's] STUPIDITY AND IDIOCY.... THE PROGRESSIVE BATAKA ELDERS HAVE MADE HIM FEEL THE NEED OF HARSH LEGISLATION TO CRUSH DEMOCRACY... TO PRESERVE IDIOTIC QUISLINGS.... GOVERNOR HALL IS A WILD DOG LONGING FOR BLACK BLOOD." This particular telegram to Kampala's police commissioner went on to connect campaigns against activists' detention, Bishop Stuart's signing over mineral rights on mission lands, and older grievances over the 1900 Uganda Agreement. It also condemned Uganda's legal system, asserting "THE ENGLISH JUDGES IN UGANDA HAVE NO JUSTICE FOR THE BLACK PEOPLE: YOU... DESERVE JAIL SHOOTING THE ATOMIC BOMB THE GALLOWES THE GUILLOTINE." The telegram paired this denunciation of the powerful with an assertion that state coercion had its limits:

WE SCORN YOU LIKE THE DROPPINGS IN A PRIVY; RAGE, YOU ENGLISH THIEVES, WHITE SWINE, BURST IF YOU WANT; EVEN IF YOU WERE TO KILL ME A THOUSAND TIMES I SHOULD REVIVE, REJOICING, AND TELL YOU TOO THAT YOU ENGLISH ARE LIARS, THIEVES, DRUNKARDS, IDLERS, WHO DRAIN AWAY THE MONEY OF THE BLACK FOLK. YOUR HEART IS AS HARD AS THE HIDE OF A HIPPOPOTAMUS; GO AND BE HANGED.⁴⁴

Mulumba's original, presumably in Luganda, was transmitted from London, addressed to Kampala's police commissioner with copies to the United Nations, prime minister [of the UK], colonial secretary, governor, office of the king of Buganda, the Bataka Union, and the Uganda press. The Luganda message provided a text that could be read defiantly in public meetings. Luganda newspapers printed excerpts. These attacks were not simply about general issues of nationalism or exploitation. They were personally vicious. Such publicity threatened Uganda-based officials' quiet cooperation with Britain. Translated into English, telegrams did additional work as police and intelligence employees recorded, discussed and interpreted their provocations within the Protectorate and to the Colonial Office. Vigorous language got picked up in international reports, potentially reaching as far as the United Nations. Reprinted in pamphlets and circulated within Uganda, allegations provoked slander suits and new press restrictions and the Bataka Union emerged as a martyr for free speech, able to discuss its allegations in court.

The specific allusions of the telegram—invoking both atomic bombs and hippopotamus hide—vividly linked modern cosmopolitan images and local understandings. In noting British insensitivity—heart of hippopotamus hide—Mulumba denounced British "justice" and colonial development initiatives. And thus rather than exemplifying progressivism, the governor's actions, he suggested, earned consequences ranging from the conventional shooting to the very modern atomic bomb. Attacking British claims to moral superiority, Mulumba positioned himself as the hero of human rights, speaking even if "killed a thousand times." This message of moral inversions was not subtle.

Nor was the “Hell Hall” telegram an isolated occurrence. Beginning in 1948, and continuing through the 1949 uprising, Mulumba sent dozens of telegrams. He copied (cc’ed) them strategically. And he used short telegrams to draw attention to longer denunciations. By August of 1948, he and Bataka Union activists in Uganda had sent enough telegrams of accusation that he was able to quote them in subsequent letters as evidence for his allegations of British abuse. Mulumba was a thoughtful reader of treaties and government papers. But he did not write about bluebooks or development reports. He failed to construct any sort of statistical or economic analysis of British exploitation. Instead, he made melodramatic accusations of treachery and corruption.

Once sent as telegrams, however, Bataka statements (or, more precisely, slanders) about British motives became the evidence Mulumba rested on in vivid demands for investigation. An eight-page analytic letter to Andrei Gromyko denounced British initiatives for local councils and Closer Union, and asked for the United Nations to intervene to “demand Britain’s account of her stewardship” over the colonized peoples “under British economic, social and political tyranny” and unable to protest without being silenced by colonial sedition and deportation ordinances. “The Africans are a young nation acting under forces of progress.... Britain is dead weight.... She has aged so much that she can only think of progress in terms of centuries.” Mulumba went on to ask “Why does the British Government deliberately ‘keep the black man down?’” before answering his own question with “Owing to her decrepitude and morbidity, Britain is a clog on the fast wheel of African competition, efficiency and general progress.” A copy of a single telegram, from the Bataka activists of Busoga, was the letter’s sole evidence of British motivations. It read “SENIOR CHIEFS INTENTIONALLY THREATENED AND COMPELLED CENTRAL COUNCIL MEMBERS VOTE AGAINST PUBLIC OPINION.”⁴⁵

Mulumba wrote to those he disapproved of. Some letters, like one sent to the Archbishop of Canterbury on the eve of the Lambeth Conference, were long denunciations.⁴⁶ Others were shorter telegrams probing for reactions. Buganda’s prime minister [Katikkiro] reported two sinister telegrams in July, copied as usual to governor, police and press. The first said: “REMEMBER YOUR FATHER APOLO WAS A MUSOGA. [He] SOLD UGANDA AGREEMENT NOW YOU AND YOUR FELLOW MEN CANNOT MANAGE THE DEAD AND GOD WILL PLEASE BE WISE.”⁴⁷ A second telegram late the following day asked: “WHO ARE THOSE WHO WANT TO ARREST AND MURDER THE BATAKA, CHIEFS OR INDIANS. REQUEST GOVERNOR AND POLICE WHO ARE GUIDING THE PROTECTORATE.”⁴⁸ While murky, these notes rejected the Katikkiro’s legitimacy as a ruler, reminded him of his vulnerability (his predecessor had been assassinated) and emphasized that he was incurring blame without obtaining any independent power. And by circulating multiple copies, or at least implying that the document was public, Mulumba attacked the Katikkiro’s prestige and enhanced that of the Bataka Union, which Mulumba described elsewhere as a fierce lion prepared to take down colonial rule. An open telegram in Luganda went further, addressing “all people of Uganda” and asserting:

THE BRITISH WITH THE ARMY HAVE, INDEED, SHOWN THEMSELVES OUR ENEMIES... FROM KINGS OF UGANDA DOWN TO PEASANTS, ANYONE NOT RECOMMENDING THE BREAKING OF ALL AGREEMENTS OF UGANDA IS AN ENEMY TO THE NATION... I HAVE, ON BEHALF OF UGANDA PEOPLE, ANNOUNCED YOU TO THE PRIME MINISTER OF ENGLAND AND TO THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR THE COLONIES. ALL AGREEMENTS WILL BE BROKEN SO THAT WE MAY BE SAVED FROM THE BRITISH FOREIGNERS.⁴⁹

Asserting that copies were being sent to Britain’s prime minister and colonial secretary, as well as Uganda’s governor and Buganda’s king, Mulumba sought to make Uganda’s rejection of British rule into a fact supported by a paper trail. This strategy—and the significance of the high tech whispering campaign—became clear in a telegram later in August that condemned arrests of Bataka leaders in Uganda and told officials:

YOU ARE BEING COMPLETELY FOOLISH AND CHILDISH... YOU THIEVES DESERVE TO BE SHOT AND TO BE IMPRISONED... THE STUART LETTERS I HAVE ALREADY PUBLISHED TO THE ENGLISH PARLIAMENT 30 COPIES OF THEM. I HAVE CLEARED THE AIR COMPLETELY THE SECRET LETTERS HAVE ALREADY BEEN SENT TO MISSIONARIES AND IF YOU DEVILS WANT TO GET HOME LEAVE AND EAT YORKSHIRE PUDDING AND SMELL PICCADILLY IT WOULD BE BETTER FOR YOU TO LEAVE US AND OUR PROPERTY.⁵⁰

In August, 1948, the British-allied leadership of Buganda [Uganda’s central kingdom] publically appealed to the British Resident [in English], asserting that “Mr. Semakula Mulumba... does not represent the Buganda Government and this meeting therefore requests the Protectorate

Government to have the said Semakula Mulumba prosecuted for passing on false and dangerous information to the people of Buganda with the intention of creating disorder in the country.⁵¹ With this appeal, though, Buganda's chiefs became even more clearly associated with Britain, and Britain with the suppression of information and the transformation of Ugandans into something less than citizens.

Mulumba's responses became if anything blunter, with a long telegram telling Uganda's people to "FROWN ON THE CHIEFS THEY HAVE LET THEMSELVES IN FOR IT PROPERLY, PREPARE YOUR COUP-DE-GRACE" before sarcastically going on to say "BRAVO" to Protectorate officials "BETRAYING BAGANDA CHIEFS QUISLINGS TO PEOPLE BY PUBLISHING SECRET RESOLUTION" and asserting that Bishop "STUART IS RETURNING TO ROB US FURTHER ALSO YOU BRITISH AND THE GOVERNOR ARE THIEVES." The telegram concluded, rather terrifyingly, with "IF ALL OF US MUST DIE BRAVELY HOW CAN THEY TAKE OUR MOTHER UGANDA OBJECT TO BRITAIN ITSELF."⁵²

Having worked to shape a crisis, Mulumba used telegrams to put other personal attacks on record. He accused Governor Hall of "losing it" and needing home leave, informed the Colonial Secretary that the administration discredited Britain and, possibly in response to Uganda Protectorate efforts to enlist Britain's special branch to investigate Mulumba's personal life, telegrammed Uganda's Chief Secretary, "LEAVE BATAKA ALONE YOU NEVER BEEN MONK I KNOW MISSIONARIES AND CAN WRITE STILL THICKER MATERIAL IF YOU CHALLENGE..." before warning against some "EFFEMINATE DODGE."⁵³

Mulumba continued to push toward a confrontation that would polarize the situation. In late 1948, he telegrammed directly, "UGANDA PEOPLE COMPLAIN BUGANDA CHIEFS PLOT EXILE KABAKA ASSASSINATE LEADING BATAKA DEPORT REST GOVERNOR BISHOP INVOLVED."⁵⁴ This telegram was loaded with keywords—chiefs plotting, Kabaka [king] exiled, planned assassinations and detentions, and it implicated the Governor and Bishop. The telegram was believable. Sent in English, it would have been read and recorded in multiple copies in Uganda and beyond. Even more dramatically, it sketched a strategy for an immoral, unprincipled colonial response—the Protectorate government could indeed understand Bataka mobilization as people complaining, chiefs plotting, the Kabaka being unhelpful, and assassination as a basic tool. British and Christian hegemony, rooted in claims of civilizational ideals and maturity, were explicitly under threat if the Protectorate administration responded to Mulumba's predictions as he expected them to, and as he called on outside observers to witness.⁵⁵

Protectorate officials kept files, took notes, translated, and tried to dissuade London-based audiences from listening or conversing with Mulumba, Musazi or other Bataka-related activists. They encouraged local notables to sue for slander. But in doing so, they appeared petty, and effectively in propaganda terms became the tyrants Mulumba accused them of being. By September 1948, they had provoked investigations from a London-based reporter, who travelled to Uganda, had coffee with the governor and attorney general, and met local newspaper publishers as he assessed the Protectorate's actions in "muzzling the voice of the people."⁵⁶

In April 1949, culminating over a year of intense whispering and organizing, the Bataka Union coordinated a march on the Kabaka's palace in what became an armed uprising against Buganda Government officials (not against British rule) that seized vehicles, destroyed government property and resulted in some deaths and thousands of arrests. To date, no report on events has fully explained what happened or why. But key to the insurrection was the use of inflammatory telegrams and press not only in the whipping up of rebellion but also in spinning how outsiders interpreted the actions. Government officials sought to label the events of 1949 as simple "riots." Mulumba referred to them as "revolution" and "war."⁵⁷ And even more dramatically, Mulumba made sure that news of Ugandan casualties reached the international press, regardless of whether Ugandans had actually been killed in the reported numbers. The *Daily Worker* and the *New Africa* both repeated Mulumba's allegations of "TERROR in UGANDA" with assertions of 13,000 arrested, hundreds killed, and systematic torture of detainees.⁵⁸

The aftermath of the uprising included a botched government investigation (the original commissioner went mad) and numerous trials in Native Government courts that lacked the

protections of *habeas corpus* and British ideas of the burden of proof. Faced with a potential public relations disaster, British officials from the colonial secretary on down sought to minimize the event, transform it from “war” or “revolution” into a petty factional fight against the king, emphasizing that it was not relevant to British rule. To do this, they collected and then hid documents from activists across Uganda and selectively built chronologies and reports for the official record.⁵⁹

The legacy of 1949, though, was suggestive: information-gathering and propaganda were explicitly noted as essential government activities in the wake of the uprising, and the Colonial Office expanded initiatives toward the East African Institute of Social Research at Makerere University, which was to become a center for careful collection and interpretation of rumor, intelligence and public opinion.⁶⁰

British Learning and Informational Networks

In the Protectorate’s early years, Ugandans manipulated their relationships with British officials and institutions via careful use of both rumor and the technologies of communication. British officials were disturbed and provoked by Semakula Mulumba and the Bataka Union’s whispering campaign not simply because it raised real issues about chiefly authority, cotton prices and provincial development initiatives, but especially because they had been so thoroughly blindsided by both the 1945 general strike and the Nsibirwa assassination. In the aftermath of these events, they had instituted new procedures to ensure the collection of information about local activists, and to try to prepare for their prosecution. The problem was that the official colonial legal system did not serve their efforts to deal with real unrest, and they thus found it more convenient to hand over “justice” to the highly problematic courts of the Kingdom of Buganda. And as they relied on Ugandan allies, their position became tenuous and it sometimes was unclear who was the senior or more capable partner in these alliances. At times, officials seem to have mistrusted their allies among office-holding Ugandans as much as they distrusted the Bataka Union. By 1951, the British Resident in Buganda was writing plaintively to the chief secretary asking permission to prosecute for criminal libel an activist who had written and published petitions denouncing Buganda’s prime minister. The Attorney General, though, asserted that “we do not prosecute persons in respect of petitions to the Governor” as “they are entitled to say what they like to him,” accepting denunciations and disrespectful writing as part of the reality of governance.⁶¹ Desperate for information, and aware of their own vulnerability, officials found themselves sponsoring dubious prosecutions for slander and sedition. Such efforts appeared lame in the context of Uganda’s intensive information environment.

By 1949, officials had realized that their problem was serious, and could not be solved simply with usual administrative practices. While floundering in response to Mulumba and the Bataka’s 1940s maneuvers, they began to learn, developing more efficient systems of information and propaganda and seeking to shape public opinion not just within Uganda but also in Britain. This did not solve their problems. Even in the conflicts of the 1950s, Ugandans’ propaganda initiatives outclassed those of Great Britain, ultimately resulting in an embarrassing about-face by British officials who accepted Ugandans’ rewriting of the Uganda Agreement and the return of Buganda’s king in the 1950s despite earlier assertions that such a thing would be impossible.

Conclusions

Ultimately, what we see in the history of information—telegrams and beyond—in Uganda, is a story far removed from technological determinism or metropolitan control of information. Instead of being dominated by informed British colonialists, Ugandans proved adroit practitioners of buzz, intelligence and spin, drawing on older styles of politics that built relationships and networks, and then used those to spread rumors. The colonial information network was subject to manipulation not simply by those in official positions, but by the Bataka and Cotton Association activists that donated money for telegrams, bought pamphlets of Mulumba’s materials and participated in a successful systematic effort to disrupt British hegemony. Understanding the system’s norms, in polite communications, and its nuances, activists were able to spread rumors, translate them to telegrams, and then analyze them

as empirical reports in explanatory letters, creating evidence of British perfidy. In doing so, they provoked responses that made accusations of British hypocrisy and lawbreaking entirely accurate.

As British observers on the ground in Uganda noted, Uganda was a prosperous protectorate without the extreme exploitation and oppression that characterized neighboring colonies of Rwanda and Kenya. With prosperity, savvy, and command of relationships and information, Ugandans' words—slanders, amplifying buzz and targeted spins—allowed activists to simultaneously remake Uganda's people, and the connections between Uganda and Britain. Uganda's information activists defied ideas of metropolitan leadership, building an informational web in which Uganda was central to its own interests and realities rather than peripheral within the British empire.

Carol Summers
University of Richmond

For correspondence: Lsummers@richmond.edu.

Notes

1. Chair of committee to celebrate end of the war, directions, 19 April 1945, Box 113, Fort Portal District Archive, Mountains of the Moon University, Fort Portal, Uganda.
2. For example, see discussion in *Mugobansonga*, 4–8 December 1953, translated in Uganda Information Press Summaries, MSS Perham Box 529/3 Rhodes House, Oxford [RH].
3. See, for regional context, Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires: Rumor and history in colonial Africa* (Berkeley: California University Press, 2000), 242–68, and Bodil Folke Frederiksen, “The Present Battle is the Brain Battle: Writing and publishing a Kikuyu newspaper in the pre–Mau Mau period in Kenya,” in *Africa's Hidden Histories*, ed. Karen Barber (Bloomington: Indiana University Press), 278–313. For a global background, see Dwayne Winseck and Robert Pike, *Communication and Empire: Media, markets, and globalization, 1860–1930* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2007).
4. For the distinction between innovation-based history of technology and “use-centered” history of technology, see David Edgerton, *Shock of the Old: Technology and global history since 1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007).
5. Frederiksen, “The Present Battle,” 285.
6. For narrative, see J. Ssekamwa, *History and Development of Education in Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Press, 1997). To consider the implications of literacy, see Michael Twaddle, “Some Implications of Literacy in Uganda,” *History in Africa* 38 (2011): 227–55, and Derek Peterson, *Ethnic Patriotism and the East African Revival: A history of dissent, c1935–1972* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), 1–5, 38–49. Both emphasize how Ugandans' identities were transformed through literacy. Additional explorations of literacy's implications across the continent can be found in Karin Barber, ed. *Africa's Hidden Histories*.
7. Wendy Belcher, *Abyssinia's Samuel Johnson: Ethiopian Thought in the Making of an English Author* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), suggests that immersion in texts about Ethiopian (or presumably Ugandan) thought patterns and values could “possess” a British author, shaping his subsequent work. There is some evidence that something like this happened among officials who spent time in Uganda's central kingdom, Buganda.
8. See Priya Satia, *Spies in Arabia* (Oxford: Oxford UP 2009), and Martin Thomas, *Empires of Intelligence: Security services and colonial disorder after 1914* (Berkeley: U of California Press, 2008), Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996), and C.S. Bayly, *Empire and Information* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).
9. Helen Tilley, “Introduction,” in *Ordering Africa: Anthropology, European imperialism, and the politics of knowledge*, ed. Helen Tilley (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2007), 1–45.
10. For example, Jim Endersby, *Imperial Nature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008), and John Perkins, *Geopolitics and the Green Revolution* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997).
11. E.g., the Kabaka's formal telegram, copy in J Hawthorn Hall, to S of S for Colonies, 16 May 1945, Churchill Papers CHAR 20/226/115, University of Cambridge.

[12.](#) "FOURTEEN HUSBANDS ARRESTED BY UGANDA GOVERNOR," one telegram to the Anglican Church's Mothers' Union declared in 1945 after the Katikkiro's assassination. Phyllis Manners (Mothers' Union Acting Overseas Secretary), to Rev. H.D. Hooper, 12 October 1945, AF35/49 G3 A7/1, Church Missionary Society Archives, University of Birmingham, UK.

[13.](#) For example, the "Baganda Landlord's Council," understood as a Bataka Union affiliate, telegram requested a meeting with a secretary of state visiting Uganda. "Fortnightly Intelligence Report," 27 April 1948, CO 537/3600, National Archives of Great Britain, Kew, UK [NAGB]. Activists denounced officials who refused to meet. Donald Kingdon, *Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Disturbances in Uganda during April, 1949* (Entebbe: Government Printer, 1950), 75. Kingdon discussed Ignatius Musazi's efforts to force meetings on cotton prices.

[14.](#) ACJ note [A. Creech-Jones], 24 September 1946, CO537/3592, NAGB.

[15.](#) See Carol Summers, "All the Kabaka's Wives: Baganda women, the Kabaka crisis and the politics and perils of loyalty," African Studies Association Annual Meeting, New York, October 2007.

[16.](#) "The Proposed African Overland Telegraph," *Proceedings of the Royal Geographical Society and Monthly Record of Geography* 1/4 (Apr. 1879): 264–71. These plans were slowed by Sudan's Mahdist revolt and Uganda's civil war.

[17.](#) E.g., "pearl of Africa" and "fairy-tale kingdom," both labels popularly attributed to Winston Churchill.

[18.](#) George Wilson, "The Progress of Uganda," *Journal of the Royal African Society*, 6/22 (Jan. 1907): 113–35.

[19.](#) Wilson, "The Progress of Uganda."

[20.](#) Holly E Hanson, *Landed Obligation* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2003). Hanson characterized this as a sort of "love" providing a framework for Baganda to build complex economic and political hierarchies.

[21.](#) Well before the era of Colonial Office bursaries, fathers ambitious for their sons made a point of sending them to British, South African and Sri Lankan boarding schools. Akiki K. Nyabongo's career was briefly discussed in CO536/196/4005. Ernest Kalibala earned a Ph.D. (Ernest Balintuma Kalibala, "The Social Structure of the Baganda Tribe of East Africa" [Ph.D. diss., Harvard University, 1946]) defining Buganda to the broader world and repeatedly shuttled between the USA and Uganda, remaining (disruptively) politically active. See CO 537/3601, NAGB, and Sir Keith Hancock Papers, file 29/1/1-7, 1954-5. Sir Keith Hancock Papers, Institute for Commonwealth Studies, University of London [KHP].

[22.](#) Buganda's delegations visited Britain in 1880, in 1902, and again during key moments of negotiation, and they involved individuals such as the prime minister (Katikkiro) Apolo Kagwa. Serwano Kulubya testified in London to block consolidation of the administration of Britain's East African states during the 1930s. Yusufu Bamutta and his son were educated in Britain. The Kisosonkole family included a South African wife and Sri Lankan schooling for at least two sons. Semakula Mulumba, and, later Ernest Ssekamwa, worked at London's School of Oriental and African Studies. E.M.K. Mulira established and maintained Fabian connections and Mutesa II and activists such as Abu Mayanja built connections with Cambridge University's elites. Even Hamu Mukasa employed a rhetoric of "wonder" in his memories of the trip, flattering his British associates and establishing himself as a man worth working with. Heike Behrends, "'Wondering with an Unending Wonder': Remarks on Ham Mukasa's journey to England in 1902," *History in Africa*, 25 (1998): 55–68.

[23.](#) The Buganda-style bureaucracy of civil service chiefships that administered the country (including previously stateless regions of the east) was impressive even in the 1950s. Survey of Muluka chiefs, Lloyd Fallers Papers, University of Chicago Special Collections, Chicago, USA [LF].

[24.](#) Beverly Gartrell, "The Ruling Ideas of a Ruling Class: British colonial officials in Uganda, 1944–52" (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1979).

[25.](#) Beyond the actual telegrams, hints of this practice appear in the London Times: "The Late Kabaka of Buganda; Message from the King" *The Times* (Nov 24, 1939) 11; or "Uganda's Greetings To Lord Lugard" *The Times* (Dec 19, 1940) 3.

[26.](#) See Carol Summers, "Uganda after World War II," in *Africa and World War II*, ed. J. Byfield et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[27.](#) See Robert Kakembo, *An African Soldier Speaks* (London: Edinburgh House, 1946).

28. Clovis Musoke blamed the Public Relations office of the Colonial Government for deceiving people and diverting funds, and sought to put the matter to the United Nations, via the Bataka representative, Semakula Mulumba. Press Summary, *Gambuze*, Fortnightly Review for 25 March 1948, CO 537/3600, NAGB.

29. Gardner Thompson, *Governing Uganda*; and document [no author given] "Mobile Propaganda Safari in Uganda" [penciled in as 1943] in MSS Perham Box 530 file 1, RH.

30. An early report asserted that Ugandans, particularly ambitious Baganda, were "prone to indulge in intrigue... [and] extremely good at keeping secrets." N.H.P. Whitley, "Report of the Commission of Inquiry into the Disturbances which Occurred in Uganda during January 1945" (Entebbe: Government Printer, 1945), 10.

31. CO536/214/40287, NAGB.

32. [Daudi Musoke?], *Buganda Nyaffe* was published anonymously before the 1945 strike and blamed by government critics for provoking the unrest. Abridged and translated version in D.A. Low, ed., *Mind of Buganda* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971).

33. These could be small and unprofitable. Aloni Lubwama, for example, was 28 years old, lacked journalism training, and edited the *Uganda Pilot*, publishing from "a hut... the size of my garage," working with the help of a reader who set type collected from Indian and other junk shops, printing without even a modern press. His paper sold 1,500 copies a week. Basil Cardew, "Daily Express Investigates Uganda Press Ordinance," reprinted in *Uganda Herald*, 2 September 1948. During political activity, entrepreneurs printed and sold badges and pamphlets. But crackdowns hurt profits, and such ventures risked bankruptcy. Civil case 56 of 1952 against the Baganda Cooperative Society, Uganda's High Court, High Court Archives, Kampala, Uganda.

34. See newspaper discussion of ideal chief competition in 1945. The winning essay by Sepriya Kisauzi Masembe noted that the ideal chief "tours his country as often as possible... reads books and newspapers, not only of his own country, but of others too." *Uganda Herald*, July 1945. See also Interview with Mr. G.E. Sseviiri, introduced by Patrick Mulindwa, and interviewed at his shop in Lubaga-Natete, 13 July 2006.

35. The one-page newspaper at the height of the strike acknowledged the strike's impact, noting major clashes in front of the press, with their doors being forced open by "hooligans." "Widespread Strikes in Kampala," *Uganda Herald*, 17 January 1945. By the next week, it noted that the telegraph to Fort Portal and elsewhere had resumed operation again, and things were much more stable. "Strike Situation Easier," *Uganda Herald*, 24 January 1945.

36. Whitley Commission, 26–30.

37. Appeal to the Privy Council (1945), CO 536/215, NAGB.

38. These modern associations included teachers' associations, a drivers' association, cooperatives, Catholic Action, Reverend Spartas' Greek Orthodox Church, a Uganda Labour Party, the Cotton Growers' Association and, significantly, a modern Bataka Union.

39. J. Kivu (founder of the motor drivers' association) claimed, for example, that he had begun a whispering campaign against S. Kulubya (the finance minister of Buganda). Kulubya took this seriously enough to have Kivu jailed for contempt of court. J. Kivu, "Life of J. Kivu" [unpublished, 1955?], chap. 5. Audrey Richards Papers, London School of Economics, London, UK [ARPLSE].

40. "Sundowner," *Uganda Herald*, 18 July 1945. Prime Minister Nsibirwa also denounced "rumours" as destabilizing the country. "Katikiro's Message to the people of Buganda on Policy," *Uganda Herald*, 25 July 1945.

41. Early libel trials by chiefs against Bataka leaders restricted the Luganda press in the 1940s. See, for example, the prosecutions against F. Kibukamusoke and Reverend Spartas in 1948, discussed in F.B. Welbourn, with research by A. Wandira and P. Nkambo-Mugera, "The African Orthodox Church in Uganda," (unpublished paper, 1957), Box 32 folder 14 LF. Even in the 1950s, libel and criminal slander were preferred administrative tools for dealing with protests. See, for example, Resident Buganda to Attorney General, 8 May 1951, C4990 claims of compensation F. Kamya, Uganda National Archives, Entebbe, Uganda [UNA].

42. Mulumba, once Brother Frances, was a lapsed Catholic who originally travelled to London to do linguistic work. He associated with Jomo Kenyatta and anti-colonial African activists of the West African Student Union, as well as with sympathetic White anti-colonial activists, during his initial trip. After returning to Uganda, he returned to London under the sponsorship of the Bataka Union, supported by donations from Ugandans. Important, but less vitriolic, was Ignatius

Musazi of the Cotton Growers' Association. Other prominent activists included F. Kibuka-Musoke, who was prosecuted for efforts to bring banned literature into Uganda.

[43.](#) For more substantial discussion of these patterns, see Carol Summers, "Radical Rudeness: Ugandan social critiques in the 1940s," *Journal of Social History* 39/3 (Spring 2006): 741–70, and Carol Summers, "Catholic Action and Ugandan Radicalism: Political activism in Buganda, 1930–1950," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 39/1 (2009): 60–90.

[44.](#) The translator noted that the original ("mpotelee mbali") more accurately translated as "F— off." Semakula Mulumba to Police Commissioner, telegram, translated by "ASKC," received in Kampala late on 18 August 1948. Boyd Papers, Secret appendix [SA] (244-5), RH.

[45.](#) Semakula Mulumba to Andrei Gromyko, 19 April 1948. Boyd Papers, SA, (182–89). RH.

[46.](#) For discussion, see Summers, "Radical Rudeness."

[47.](#) In other words, Sir Apolo Kagga was an alien, rather than a Muganda, and had betrayed Buganda by negotiating the 1900 Uganda Agreement that was basic to the Protectorate's establishment.

[48.](#) Telegrams translated from those received by Katikkiro Kawalya Kagga on 19 and 20 July 1948. Boyd Papers SA (224). RH.

[49.](#) Copy of translated telegram to "Bataka Uganda," 11 August 1948, Boyd papers SA (239). RH.

[50.](#) Semakula Mulumba, from copy of translation, received Kampala 17 August 1948, Boyd Papers SA (243). RH.

[51.](#) Letter copied in "Baganda Chiefs Disown Bataka," *Uganda Herald*, 19 August 1948.

[52.](#) Mulumba to Bataka Uganda, 26 August 1948, copy to Premier, Governor, Boyd Papers SA (251). RH.

[53.](#) Semakula Mulumba, 13 October 1948, Boyd Papers SA (262–63). RH.

[54.](#) Semakula Mulumba to Governor Hall, telegram, 20 November 1948, Boyd Papers SA (294). RH.

[55.](#) Mulumba's activities were part of a larger mobilization in 1948–49 that included public mass politics, secret cells, and his lobbying campaign.

[56.](#) "Daily Express Investigates Uganda Press Ordinance," *Uganda Herald*, 2 September 1948.

[57.](#) For examples, see Kingdon report, 89, 93.

[58.](#) Ugandans were killed, and the British did seek to minimize the significance of their killing. But the casualty figures that Mulumba reported were off by orders of magnitude.

[59.](#) Key materials are missing from CO files at Kew, some of which exist in fragments in personal papers, and in one uncatalogued volume in the Entebbe archives (UNA).

[60.](#) A.J. Keller to Logan, 5 September 1949, CO 537/4342 describes efforts to develop political (Special Branch) intelligence policing in Uganda after the 1949 events. The East African School of Social Research emerged shortly thereafter, and their collection and interpretations of local events, particularly by Audrey Richards, D.A. Low, Cranford Pratt, L.A. Fallers and J. Taylor, were important to official interpretations of later crises in the 1950s. For examples of intelligence gathering in field notes, see the EAISR materials in 6/- and 7/-, ARPLSE. For examples of how researchers' insights informed policy and action, see the archive of research and seminar papers assembled by J. Keith Hancock during his investigation. Historical Manuscripts ICS 29, KHP.

[61.](#) Resident Buganda to Attorney General, 8 May 1951, and Attorney General to Chief Secretary 9 May 1953, C4990 claims of compensation F. Kanya, UNA.