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# Adolescence versus Politics: Metaphors in Late Colonial Uganda

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# Metaphors in Late Colonial Uganda

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In 1943, Bishop Cyril Stuart, head of the Native Anglican Church of Uganda, tried to explain his own unpopularity and make sense of Uganda's ongoing political crises by asserting that the country was full of "lovable people" who were in a "very difficult adolescent stage."[1] The bishop was describing a specific challenging political context in Uganda. The frame of adolescence that he used, though, was much larger. This was not a casual reference; the bishop was drawing on a vision of empire and change rooted in the social sciences rather than in the older metaphors that undergirded systems of indirect rule and deployed languages of racial difference or portrayed a parental Britain saving its vulnerable child-subjects. This social-science metaphor of promising but difficult adolescence, and its associated ideas of tumultuous maturation and stages of growth, allowed British colonial actors to think about politics and change in psychosocial terms. These replaced both older essentialist categories and newer Marxist economic analyses of exploitation and class struggle with an overtly apolitical idea of organic (if disruptive and loud) political change. Within this new frame, progressive imperialists argued for an ongoing and even intensified engagement with the protesting people of the empire, an engagement that became known as a second colonial occupation. Protests were heard not as descriptive statements of literal misrule or abuse, but as signs of adolescent maturation, a stage that would pass and would

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[1] Bishop Cyril Stuart to the Archbishop of Canterbury, 30–10–43 CMS G3 A7 d1, Church Missionary Society Archives, Birmingham University, Birmingham, UK.

eventually yield a newly adult people, grateful for their parents' care. Thus protests were understood as auspicious signals of Britain's successful nurture of a maturing people, rather than as dire markers of the people's poverty and the British empire's failures.

This British deployment of metaphors of adolescence differed markedly from the French rhetoric of the era, which recognized the adulthood of the colonized and the possibility of adult citizenship, even when arguing over biological children of mixed ancestry.[2] Even during the Vichy years, when assimilationist ideas were eclipsed, French administrators did not portray Africans as less than adults.[3] Beyond Vichy, the African labor activists and soldiers that Frederick Cooper and Gregory Mann have discussed, and the anticolonial migrants Michael Goebel has described in Paris's streets, salons, and coffee shops, were seen as adults and included citizens and savvy negotiators such as Lamine Gueye and Leopold Senghor.[4]

The British Empire of the mid-twentieth century, however, struggled with its own rhetoric and ideals. Asian moves toward self-rule and increasing levels of autonomy from the dominions diminished Britain's status at a time when austerity and reconstruction at home limited its economic ability to assert global power. Racist and paternalistic ideas of empire were being explicitly challenged by the Atlantic Charter and new rhetorics of human rights.[5] Tensions between the US and the Soviet Union offered an opportunity to view the world in Cold War terms, but rhetoric about the dangers of communism in Africa mostly fell flat. Uganda's conservative governor Sir John Hall, increasingly nervous about the security situation during the late 1940s, at times tried to discredit activists by labeling them communists, only to be mocked by Semakula Mulumba, his loudest critic, who declared, "There are no Communists in Uganda. We are not Communists. The Uganda people do not know the meaning of Communism. They do, however, know that the Governor, who is not a 'Communist,' treats them

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[2] See, for example, Emmanuelle Saada, *Empire's Children: Race, Filiation, and Citizenship in the French Colonies*, trans. Arthur Goldhammer (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2012).

[3] Eric T. Jennings, *Vichy in the Tropics: Pétain's National Revolution in Madagascar, Guadeloupe, and Indochina, 1940–1944* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 20–78.

[4] Frederick Cooper, *Citizenship between Empire and Nation: Remaking France and French Africa, 1945–1960* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014); Gregory Mann, *Native Sons: West African Veterans and France in the Twentieth Century* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006); and Michael Goebel, *The Anti-Imperial Metropolis: Interwar Paris and the Seeds of Third World Nationalism* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

[5] Brian Harrison, *Seeking a Role: The United Kingdom, 1951–1979* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2009), 101–14.

badly."[6] With visions of class struggle and revolutionary war against exploitation and oppression, popular ideas of communism risked exacerbating Ugandan tensions in ways neither British administrators nor Ugandan activists found appealing.

In the 1940s and into the 1950s, British administrators and intellectual and religious leaders within Uganda, an economically dynamic but politically challenging protectorate, found the metaphor of adolescence both fitting and very useful. This vocabulary drew on and contributed to a global, cosmopolitan social-science literature of psychology and social maturation. British leaders in Uganda made that vocabulary local through the haphazard initiatives of the bishop and more systematic work by the social scientists of the East African Institute for Social Research. Within this framework, they built local analyses that allowed them to reject the political critiques and clashing claims of local political debates. The metaphor of adolescence worked against politics based in individual citizenship, rights, or class struggle, and instead reframed tensions as a blameless and temporary family drama.

Beyond Uganda, sociology and psychology, rather than older forms of observational cultural anthropology, had become increasingly prominent parts of colonial discourse during and after World War II. George Steinmetz, for example, has emphasized that the period from the 1940s through the 1960s was formative for British sociology, which eclipsed anthropology in the late colonial world. Sociologists sought explicitly to analyze social structures as well as the challenges of modernization that were larger and messier than anthropological analyses. Anthropological analyses remained smaller in scale, tied to culture, ethnicities, and governing principles of indirect rule.[7] Understanding colonial minds was also a central aim of the era's new psychological investigations, according to Erik Linstrum. With new tools such as color wheels and tachitoscopes, psychological researchers experimented to test how people perceived, thought, and reacted in cultures such as those of the Torres Straits, far removed from Britain. Such investigations often found ranges of variation among colonial subjects that paralleled findings from Britain, supporting broader normative ideas of humanity against older racial categories. Laboratory findings contributed to practical innovations in military assignments and eventually even in

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[6] Semakula Mulumba, "Commentary on the Replies of the Colonial Secretary," November 24, 1950, CO 537/581, British National Archives, Kew, London.
[7] George Steinmetz, "A Child of the Empire: British Sociology and Colonialism, 1940s–1960s," *Journal of the History of the Behavioral Sciences* 49, no. 4 (2013): 353–78.

counterinsurgency and community development, where group therapy ideals provided the basis for attempts at remaking colonial authority to "minimize transference" and downplay hierarchy.[8]

The context of modernizing social sciences that shaped a new sociology and psychology brought forward not just the investigative methods and disciplinary infrastructure Linstrum and Steinmetz have described, but new concepts as well. Significantly, during the early twentieth century social scientists built the category of adolescence, working to understand changing social realities in the United States, Britain, and beyond through a concept advocates assumed would have a broader relevance. Sociologist G. Stanley Hall's *Adolescence*, published in 1904, depicted a new, modern stage of life that had physiological and psychological, anthropological and sociological implications. Adolescence was, in this early discussion, both something everyone experienced and a topic that required attention to ethnic differentiation. Even in his pioneering work, Hall made clear that the concept went beyond the individual: he referred as well to "adolescent races," discussing their needs for teaching and treatment.[9] In subsequent years, publications on adolescence proliferated, positioning the concept as central to analyses not simply by academic sociologists, but by professionals ranging from school teachers to psychologists and beyond. The concept Hall built was not simply a biological or psychological given. He emphasized how a new modernity had reshaped experiences of maturation. By the 1940s, colonial leaders used the concept as a metaphor to dismiss African politicians as disruptive adolescents, going beyond Hall's emphasis on adolescence as a stage of individuals' lives occasioned by social modernity.[10] "Adolescence" became a way to explain how people and societies collectively experienced social and political change.

Metaphorical narratives have offered historical actors means to make sense of their contexts; they have also structured, and at times overwritten, alternative interpretations of complex events.[11] The individuals who deployed the idea of adolescence went beyond a description of biological maturation or generational transition to draw on the metaphor's vision of

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[8] Erik Linstrum, *Ruling Minds: Psychology in the British Empire* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2016), esp. 13–42, 155–65.
[9] G. Stanley Hall, *Adolescence: Its Psychology and Its Relations to Physiology, Anthropology, Sociology, Sex, Crime, Religion and Education* (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1904).
[10] Sir Philip Mitchell, cited in Linstrum, *Ruling Minds*, 171.
[11] See, for example, Séverine Autesserre, "Dangerous Tales: Dominant Narratives on the Congo and their Unintended Consequences," *African Affairs* (2012): 202–22.

tumultuous psychological maturation. They treated adolescence and youth as a key aspect of political clashes and of hopes for the future.[12] This article thus discusses adults who talked about adolescence rather than focusing on either real children or policymaking for children.[13]

Uganda's own African politicians used more complicated metaphors of childhood, maturation, generational rights, and parental inefficiency, rejecting the simplified dismissal of their grievances implicit in the concept of adolescence. Within Uganda, African politics included occasional protests by youth and by ambitious junior men excluded from Buganda's oligarchic officeholding leadership. Some of these activists aligned themselves with their grandfathers to call for the stewardship of Buganda's resources, while others drew on older Ganda ideas of generational transition tied to the king's life cycle to emphasize the need to challenge and remake the kingdom of Buganda at a time when a young king was beginning to rule.[14] Uganda's activists of all ages invoked youth occasionally, but emphasized inheritance and citizenship. They critiqued greedy leaders and inadequate British patronage. They did not consider their concerns to be childish or adolescent.

It was British observers who invoked the metaphor of adolescence. They drew on it, investigated it specifically through research in Uganda, and deployed it to explain clashes over development, imperial power, and local opportunities. The metaphor's psychosocial imagery defended Britain's role and deflected blame or accountability. The presence and persistence of ideas of adolescence in Uganda offer a guide to the mental world of late colonial power. A focus on that metaphor allows us to see beyond the messy, complicated event history of the era to the ways that the era's religious leaders, social scientists, and administrators used this key concept both to understand and to explain away the troubling political implications of the period's clashes.

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[12] Carol Summers, "Young Buganda and Old Boys: Youth, Generational Transition, and Ideas of Leadership in Buganda, 1920–1949," *Africa Today* 3 (2005): 109–28.

[13] See, for example, Beverly Grier, *Invisible Hands: Child Labor and the State in Colonial Zimbabwe* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2006), and Abosede A. George, *Making Modern Girls: A History of Girlhood, Labor, and Social Development in Colonial Lagos* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2014), as well as Ellen Boucher, *Empire's Children: Child Emigration, Welfare, and the Decline of the British World, 1869–1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), and David M. Pomfret, *Youth and Empire: Trans-Colonial Childhoods in British and French Asia* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015).

[14] Summers, "Youth, Elders and Metaphors of Political Change in Late Colonial Buganda," in *Generations Past: Youth in East African History*, ed. Andrew Burton and Hélène Charton-Bigot (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010), 175–95.

## UGANDANS AS ADOLESCENTS

By the end of World War II, Uganda's administration, its missionaries, and the colonial office back in London had mostly gotten over any ideas they might have had that Ugandans were simply innocent children who could be protected and guided to maturity by a paternal British Empire. The protectorate was, after all, centered in Buganda, a kingdom run by a canny elite that had aggressively negotiated for power in Buganda and over Uganda even as they accepted formal loyalty to the Queen of England. Even the losers in that 1900 negotiation process had gone on to engage in vigorous and ultimately successful negotiations that led to the reclamation of Bataka (clan) lands and a cautious attitude by British administrators that persisted throughout the colonial years.[15] Political mobilization by the Sons of Kintu, the Motor Drivers' Association, the Bataka Union, the Cotton Growers' Association, and other groups from the 1930s through the 1950s, as well as the growth of a vigorous and critical Luganda press, forced administrators and British experts to acknowledge the variety and complexity of Uganda's political scene, which they documented copiously in intelligence reports and sought to interpret with cutting-edge expertise from international social scientists.[16]

Increasing political mobilization and effective Ganda leadership during and after the war challenged British imperial authority. British observers struggled to explain chaotic and high-profile school strikes in 1941, especially at the country's elite school, King's College Budo.[17] They witnessed a general strike in 1945 that immobilized Kampala and attacked "progressive" gentlemen such as Buganda's treasurer, Serwano Kulubya. They read complaints about British administration in local papers and in pamphlets

[15] Holly Hanson, *Landed Obligation: The Practice of Power in Buganda* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 2004).
[16] On early political successes, see Hanson, *Landed Obligation*. On late colonial political associations, see Summers, "Radical Rudeness: Ugandan Social Critiques during the 1940s," *Journal of Social History* 39, no. 3 (2006): 741–70; Summers, "Grandfathers, Grandsons, Morality, and Radical Politics in Late Colonial Buganda," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 38, no. 3 (2005): 427–47; and Summers, "Catholic Action and Ugandan Radicalism: Political Activism in Buganda, 1930–1950," *Journal of Religion in Africa* 39, no. 1 (2009): 60–90. For official discussion, see CO 537/4342, British National Archives, Kew, London. On the East African Social Institute for Social Research at Makerere University, see D. A. Low, "Uganda: Makerere and Sir Andrew Cohen in the 1950s," [1984?] undated typescript, MSS Afr s 1825, Rhodes House Library, Oxford University.
[17] Summers, "'Subterranean Evil' and 'Tumultuous Riot' in Buganda: Authority and Alienation at King's College, Budo, 1942," *Journal of African History* 47 (2006): 93–113.

and books, ranging from the Luganda *Buganda nyaffe* (Buganda our mother) to the English-language *An African Soldier Speaks*. And they examined the widespread destruction caused by the 1949 uprising in a regional context, comparing it to the greater violence of Kenya's "Mau Mau" mobilization and acknowledging that Uganda's politics could get worse. Alarmed, they used courts, collective fines, deportations, and new propaganda techniques to seek to control an increasingly restive public. Most notably, they struggled with a young but increasingly defiant kabaka of Buganda, Mutesa II, who began to associate himself with the political activists of the kingdom rather than with his British foster parents after emerging from the regency of senior advisors. Deporting him at the end of 1953 failed to calm Buganda's politics, though, and instead offered a wide range of political figures an opportunity to come together in an ultimately successful campaign to force both local British protectorate officials and high-level bureaucrats and politicians in London to back down, seek help, and literally, somewhat desperately, rewrite the terms of Buganda's relationship with Uganda in a new constitution before returning the much-strengthened king to Uganda.[18]

In such a chaotic context, the metaphor of Uganda's adolescence proved helpful to British administrators and activists, particularly progressive ones associated with liberalism and progressive Christianity (such as Bishop C. Stuart) and leftist politicians and professional activists (such as leftist M. P. Fenner Brockway and cooperatives expert Diane Noakes). Rebellion, chaos, ungratefulness, and demands to be left alone, in this metaphor, became no more than what would be expected of such a stage of maturity. Instead of needing to reconsider the persistence of British domination of church or government, or to blame themselves for provoking rebellion through lack of resources, abusive policies, or active misrule, liberal and Labour interpreters could thus transform scathingly abusive local political rhetoric into something tolerable and perhaps expected of rebellious youth. Eventually, the metaphor of adolescence implied, Buganda's leaders might stop referring to well-meaning Britons as white swine, bloodsuckers, and robbers—all terms notable in activists' condemnations of British policy.[19]

Even in the short term, ideas of adolescence, with their psychological emphasis on stages of growth rather than exploitation, abuse, or other

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[18] Summers, "Youth, Elders and Metaphors."
[19] Dauci Musoke Mukibiira and Semakula Mulumba, for example, in Low, ed., *The Mind of Buganda: Documents of the Modern History of an African Kingdom* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971). See also Summers, "Radical Rudeness."

explanations for ungrateful and restive local political statements, offered the British a way of explaining why they sought to increase British investment and attention in a context where an articulate local political class was increasingly suspicious and resistant. British political and economic development policy in Uganda during the 1940s and 1950s was not a response to public demand. Economically successful already, Buganda's core political activists of that era put their money and resources against an experimental cotton station, a campaign for land conservation through the cultivation of elephant grass, and the administration's efforts to intervene in ginning and the cotton market. They actively resisted "Closer Union" for a larger political and economic development zone that would have united Uganda and Kenya, and opposed electing representatives of Buganda to the Uganda Protectorate's Legislative Assembly. Even the land bill that permitted the transformation of Makerere into a University College had been forced through Buganda's Lukiiko (parliament) against public opinion, triggering the assassination of the prime minister, who had advocated for the university. In his visit to Buganda, Fenner Brockway found himself shocked both by local activists' ability to organize and by their blunt rejection of the sorts of market interventions and government planning that Britain's farmers had long accepted as progressive and constructive.[20]

Given such broad political opposition, British policy in the postwar years was thus bluntly anti-political even as it touted economic and political development and progress. But when facing effective opposition to initiatives rooted in expertise, development, and progress, intellectuals resorted to justifying their initiatives through a patronizing psychosocial language of adolescent rebellion and growth.

## THE WORK OF A METAPHOR:
## EVADING BLAME AND JUSTIFYING
## INTENSIFIED INTERVENTION

Anti-political politics appears, on the surface, to be an inherently contradictory concept. Contradiction, though, is often important to ideological justifications: the classic "war to end all wars" concept, along with today's "peacekeeping" armies, illustrates this reality. More significant than its

[20] Summers, "Local Critiques of Global Development: Patriotism and Power in Late Colonial Buganda," *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 47, no. 1 (2014): 21–35.

internal contradictions was the congruence that specific aspects of the adolescence metaphor offered to the resources, self-image, and ultimate goals of progressive imperial planners. This was important in an international atmosphere of nationalism, decolonization, development, and independence. Older racial ideas of British superiority had faltered, looking suspiciously akin to the racism espoused by the Nazis, a toxic resemblance only strengthened by the rise of white settlers' racial initiatives in South Africa, Southern Rhodesia, and Kenya. Britain and the war-stressed British Empire no longer claimed economic and military superpower status in the increasingly bipolar world of the Cold War. Unable to simply claim racial or civilizational superiority, act as an all-powerful protector, or offer copious patronage, but needing its empire more than ever, Britain needed new ways to think about its imperial subjects—especially its restive and protesting subjects.[21] Beginning in the 1940s and extending through the last years of the 1950s, the "second imperial occupation" of territories as diverse as settler Kenya and the Uganda Protectorate was principally justified by British participants and observers by Britain's ability to bring development. Development—characterized as a technical, apolitical benefit—allowed Britain's liberal, progressive, and socialist imperial activists to justify continued British rule, regardless of popular, and possibly democratic, agitation against governors' and administrators' interventions. It allowed planners to substitute expertise for popularity or democracy.[22]

The problem for British planners, then, was to decide what sort of development was appropriate. The Russian Stalinist model of rapid industrialization complete with centralized planning, ambitious quotas, and a willingness to sacrifice citizens to the nation was still, in the 1950s, viewed as a triumph by many even in Britain, and emulated by an ambitious People's Republic of China in the Great Leap Forward. Such plans, though, required an explicit willingness to sacrifice and struggle. Sacrifice and struggle—mobilizing *bakopi* (ordinary people) against "kulaks," poor peasants against rich peasants, and everyone against capitalists—did not fit easily into the British Empire. In the metropole, Fabian and academic socialism, with an emphasis on reformism and inquiry—technical, professional change rather than populism or revolution through violence— offered an alternative. Even politicians labeled as "radical" in the British

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[21] Summers, "Ugandan Politics after World War II," *Africa and World War II*, ed. Judith A. Byfield, Carolyn A. Brown, Timothy Parsons, and Ahmad Alawad Sikainga (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 480–98.

[22] James Ferguson, *The Anti-Politics Machine: "Development," Depoliticization, and Bureaucratic Power in Lesotho* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990).

context, such as Fenner Brockway, tended to emphasize cooperatives, trade unions, and familiar forms of political and economic action, rather than overt revolution.[23]

By the 1940s, in places such as Uganda, Britain had accepted that older ideas of indirect rule were inadequate and failed to fit local political realities. Ethnicity, chiefship, and "customary" legal systems remained occasionally useful, as in Buganda when the cases of thousands of people arrested during the 1949 uprisings were tried by Buganda courts with adapted standards of evidence and testimony, rather than clogging protectorate courts into immobility. Increasingly aware protesters and critics objected to such uses of "tradition," however. For the colonial thinkers of the 1940s and 1950s, there could be no dual mandate to preserve indigenous traditions and institutions while instructing in the ways of an ideal civilization.[24]

Unable to fall back on simple racism or ideas of indirect rule, British policymakers and politicians actively evaded being cast as the center of capital and exploitation by seeking to reinterpret and reshape conflicts. In Uganda, this meant that on occasion major socially and economically important conflicts were officially characterized as personality conflicts. The most notable of these was the 1945 general strike, which, as Gardner Thompson has noted, was summarized in an astonishingly incompetent investigative report that rejected any discussion of economics in favor of an interpretation based on personal rivalries and, according to a key East African Institute for Social Research investigator, schoolboy politics.[25] As unrest became even more widespread and complex, such dismissal of grievances and politics became more difficult, but nevertheless persisted as officials described notable activists as elderly (in the case of clan heads such as Jemusi Miti), corrupt and ambitious (such as Ignatius Musazi and Semakula Mulumba) or immature and reckless (such as Abu Mayanja).[26]

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[23] See the Papers of the Movement for Colonial Freedom, SOAS special collections, University of London; and especially Diane Noakes to Fenner Brockway, 24-7-51, PP MS 56/8, Diane Noakes papers, SOAS special collections; DO 35/4368 and extensive materials in CO 822, British National Archives, Kew, London.

[24] See Frederick, Lord Lugard, *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* (Edinburgh: William Blackwell and Sons, 1922). For Ugandan critique, see Sir Phillip Mitchell, in Low, *Mind of Buganda*, 111–17.

[25] Gardner Thompson, "Colonialism in Crisis: The Uganda Disturbances of 1945," *African Affairs* 91, no. 365 (1992): 605–24; E. M. K. Mulira, "The Legacy of Two Schools: Being a Historical Background to the Causes of Trouble in Uganda, in 1945," [undated typescript, probably early 1945] EMKM KCB 1/1, Mulira Papers, African Studies Center, Cambridge University.

[26] For example, files on Abu Mayanja FCO 141/18246 and J. W. Kiwanuka FCO 141/18248, National Archives.

British administrators thus sent or encouraged experts in trade union-ism to go to imperial hinterlands to teach appropriate forms of worker struggle, making clear that political analysis, strategy, and action could not be left to local activists, however successful; those activists had in fact won war bonuses in the 1945 strike, successfully challenged Indians' monopolies on cotton ginning in 1949 and retrieved their king through a sophisticated and complex protest and publicity campaign after the 1953 Kabaka Crisis. The tactical successes of local Ugandan forms of protest and politics unset-tled British observers and even their allies in the kingdom of Buganda, pro-voking reinterpretation and intervention.

By describing Africans as adolescents, British observers acknowledged the obvious. Ugandans were not children. They were awake, aware, vocal, and blaming British administration for a range of problems. Within the metaphor of adolescence, though, such rebelliousness could be seen as without cause—as a stage in the protestors' maturation rather than being provoked by British malpractice. Adolescent protesters had not been forced into rebellion by capital or imperial exploitation; rather, they rebelled and engaged in risky behavior simply as ways of trying to decide who they were. And it was up to the aging empire not to be hurt or to resort to discipline, but to channel that rebellion into psychological and social maturation through guided forms of political development. At times, this meant helping those that insulted the parental power. At times, it meant setting firm boundaries. Overall, it meant channeling more resources to gradually maturing people and institutions, whether those be universities, develop-ment projects, or legislative seats that were key to what has been referred to as the second colonial occupation.[27]

## ORGANIC GROWTH RATHER THAN
## CULTURAL AND CLASS WARFARE

The East African Institute for Social Research (EAISR), under Audrey Rich-ards, was at the center of much of this reimagination of Uganda and Buganda. Seeing an African city and country as a center of adolescent matu-ration was not an obvious metaphor for social scientists. Anthropologists elsewhere in the world had, after all, emphasized a timeless world of culture

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[27] For Kenya, see Joanna Lewis, *Empire State-Building: War and Welfare in Kenya, 1925–1952* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2000).

and "tradition."[28] Even in the context of Northern Rhodesia's industrializing copper belt, Richards's earlier ethnography portrayed local people as part of a poor but integrated cultural system that persisted with little inclination toward dramatic transformation.[29] Audrey Richards came to Uganda in 1944 after building on an impressive career at the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Northern Rhodesia. She was immediately impressed both by Uganda's relative affluence and ease, compared not simply to Northern Rhodesia but to wartime Britain. Her initial program threw her into contact with Buganda's remarkably developed indigenous social sector, as she visited with nurses, discussed theology (presumably in English) with schoolchildren, and realized that she lacked enough dresses to keep up appearances.[30] Under her guidance and that of her successor, Lloyd Fallers, EAISR sponsored research that led to dissertations and seminar papers, and to the institute's most important early publication, *The King's Men: Leadership and Status in Buganda on the Eve of Independence*, an edited volume with essays from several key researchers.[31] Published in 1964, after Uganda's independence, it contained research begun and carried out between 1953 and 1958, funded by the Carnegie Foundation and the Colonial Social Science Research Fund. Initially framed as a collaborative and potentially comparative study of leadership, it saw so much complexity in Buganda as to offer "too many variables" for systematic comparisons, and thus became an exploration of the kingdom's society and politics during a time of political tension, struggle, and transformation. The published version offered an anthropological vision of Buganda, but the research and conferences that led to it included work by historians such as D. A. Low and Kenneth Ingham, political scientists such as Cranford Pratt and David

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[28] See, for discussion, Peter Mandler, *Return from the Natives: How Margaret Mead Won the Second World War and Lost the Cold War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013).
[29] See Audrey I. Richards, *Land, Labour and Diet in Northern Rhodesia: An Economic Study of the Bemba Tribe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1939); in contrast to Hortense Powdermaker, *Copper Town: Changing Africa* (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), or the earlier Uganda-centered work of Lucy Mair, *An African People in the Twentieth Century* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1934).
[30] On Richards, see Megan Vaughan and Henrietta Moore, *Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition, and Agricultural Change in the Northern Province of Zambia, 1890–1990* (Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1994), and Lyn Schumaker, *Africanizing Anthropology: Fieldwork, Networks, and the Making of Cultural Knowledge in Central Africa* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2001). On Ugandan conditions, see Richards to "Dearie," 6 August 1944, Richards papers 18/4, London School of Economics special collections, London.
[31] L. A. Fallers, ed., *The King's Men: Leadership and Status in Buganda on the Eve of Independence* (London: Oxford University Press, 1964).

Apter, religion experts F. Welbourn and John Taylor, and, significantly, psychologists Mary Ainsworth and Leonard Ainsworth.

L. A. Fallers's introduction made clear that this study departed significantly from conventional analyses that might focus on colonial interventions and African traditions. Instead he noted quite accurately that Buganda's leaders had consistently taken on aspects of modernity for themselves, rather than seeing them as alien. Continuities—a sort of organic growth—rather than a colonial or modern rupture defined Buganda's social and political experiences.[32] Researchers from Audrey Richards to her junior colleagues then proceeded to explore what it meant for a people to, in the eyes of political anthropologists and psychologists, grow up. Working with Ganda researchers such as S. B. K. Musoke, F. K. Kamoka, and many others, Fallers described Buganda as a dynamic society, with social mobility rather than just inherited status and with occupational diversity and complex institutions. The expansion of these into, for example, a Uganda Protectorate Department of Hydrological Services, was thus less a dramatic transformation than a maturation. As for the social and physical mobility sometimes seen as marking modernity, he noted that in Buganda "mobility on a very substantial scale is nothing new."[33]

Mobility, though, especially the sort that led to high status, could be difficult to achieve. Audrey Richards's essay, which drew not simply on life histories and memories but on surveys and interviews with young people, described how parents sent their children away at some point between the ages of three and seven so that the children would receive a stricter upbringing than parents might provide, and so that those children might acquire useful connections, or indeed *be* useful connections, between the parents who sent them and the sponsors who took them in. Older children, if promising, were sent into even more challenging environments as pages, servants, concubines, or wives for chiefs, ministers, or even the king. These positions could involve dramatic danger and punishment. But they also offered real opportunities for achievement, and thus the child or adolescent was obliged to accept punishment gratefully. Unsurprisingly, given such expectations, "hatred and jealousy of the father is recognized in Ganda institutions" since "a man can only achieve . . . authority by ousting his father . . ."[34] Politically, Richards argued, this meant that young pages and servants had to

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[32] Fallers, "Introduction," *King's Men*, 9.
[33] Fallers with S. B. K. Musoke, "Social Mobility, Traditional and Modern," *King's Men*, 159.
[34] Richards, "Authority Patterns in Traditional Buganda," in Fallers, *King's Men*, 260–66.

show extreme deference—"creeping along the verandah of the lord's house
. . . [he] kneels to greet his superior and agrees with whatever the latter may
say" as well as offering "flattery" and "obsequious praise." Otherwise, the
youth would be seen as seeking to supplant his or her senior.[35]

Richards sketched these patterns carefully as background for a subse-
quent chapter, where their relevance to the politics of Buganda in a turbu-
lent decade was made clear. "Most psychologists," she argued, "would
claim that attitudes to authority are based on the patterns formed . . . in
early childhood."[36] Pretended flattery and obedience overlying a reality of
intense meritocratic competition in a highly mobile society of fearful and
potentially vulnerable authorities, she implied, was rooted in older political
forms and persisted as a standard cultural expectation, enforced with dev-
astating violence.

Richards went further, though. She emphasized not simply that atti-
tudes formed in childhood shaped ideas of authority, but that in Buganda's
historical experience, the student activists at King's College Budo in 1941
became fixed in a pattern of alliances that continued for decades. In other
words, the "adolescent politics" condemned by Bishop Stuart was rooted
in the experiences of actual adolescents. The region's political turmoil, with
grievances over cotton prices, complaints about the pace of Africanization,
rejection of closer union with Kenya, and anger over the governor's inter-
vention in appointments to offices in both Buganda and the protectorate,
thus boiled down to a psychological issue.

Significantly implicit in Richards's analysis was the conclusion that just
as Ganda parents did not make their children happy by giving them what
they asked for, but instead used force to keep order and build success, no
amount of dialogue, mediation, or negotiation by Britain was likely to pro-
duce social peace. Indeed, Ganda society demanded struggle, competition,
and sometimes pretense, slander, and flattery to function and to allow new
leaders to emerge.

A subsequent essay by Leonard Doob, based on an explicitly psycho-
logical survey of "leaders" and "followers," made the social psychology of
this vision even more explicit, so much so that it overwhelmed the more
usual political issues or programs in explaining behavior. In his surveys, the
single most dramatic difference between leaders and followers was their
analysis of a psychologically provocative stick drawing. Leaders, when

[35] Ibid., 271.
[36] Richards, "Traditional Values and Current Political Behaviour," in Fallers, *King's Men*,
295.

shown the drawing, noted routinely: "son . . . dislikes the father." Followers, he asserted, never offered such an interpretation.[37]

Working in the middle of political crisis, and reporting directly both to British officials of the resident's office of Buganda and to the governor of Uganda, as well as providing background papers and ongoing interpretation and context for the visiting constitutional expert Sir Keith Hancock, the Makerere academics' perspectives on political culture were critically important. Specific individuals did seek to deploy economic or conventional class-based analyses of Buganda, but were met with scathing prepublication critiques by Audrey Richards.[38] The result was a working model of Ugandan politics that marginalized economic issues. Earlier clashes, such as the 1945 general strike or 1949 agitation over cotton prices, had led to concrete reforms after officials acknowledged (if only in internal documents) the justice of activists' complaints about inadequate wages and cotton prices in the context of war inflation and a noncompetitive cotton system. Next door in Kenya, Mau Mau activists explicitly voiced their opposition to racially exclusive policies regarding land ownership, presenting clear, easily understood grievances. Both economic complaints and accusations of exploitation could at times render British officials defensive and vulnerable. African activists occasionally referred to such issues. Yet such concerns were not at the center of imperial political debate in the 1950s in Uganda; British interpreters' explanations of events and tensions maintained that political mobilization was psychological, rooted in political immaturity, a personal issue that needed to be resolved by closer British engagement in developmental politics and institutions.[39]

Uganda's own propagandists did not necessarily accept these characterizations of themselves as adolescent and of their rebellion and struggles as signs of immaturity. Working with British leftists, Ignatius Musazi and his colleagues in the Cotton Growers' Association, and then in the Uganda National Congress, denounced specific exploitative and unfair policies, focusing first on cotton prices and ginning policy, then extending their critique into questions of ministries and ultimately, by the late 1950s, calls for self-government. More scathingly, Bataka Union activists, notably Semakula Mulumba, provided litanies of specific abuses tied to British rule. Such

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[37] Doob, "Leaders, Followers and Attitudes Toward Authority," in Fallers, *King's Men*, 341–45.

[38] Audrey Richards's comments on work by H. West, in Richards Papers 6/17; on T. V. Sathyamurthy in Richards 6/3 and Richards's notes on manuscript by Christopher Wrigley, 1957, Richards Papers 6/2.

[39] Thompson, "Colonialism in Crisis."

activists offered a genuinely Ganda vision of political ethics and citizenship, with a distinctive vision of rights and responsibilities and even accessible, participatory governance.[40]

Within a rhetoric of adolescence, though, British experts rejected such complaints as superficial and irrelevant. Investigative commissioners concluded after the 1945 and 1949 uprisings that unrest happened in part because Britain, distracted by the war, had failed to provide an ideal form of close paternal guidance. British governors and church figures not only saw Buganda's king as an unruly youth, but also read his youth onto Buganda's people more generally, whether discussing his marriage plans and difficulties, or attempting to understand Buganda's political leadership through their school records and relations with mission patrons.[41] Some experts went even further. The influential canon Herbert Grace, who had headed King's College Budo during the youth of key political activists before moving to Achimota and eventually retiring to the UK, wrote chidingly to Buganda's prime minister, Mikaeri Kawalya-Kaggwa, rejecting Kawalya-Kaggwa's analysis of the trouble as economic and asserting instead that the issue was simply one of "educated, intelligent young men." He advised that "you can't *repress* this movement—it will grow even more as your soldiers return and the more who are educated the more this movement will grow. . . . This young Africa is an explosive force and though the numbers may be small, it will have growing power and it all depends how it is treated now whether it becomes a curse or a blessing."[42]

Grace continued his letter to complain of "half educated young men," asserting they needed more, not less, intervention if they were to be guided into the "right paths" that would allow them to build Uganda rather than engage in politics, anti-imperial struggle, or calls for rights, justice, accountability, or independence. This rhetoric worked not simply because it allowed British actors to defend their own actions in Buganda, but also because it corresponded to some degree to the realities of the Ugandan experience. Junior men, lacking offices and the respect of seniority, did organize within Uganda, within associations that ranged from the Motor Drivers' Association to the Bataka Union and the Cotton Growers' Association. These activists protested against chiefs and British alike. Yet their rebellion was not the simple opposition to the status quo implied by observers' denunciations of adolescence or immature ambition and ignorance. It

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[40] See Summers, "Grandfathers, Grandsons."

[41] H. M. Grace to Bishop Stuart, 1 August 1948 and H. M. Grace to A. Sempa, 14 March 1946 in File on the Disturbances, CBMS A/T. 3/2 Box 281, SOAS special collections.

[42] H. M. Grace to M. Kawalya Kagwa, 17 January 1946, A/T. 3/2 Box 281, CBMS.

was often a struggle *for* opportunities and offices rather than *against* oppressors or exploiters. Rhetoric about youth and maturing adolescence allowed such positive aspects of the struggle to take center stage. Especially when explaining educated, elite youth and Baganda landowners, this language of adolescence interpreted protest as ambition, not opposition, and avoided permanently dividing the country.

The portrayal of Baganda and Buganda as adolescent people in an adolescent nation did not block conflict, but it allowed analysts and interpreters to present major upheaval as petty. In his influential work on Lesotho, James Ferguson described a modern development ideology and program awkwardly as an "anti-politics machine."[43] Within Uganda, though, it is significant that this developmentalist anti-politics machine required a language not simply of expertise and international technical high modernism and progress (ideas that have to date been emphasized in such discussions) but also a metaphor of youth that helped contain and delegitimize struggle, reshaping the very real politics and protests of the time. In doing so, it allowed the stressed, post–World War II British Empire to deflect both local and international attention from just how little cash, material, and input it had to offer as resources for a high-modernist development policy. With their emphasis on psychology and personal development, British academics and planners also kept the focus of Uganda's politics on identity—on who the maturing adolescent really was—rather than on questions of power, justice, or inequity, whether within Buganda or in Buganda's relations with Uganda and Britain.

## UGANDANS' CHALLENGES

At times, Ugandans challenged these characterizations. The Uganda National Congress rejected a politics grounded in a youthful identity. Instead, it pursued rights in an explicitly political framework easily recognizable to more conventional students of political development and democracy. UNC members wrote petitions; they sought electoral office; they held mass meetings; they deployed the press; and, rejected from key offices, they pursued parallel structures that had at least the general appearance of representative governance. And by the late 1950s, they had become the spearhead of Uganda's demands for independence, putting forward a motion

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[43] Ferguson, *Anti-Politics Machine*.

for Uganda's self-government and independence to Uganda's Legislative Assembly.

Yet when engaging in imperial debates dominated by metaphors of youth, prominent activists found metaphors of maturation inescapable; rather than rejecting them entirely, they reinterpreted their implications. Instead of seeing maturation as an apolitical, organic, biosocial phenomenon, they emphasized that it was learned. Senior politician Y. S. Bamutta put forward the motion for self-government in April of 1957 using this shaded language of childhood and youth. British officials had noted increasing political activity in Uganda, mocking these initiatives by noting that the "infant mortality [of parties was] high." Bamutta argued that "for a country to grow and improve and to run its affairs it must be given responsibility. If it is given the responsibility it will learn." He acknowledged that mistakes were likely, but that "we have been waiting for the last 60 years. You cannot train a child to walk and give it a stick to lean on. That way it will never be able to walk. You must let it try and let it fall down and then it will pick itself up and thus will learn how to walk." Apprenticeships, clerkships, and educational institutions must give way to real authority and accountability. Learning, Bamutta believed, happened when the youthful nation faced its own consequences, without protection from an imperial sponsor that seemed far too reluctant to let go. Others continued Bamutta's argument, as his motion for independence was seconded by D. L. K. Lubogo and expanded on by Dr. E. M. K. Muwazi, who combined the available metaphors to assert:

> I know we shall tumble and fall, like a toddler, but of course, that is inevitable. I know we shall try and get up again after tumbling and falling and it is no good anyone telling us to walk slowly. Circumstances, sir, do not permit us to walk slowly any more . . . when you want to learn how to swim you must get into the water. You cannot learn to swim simply by staying outside the water and if we are to learn how to govern ourselves we must get into government ourselves and learn the art of self-government . . .[44]

Many Ugandan members of the Legislative Assembly struggled over whether that growing mastery would come from an organic process of maturation, or an active process of learning. Z. C. K. Mungonya, who held the portfolio of minister of land tenure, sounded distinctly British as he

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[44] Legislative Assembly Debates (April 1957) in CO 822/1510, National Archives.

emphasized the need for maturity and asserted that "every thinking African would agree that it is very unwise for the Government simply to establish self-government and thrust so much responsibility upon the people who are not ready or competent to carry it out." G. B. K. Magezi spoke more poetically, but even more fearfully, noting that trees that grew fast died quickly, and worrying that too much influence from Buganda meant that quick independence would degenerate into Ugandans sending telegrams to London asking for Britain to come and save them. Instead of rushing into self-governance, he concluded, "we have got to let it grow naturally and attain it at the right time . . ."[45]

It was, though, an academic associated with Makerere, Kenneth Ingham, who patronizingly congratulated everyone in the Legislative Assembly on their speeches before reclaiming the metaphors of youth that the Congress party had tried to seize. He observed that "metaphors have been employed of children learning to run and they cannot learn to run without falling. With that . . . I agree. On the other hand, the difference between a child falling and sustaining slight bodily damage is a difference of a very great degree from a minister of the Government making a complete mess of his particular portfolio and ruining possibly the lives of a million people in this country." Ingham opposed the motion for self-government.

While going down to defeat, Congress politicians (notably, Y. B. Mugoma) voiced the fundamental inadequacy of such simple obstructionism, observing that the British had had 60 years to teach—and arguing that without political pressure for self-governance, Britain's failure to teach might well continue, providing an excuse for continued domination and exploitation.

## CONCLUSION

Whether sincere or tactical, the metaphor offered by Ingham and others in the administration, academic, and clerical worlds of Uganda who saw Ugandans as restless, demanding adolescents not yet mature enough, or educated enough, for self-governance, was a temporarily effective language. Ultimately, though, it gave way to the realities of British weakness and Ugandan politics. In the aftermath of independence, its echoes offered an

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[45] Ibid.

"I told you so" during challenging years of political stalemate, abuses, and collapse.

Turning the discussion of independence into a metaphorical examination of childhood, adolescence, and parenting had sidestepped any number of issues critical to Uganda's future, ranging from class conflict to struggles between regions and debates over "traditional" rulers and laws. The metaphor of adolescence was convenient and flexible, facilitating peace and polite discourse among elites. It pushed back disorderly, divisive clashes of interests that could emerge in overt political contention and debate. It failed, though, to offer ordinary Ugandans a way to act democratically in pursuit of their aims.

Childhood and youth are powerful metaphors. They can persuade. They can deflect. They can mobilize, or shape, empathic responses to crises. Ideas of childhood and youth are rarely simply questions of biology or neutrality. Instead, they have at times provided frames that policymakers and activists use to understand and intervene in events. They work to privilege visions of developmental growth and to delegitimate explicit discussions of power and politics. Ideas of childhood and diminished responsibility inhibit or evade accountability. The Congress politicians of the 1950s saw themselves as adults. Emphasizing immaturity and making excuses for performance diminished these activists' accountability and, in metaphors of the time used by Ugandan activists, blocked democracy in favor of fostering a lingering protectorate of cripples. Instead of emphasizing politics or a need to respond to popular mobilization and demands, this strategy offered progressive British colonial development planners in the 1940s and 1950s an overtly non-racial, non-Marxist opportunity—an apolitical means to justify and enforce their imperial guidance.

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