

UNLOCKING THE MYSTERIES OF THE ORIGINS OF THE 1966 UGANDAN CONSTITUTIONAL CRISIS

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ABSTRACT: *Although it is partly valid that Obote's aggressive stance on Buganda and Buganda's regionalism had a role to play in the outbreak of the 1966 Ugandan Constitutional crisis, this study challenges the notion that its occurrence was largely as a result of the above. It calls for the re-examination of the underlying social and political forces that led to its outbreak as there is overwhelming evidence of the role played by the residual effects of colonialism. Indeed the 1966 constitutional coup is still ingrained in the memory and history of Ugandans and is thus often referred to, however, the absence of a formal commission of inquiry into the precipitating factors that led to the crisis means that there is little clarity regarding the fundamental causes. This study is thus the first to offer a detailed critical analysis of these causes. Using the historical method to inform the research design; the study employs an archival history methodology to show that the internal political dynamics that operated in the post-colonial era which brought about the crisis were all related to the effects of 68 years of British colonial rule.*

KEYWORDS: Buganda, Constitutional Crisis, Mengo Establishment

INTRODUCTION

Uganda's independence in 1962 was a symbol of hope and freedom and for this East African country independence also represented an opportunity to become a sovereign nation and for all Ugandans to occupy an equal footing with their former political opponents within the country and within the changing global arena. Beyond this, self-determination signified a promise of peace, stability and a unified nation, however, four years later these hopes were dashed.

1966 was an incredibly tumultuous period in the history of the Ugandan nation. The violent attack on the palace whose impact has spread over decades and the overthrowing of the 1962 Independence Constitution occurred in that year. The country was plagued by a range of tragedies that not only ended the peace and stability it had enjoyed in the first four years of independence but also led to loss of lives. This period has had ripple effects for the country the origins of which have been enshrouded in mystery and resulted in differing historical accounts.

The purpose of this study is to explore the origin of the 1966 Ugandan constitutional crisis by critically analysing the influential factors that may have contributed to its outbreak and seeks to answer the following questions: "What were the internal dynamics of the Ugandan society that produced a major crisis barely four years into independence; and "What was the role of colonial legacy in the outbreak of the crisis?" The aim is to investigate and establish how a young nation filled with hope could experience a major crisis which has had a significant impact on both the kingdom of Buganda and Uganda's history.

This study argues that some political participants like Mayanja-Nkanji, a former Katiikiro (prime minister) of Buganda have attributed the causes of the crisis to the aggressive stance of Milton Obote, Uganda's first Prime Minister, towards the kingdom of Buganda, yet others such as Akena Adoko cite Buganda's regionalism as the primary cause. This study establishes otherwise as it contends that, with or without the above, the crisis was bound to occur due to the existence of enduring effects brought about by the colonial legacy which played a more significant role than has previously been documented.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a historical research methodology, that is reminiscent with the collection of historical data. By studying documents, relics and carrying out oral interviews an understanding of the past is sought. (Amin 2006). Such a methodology as Patten (2004), contends, gives a flowing dynamic account of past events and an understanding the nuances, personalities and ideas that influenced these events in the first place.

The approach of investigation used was of a qualitative nature as it seeks to understand the lifestyles and social phenomena at first hand. Indeed, as Blalock (1970), points out the qualitative approach provides detail and adds richness and depth to the understanding of any phenomena being investigated.

The study relied heavily on the archival data. The National archive at Entebbe, the Lubaga Catholic archive, Makerere University and the National Parliament archives were all visited. These revealed the presence of rich unpublished data relating to the events surrounding the 1966 crisis. The documents consulted in detail included but not limited to various official government correspondences, autobiographies, memoirs or diaries, commission reports, Legislative Council & Parliamentary debates and reports of Parliamentary committees.

This study also greatly benefited from the various newspapers. This is so because apart from by giving a daily account of events as they happened in 1960s, functioned as a prism of various aspects of Uganda's political life for the period under study; and offered clear insights into the intricacies of the origins of the crisis

Finally, with regard to primary data, the real record of history is found in the lives of ordinary people who lived it, hence the use of Oral History. This methodology was useful because of the richness of eye witness accounts and reminiscences about the Buganda history relating to the impact of the 1966 Uganda constitutional crisis. This proved to be of a great importance to the study as it supplemented the incomplete written record about the history of the Crisis.

Origins of the 1966 Ugandan Constitutional Crisis

The origins of the 1966 constitutional crisis can be found in the effects of the 68-year British rule and its impact on Uganda's post-colonial internal dynamics. In this study, it is contended that this crisis was primarily the outcome of the simmering colonial legacy that finally exploded into physical violence, as the struggle for the control of power reached its climax. This study looks at both the effects of colonialism and the internal dynamics within the Ugandan society that prevailed to bring about the political mayhem of 1966.

The debate over the colonial legacy as the cause of conflicts across the entire African continent is endless. A number of scholars argue that colonialism had a devastating impact on Africa and that most of the continued conflicts on the continent have their roots in colonial history. (Stephanie, 2005) In relation to Uganda, this line of argument is supported by Muddoola, 1996 and Karugire 1980, who point out that by 1966 the Ugandan state had not been freed from the impact of such colonial policies due to the preferential treatment of the Kingdom of Buganda, the redrawing of boundaries and the system of indirect rule.

The system of indirect rule

One of the common characteristics of the British rule in Uganda was the use of the system of indirect rule. Under this system the British gave preference to established indigenous government structures to administer colonies on Britain's behalf. In Uganda, the Baganda became the main source of colonial agents. (Welsh, 1996) They were utilised as a conduit for the colonial agenda while implementing the system of indirect rule, which was beneficial for both the British colonialists and the Baganda. Accordingly, Lonsdale, 1983 points out that the British were provided with a firm base for expansion throughout the rest of Uganda and the Baganda were also employed as initial administrators in many parts of the protectorate outside the Kingdom of Buganda. This policy elevated the Kingdom of Buganda to prominence, often at the expense of the other regions in the protectorate. For example, in the west of the country Baganda subjects were employed in the Kingdoms of Bunyoro and Toro and in the territory of Kigezi. Similarly, in the east, Baganda administrators governed the territories of Teso, Budama, Bukedi, Busoga and Bugishu, and in the north in the territory of Lango. (Uganda Protectorate, secretariat minute no 322)

As much as the cooperation between the British and the Baganda had benefitted the Buganda, this association also marked the beginning of the anti-Baganda sentiments in many parts of the country outside the Kingdom of Buganda where the Baganda had been employed at the expense of locals. As the preferred administrators of the British in the process of expanding colonial rule, the Baganda imposed their centuries-old political system and administrative structures in the newly colonized areas which increased resentment from other ethnic groups. (Uganda Protectorate, secretariat minute no 2; the Kankungulu estate)

Feelings of resentment at Buganda were aggravated when the chiefs appointed to fill the newly introduced Buganda structures, and Baganda or locals of the area, were instructed to use the Buganda titles in these recently colonised areas. This became a cause of resentment and the 1903 Badama revolts against British colonial rule in eastern Uganda illustrate the sense of frustration about the Baganda who were seen as the henchmen of the British. (Uganda Protectorate, secretariat minute no 2; the Kankungulu estate)

The anti-Buganda sentiments in the rest of protectorate were also brought about by what the colonized people outside Buganda Kingdom interpreted as cultural imperialism. In many of these areas, for example, the Baganda colonial agents had insisted on the use of the Luganda language as the official means of communication. To these people, the use of Luganda became one of the most painful aspects of the intrusion of Buganda's rule. (Uganda Protectorate, secretariat minute Paper no 898; Buganda). These sentiments were aggravated when Buganda entrenchment through Baganda administrators began to affect other local traditions.

In addition, Baganda agents were allegedly involved in corruption, leading to individuals amassing wealth in the areas under their jurisdiction. This personal aggrandizement is best

illustrated by the letter to Hon Chief Secretary by the Provincial commissioner, Eastern Uganda (Entebbe National Archives Kakungulu estate C2577). He points out that the Mbale County covering 80 square kilometres was taken over by Kakungulu and his followers. In addition to the expropriation of land, Kakungulu and his followers obtained substantial income through the imposition of an annual rent of 11 shillings on those living on this land. The Bagishu, who constituted the majority in the area, considered it a great injustice to have to pay rent for what they regarded as communal tribal land. The Bagishu were even more incensed at the fact that the taxes paid were not utilised for their benefit.

In so doing, the Baganda used the system of indirect rule to their advantage so as to dominate and exploit others in the Protectorate, but this too would have negative repercussions on them in post-colonial Uganda.

The preferential treatment of the Kingdom of Buganda

Another characteristic of British colonial rule in Africa involved giving preference to one ethnic group over another. In the case of Uganda as a protectorate, the British throughout the colonial period bestowed this preferential treatment upon the Kingdom of Buganda at the expense of the neighbouring kingdoms and chiefdoms. This preference for Kingdom of Buganda is not surprising as Buganda had existed as an independent kingdom for nearly five hundred years before the arrival of the British. Consequently, with the long British tradition of favouring established monarchies, preference would be given to kingdom states such as Buganda which together with its size and central location in the protectorate explains why Buganda was favoured. (Gingyera-Pinchwa, 1978)

As a result of this cooperation, unlike in many other parts of the Uganda protectorate, the Kingdom of Buganda was governed by legal agreements with the colonial overlord throughout the colonial era. Notably, within these agreements were treaty rights that elevated Buganda interests over those of other ethnic groups in the country. (History of Buganda and the surrounding African tribes, Makerere University Library archive AR/BUG/66/2) The kingdom received special treatment in the colonial era which positioned the region above the others and revealed a special relationship between Buganda and the British that lasted 68 years.

The above relationship was a precursor to an antagonistic relationship between Buganda and the other ethnic communities in the rest of Uganda. Notably, the Kingdom of Buganda retained a degree of autonomy in the running of its affairs which allowed its kings, together with their chiefs, to govern and at the same time preserve Buganda's political institutions. According to (Johannessen), this gave Buganda a distinctive and privileged position compared to the other Ugandan kingdoms and tribal areas in both the colonial and the post-colonial era. In essence, the other kingdoms were governed more directly as districts, in the same way as the tribal areas in other parts of the protectorate. This was clearly preferential treatment to Buganda and resulted in animosity from the other territories and with the departure of the British, opportunistic politicians exploited this animosity to turn other ethnic communities against Buganda which resulted in the political turmoil of 1966.

The redrawing of colonial boundaries

Clearly Uganda like many other African countries was a creation of the colonial period with its physical borders largely being determined by administrative convenience and economic considerations or natural boundaries such as mountain ranges and river beds rather than the

people. British colonial interests did not correspond with the ethnic patterns of the Ugandan people regarding the demarcation of internal boundaries. As a result, many different ethnic groups were combined in territories which did not reflect their ethnic diversity and thus ethnic tension invariably worsened. One such example in Uganda was the transfer of the counties of Buyaga and Bugagainzi which in later years became the lost counties, from the kingdom of Bunyoro to the kingdom of Buganda. The majority of the inhabitants of this area were Banyoro who were now put under the control of their traditional enemies, the Baganda.

To the people of Bunyoro as indicated in their communication to the Resident, Buganda (Preliminary correspondence between the Mubende-Bunyoro Committee and the Resident, Buganda, Entebbe National Archives, REL/s/121,1920), the loss of land to Buganda was perceived as a penalty inflicted upon them for having waged a war against British colonialism. Moreover, what incensed them was that this lost territory was a reward for the collaborating Buganda whom they considered their traditional enemy. As a result, enmity between the two-powerful neighbouring Ugandan ethnic communities intensified. This was a clear testimony that the redrawing of boundaries had not only irrevocably altered ethnic realities in Uganda but also strengthened ethnic rivalry in Uganda. J.R.P. Postlethaithe, the British District Commissioner of Bunyoro in 1927 and 1928 noted that “the inclusion of this area in the Kingdom of Buganda is considered to be one of the greatest blunders we committed.” (Lwanga-Lunyiigo, 2007). According to Kenneth, 1994, indeed the attempt to solve this problem in post-colonial Uganda unleashed one of the most fervent political struggles Uganda has known.

The shortcomings of the 1962 independence constitution

The 1962 Constitution which was a culmination of a long and treacherous constitutional path that occurred during the colonial era that makes its promulgation in 1962 part of the colonial legacy. The independence constitution had numerous shortcomings and greatly contributed to the political problems of post-colonial Uganda. In the first instance, the 1962 Constitution failed to curb Buganda’s dominance: under Article 74 (1), (2), and schedule 7 of Constitution and Buganda federal powers and responsibilities were enormous. (1962 Independence Constitution, Schedule 7, Entebbe National Archives, C10736/ DGc 230 III, pp.10-13)

Moreover, in order to enable it to implement its federal autonomy effectively, Buganda was further granted independent and important sources of revenue which included sources of revenue from graduated tax and entertainment tax. Buganda was also entitled to receive 50% of the annual statutory contribution from general revenue and 50% of assigned revenue from the Kingdom of Buganda. In addition, the London constitutional conference report (Report of the Constitutional Conference. London; the Police Functions, Entebbe National archives, C10628/7) to further strengthen this autonomy, Buganda was granted its own police force, legislature and judiciary which had the same status as other institutions in the rest of Uganda. In other words, in its devolution of power, the 1962 Constitution left the Kingdom of Buganda as a strong unit within Uganda with almost the same status it had enjoyed in the colonial era. By failing to redistribute power equitably among the smaller ethnic groups of Uganda, as Nsibambi, (2014) notes, the 1962 Constitution contributed to the political problems of this young nation. It had endorsed the historical disparity of treatment of Buganda and other parts of Uganda, a fact that made other areas of Uganda resent Buganda. Hence, the anti-Buganda sentiments of the colonial period were now extended into the post-colonial period which was a recipe for disaster as opportunist leaders were to exploit the situation to bring about the turmoil of 1966.

The functioning of the National Assembly had also been handicapped by the federal powers of Buganda as enshrined in the Independence Constitution. The National Assembly had no authority to legislate on the king (Kabaka) of Buganda and his powers, obligations and duties. In addition, Article 73 left the Buganda legislative assembly, (the Lukiiko) with the supreme authority to make laws for the peace, order and good governance of the kingdom of Buganda. Thus, by placing regional interests above national ones and exalting regional leaders at the expense of national ones, the Independence Constitution emphasized division rather than unity and the system was doomed to failure. Indeed, Kanyeimba (2002) rightly points out that no government, however able, could have directed the development of the country without encroaching upon the reserved and residual powers of the component states.

In addition, state authority had been undermined through the creation of other centres of power and it was these seeds of contradiction sown in the constitution that made the crisis of later years inevitable. Issues of land ownership, education and administrative personnel were all left in the hands of regional assemblies such as the Lukiiko. (Independence Constitution, Schedule 7 Entebbe National Archives, C10736/DGc 230 III). This would leave the central government almost helpless in areas where it would have needed improvement and modernisation in an effort to bring about a united nation. In other words, whereas the central government was mandated to effectively plan for the nation, the tools for planning were beyond its reach.

The shaky coalition government

Uganda's first post-independence government was a coalition that came about as a result of an alliance between the Kabaka Yekka (KY) and the Uganda People's Congress (UPC). According to Jorgensen (1981), prior to 1962, such an alliance had never been considered because each of these parties had divergent views and political goals on almost every conceivable subject besides the contradictory ethnic bases. The UPC had been formed to counter Buganda's regionalism and before independence it had acted as a vehicle to rally opposition to Buganda hegemony and was largely a northern dominated party. Conversely, Mutibwa (1992) makes a valid observation that the KY which was launched on 10 June 1961 epitomized the isolationist tendencies of the Baganda. It had been formed to protect the threatened position of the Kabaka and the Protestant element of the Mengo establishment.

The coalition came about as both the British and the Mengo Establishment wanted to prevent Catholic Ben Kiwanuka, the leader of the Democratic Party (DP) and Uganda's first Chief Minister, from taking over leadership from them. (Onyango-Odongo, 1993). As a result, the British persuaded Obote and Muteesa the Kabaka of Buganda who had been implacably hostile towards each other to bury their political differences and work together. (Onyango-Odongo, 1993). This partly explains Obote's sudden change from his outspoken anti Buganda stance to becoming pro Buganda.

The formation of this coalition government however, as reported by Kasozi, (2013) has been regarded as one of the most dishonest political ventures that Ugandan politicians have ever undertaken. Neither the KY nor the UPC had any illusions about the permanence of the alliance as both Obote and Muteesa had different agenda. According to Jorgensen, (1981), Glenworth and Hancock, (1973) the UPC's sole aim was to use the alliance to get to power by depriving the DP of support in Buganda while the Mengo establishment's aim was to retain their privileges. Consequently, as soon as the DP was defeated differences between the two resurfaced. For instance, although Muteesa's position was a largely ceremonial one, the new position gave him dual loyalty as the Kabaka of Buganda and as the Head of State. (Mittelman,

1993). This was to bring about conflicting roles between him as a head of state and Obote as Prime Minister and moreover, Obote's aspirations were at variance with those of Buganda.

The Implications of the Struggle to Control the Uganda People's Congress in Buganda

The ramifications of colonial rule discussed above provided the basis for Obote's dictatorial tendencies, the Buganda Regionalism and the venal political system which were to bring about the constitutional crisis in 1966.

The political stability of Uganda depended on the strong united leadership of the UPC as a ruling party, however, as Ssemwanga- Kivumbu (2013) rightly points out, the UPC was born of a loose coalition of divergent ethnic groups that largely came together to change their marginalized status and end Buganda's domination. As a result, its leadership was factionalized with each faction leader representing a local constituency which was usually ethnically distinct from the others. Obote's power base, for example, lay among the Langi in the north of the country, George Magezi's came from the Bunyoro in the western region and John Babiha's from Tooro in the mid-west. W.W. Rwetsiba's support base was in the Ankole region in south-western Uganda and William Nadiope's was from Busoga in the eastern region. Felix Onama was from the west Nile region and Cuthbert Obwangamoi was from the far eastern region of Uganda. (Engholm, 1962 and Karugire, 1980)

Each of these regional leaders was a leader in his own right who did not require the support of the party or its president to be elected in their districts. It was these groups, with John Kakonge, the UPC secretary general, who were engaged in a struggle for control of the party. By 1964, major realignment of political forces began to take shape along regional and ethnic divides of the North and the South. Obote led the northern Nilotic republican group while Grace Ibingira led the southern monarchist Bantu group. The control of UPC was crucial because whoever controlled it would ultimately control the country. The Bantu group accused Obote of contradicting his own policy of stimulating national unity by showing bias towards the ethnic groups of northern Uganda.

According to Ingham (1994), as a result of the widening ethnic divide in the party, from mid-1965 a number of Bantu ministers and leading Baganda personalities began plotting to oust Obote in order to reverse the perceived domination of the cabinet by northerners. The struggle for the control of the UPC had now reached a crisis level. The rivalry between Obote and Ibingira for the leadership of the party and, by extension, the leadership of Uganda continued unabated as its outcome would determine who would control the political development of the young nation.

Obote now faced two major threats to his power as the country's prime minister: the infighting in the UPC and the threat from Buganda which had remained steadfast in opposing his rule. He dealt violently with his opponents and his actions rather than containing the situation simply escalated it to critical level which, coupled with other issues, culminated in a crisis in May 1966. Obote was aware that he needed to be a step ahead of his political opponents if he was to survive as both the leader of UPC and the Prime Minister. The existence of these threats instilled a great fear in Obote which soon developed into a deep-seated hatred of both his opponents in the party and in Buganda which meant that for his own political survival he had to prevent any opposition.

Obote's emerging dictatorial powers

Obote's autocratic behaviour stemmed from the structural problem of the colonial legacy already cited above. While the British were forming the new super-structure of the political administration of independent Uganda, they did not discard the oppressive colonial system; instead they accentuated autocracy by transferring the autocratic powers, executive and political, which had been formerly vested in the British Governor and his British Chief Secretary to the office of the Prime Minister of an independent Uganda. Thus, Obote amassed great powers by inheriting the colonial instruments of power, namely: the police and the King's African Rifles (viz. the Uganda Army). This did not mean he had to abuse such powers, rather he chose to become an autocratic and dictatorial leader because he was unable to handle dissent and disagreement.

Using the northern dominated army and a spy service under the innocuous name of the General Service Department, headed by his first cousin Adoko Nekyon, Obote treated those people who opposed him with contempt and complete disregard for human rights and the rule of law. (Mutibwa, 1992). Ben Kiwanuka, the first Chief Minister, Brigadier Shaban Opolot commander of the armed forces, and five cabinet ministers were all detained indefinitely and five members of parliament who refused to acknowledge and accept the 1966 constitution lost their seats.

Between 1962 and 1966, Obote also forced his Ugandan ideals upon the Buganda by adopting an aggressive stance towards the kingdom as he claimed that this was part of creating a national identity in a newly independent Uganda. (Obote speaks to Drum, Drum April 1966) To Sathyamurthy (1986), the reasons for Obote's reactions seem to stem from the fact that he was unhappy that the regional governments had become a microcosm of the central government rather than its local outpost. Obote slowly destroyed the kingdom's institutions and its position of advantage within the country. For example, he passed legislation in 1964 that restricted the activities of the KY only in Buganda. In this regard Hansen (1977), points out that Obote's concerted and unsuccessful efforts to bring about Buganda's demise had turned the Baganda into the most vocal opposition and only served to increase the tension between the kingdom of Buganda and Obote. Thus with the aid of the northern troops and ministers, Obote forcefully attacked the kingdom of Buganda in 1966.

Buganda's regionalism

In the newly independent Ugandan state, Mengo the seat of government of the kingdom of Buganda was one of the major centres of power. Unfortunately, at this critical time Mengo failed to provide national leadership, and instead concentrated on entrenching Buganda's regionalism. Moreover, as Kasozi (2013), notes the economic and political power in Buganda was concentrated in a few families, hence creating a wealthy and powerful ruling elite, popularly known as the Mengo Establishment. They developed an acute form of superiority complex and directed the political and economic agenda of Buganda and were preoccupied with preserving the Buganda sub-state not in order to protect the general interests of the rest of Buganda but in order to protect the elite's privileges. (Kasozi, 2013)

The poor leadership of the Mengo Establishment manifested itself in various ways. Firstly, the Mengo Establishment's reluctance to institute a functioning democracy in the kingdom was later used successfully by its opponents. In his report, (Munster, 1961) on the relations amongst Uganda's ethnic groups (Report of Uganda's Relations Commission, Lubaga Catholic

Archives LCA 135, 1961) notes that the Mengo Establishment's attachment to the old form of governance led to its rejection of political party activities in Buganda and to reforms in the Lukiiko. Consequently, the Mengo Establishment was not ready to give up its old centuries-old system of administration for the sake of having a uniform system of governance with the rest of Uganda. Buganda's call for safeguards of their Kabaka, which at times went to the extreme of secessionism, effectively turned the kingdom of Buganda against the rest of the country. Obote took this opportunity to attack Buganda because of the internal policies of the Mengo establishment. Indeed, Mugaju and Olaka-Onyango, 2000, and Mugabe 2012, while examining the development of political democracy in post-colonial Uganda relate the clashes and conflicts between the Mengo Establishment and nationalistic leaders to the Buganda's hostility towards democracy.

Overall, the leadership at Mengo was inept and lacked the ability to provide national leadership which could have eased the tension between Obote and Buganda, and also led to a stable Buganda. Writing about the 1966 Constitutional Crisis, Hancock one of the British colonial administrators observed that the Mengo Establishment "were beginning to suffer the consequences of their short-sightedness, dithering, and complacency." (the Constitutional crisis of 1966, *The Monitor*, 13 May, 2012)

The Venal Political system of the 1960s

In the 1960s, Uganda was also riddled with widespread corruption at various levels of government courtesy of the existence of weak institutions which ought to have acted as checks and balances for the government. This afforded leaders like Obote the opportunity to exploit these weaknesses in order to stage a constitutional coup in 1966.

Firstly, the bribery of members of the national assembly greatly undermined the independence of the institution and its effectiveness to check the excesses of central government. The Obote government combined patronage and the promise of future rewards within the ruling UPC to carry out programs that would enhance his dictatorial powers. Similarly, this also applied to the opposition members of the national assembly from both the DP and KY who crossed the floor to join the UPC on the promise of government jobs and remuneration. Basil Bataringaya, the leader of the opposition (DP) was appointed Minister of Internal Affairs after crossing to UPC. Other DP members who followed him included James Ochola, Vincent Rwamwaro and Stanslaus Okurut. From the Kingdom of Bunyoro, several DP members of the national assembly also agreed to join the UPC after Obote undertook to carry out a referendum to restore to Bunyoro the lost counties which then belonged to Buganda. (Parliamentary Hansard official Debates, 1st Session 1966 Vol 67 National Assembly Achieve). William Kalema who led a group from KY was appointed as Minister of Finance. Ironically, the UPC had been a member of the coalition government yet it had bribed members of the KY its coalition partner to cross over to it. Moreover, all the above individuals joined UPC without notifying their electorate which amounted to a treacherous act and an erosion of democratic principles thus effectively creating a dictator, namely Obote.

Furthermore, those who joined the government allowed the UPC to acquire an artificial majority with dire consequences. By 1966 the National Assembly had 74, 9, 8 and 1 member(s) of the UPC, the DP, the KY and the Independents respectively. (Parliament Hansards, Official Debates 3rd Session December 1965 to February 1966, National Assembly Achieve) This was not a reflection of the true strength of UPC in the country. Without this artificial majority, it is

unlikely that Obote could have achieved what he did in 1966; the abrogation of the 1962 constitution, acting decisively against Muteesa and Buganda.

He also disregarded parliamentary resolutions. When parliament passed a resolution ordering the suspension of Idi Amin and an investigation into his bank account which contained 17,000-pound sterling an amount exchanged into cash in the form of gold bars bearing a stamp of the government of Belgian Congo, Obote ignored it and even later promoted Amin, to the rank of Major General and Army Commander. ('Parliament accepts Ochieng Motion seeking Amin Probe' *Uganda Argus*, 1966 5 February; Parliament Hansards Official Debates 1st Session 1966, Vol 63, National Assembly Achieve) He would then as noted by both Nsibambi (2014) and newspaper reports ('Baminista batanno bakwatidwa', *Omukulembeze*, 24 February 1966), arrest five cabinet ministers, namely Grace Ibingira who at the time was the Party Secretary General, Balaki Kirya, George Magezi, Dr.S.B Lumu and Mathias Ngobi as they had demanded an investigation into the gold scandal on 24 February 1966. This gives credible evidence that Obote was a beneficiary and not an innocent player in the gold scandal and his actions served to elevate the political tension in the country.

Additionally, venal politicians also existed at Mengo, which was one of the power centres in the newly independent nation. For instance, although Buganda had GBP 1 million in its coffers by 1958, by 1960 this had dwindled to a mere GBP 465,000 and 1963, it was in the red by GBP 226,863. (Ministry of Finance Kabaka's Government, 1965, Makerere University Library Achieve, AR/BUG/1/8)

By 1965 the Kabaka's government was on the brink of bankruptcy, unfortunately, the worst offenders were the Kabaka's ministers whose nepotism and insensitivity had reached new heights. ('Speech by the Prime Minister the Hon DR.AM Obote, MP, ' on 3rd March: National Assembly Achieve, DG 11). In 1965, despite the fact that they were running a deficit budget these officials borrowed a sum of GBP 200,000 for personal use. (Buganda Economic Planning Commission Report 1964-1970, Makerere University Achieve, AR/BUG/1/5/5.)

It were the above actions by the Mengo leadership that brought about a serious political stalemate between the central government and Mengo. Obote was concerned with the financial misconduct by the Mengo establishment resulting in protracted wrangles between the central government and Buganda thereby adding to the existing poor relations between the two parties, thus contributing inevitably to the explosive atmosphere that finally led to the attack on the Kabaka's palace on the 24 May 1966.

CONCLUSION

The manner in which British colonial rule was established and extended from Buganda to the rest of the protectorate and the consequent British administrative policies of indirect rule and the preferential treatment of Buganda, strengthened divisions and sharpened ethnic conflict. It left a residue of distrust between Buganda and the rest of Uganda which strongly impacted on the political environment of post-independence Uganda. Consequently, the issue of Buganda's relationships with the central government attained national significance in the years immediately before and after independence. It is thus the conclusion of this study that the existence of lingering effects of colonialism within the young Ugandan nation state produced a weak post-colonial state that was incapable of combining different antagonistic forces while

ensuring stability. Hence, the occurrence of a constitutional crisis in 1966 was inevitable. Additional significant factors, such as the aggressive stance of Obote towards Buganda, Buganda's regionalism and the ineptitude of the leadership at Mengo fuelled an existing volatile situation.

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