

# **Makerere and the Beginnings of Higher Education for East Africans**

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## **Abstract**

An inconsistently "liberal" ideology shaped the first three decades of Makerere College in Uganda, as it developed from its founding in 1922 as a technical school to serve all of East Africa. Following an overview of British attitudes toward African higher education in the 1920s and 1930s, this essay discusses British perceptions of African abilities and disabilities; the related intertwining of moral and religious education; the debate pitting vocational against literary education; and the creation of an East African elite. The Makerere that resulted was an essentially British "African university."

## **The Historical Framework**

The present essay, part of a larger project examining the evolution of Makerere University in Uganda, concerns the ideological foundations laid in the period 1922-50, when Makerere served all of East Africa. I present the ideas within a mainly Ugandan context because the ideological amniotic fluid in which the embryonic college developed shaped education in Uganda more than in Kenya and far more than in Tanzania. Following an overview of colonial British attitudes toward African higher education, I go on to discuss British perceptions of African abilities (and disabilities); the intertwining of moral, religious, and academic education; and the debate pitting vocational against literary education, with African pressure propelling the triumph of literary education. I conclude by discussing Makerere's role in the creation of an elite supporting an "African university" that was, in fact, essentially British—a university with a significance disproportionate to the small, landlocked country that supplied such fertile soil for its growth.

In giving a brief sketch of Makerere's history, it is easy to supply the main facts from its founding in 1922 until it achieved autonomy in 1970, and more difficult to summarize the next three decades. Makerere began as a school to train African boys as carpenters and mechanics; when, soon after, the technical courses shifted to another institution, it became a "vocational-professional college"

training medical assistants, surveyors, school teachers, and similar auxiliary personnel for the colonial service. The student body was all male until 1945; it was black African until 1950. As early as 1929, progressive colonial observers saw that Makerere could develop into an institution of higher education. Before such an advance could take place, however, Makerere had first to bring its pupils to the minimal level required for university entrance; to this end, a three-year Cambridge School Certificate (CSC) course began in 1933.<sup>2</sup> Four years later, the De La Warr commission recommended that Makerere be reconstituted to include both a secondary school (as it was by then) and a Higher College of East Africa. Although World War II forced suspension of planning for the Higher College, in 1943 the British government created a commission, chaired by Lord Asquith, to survey colonial institutions of higher education and to make recommendations for their postwar development. The resulting "Asquith Colleges" arose in a "Special Relationship" with the University of London, which granted their degrees and ensured adherence to the "international gold standard." Thus reborn as the University College of East Africa, Makerere started degree courses in 1950. Until enrollment began climbing steeply in the mid-1950s, it remained very small; a total of only 1700 students had completed their studies between 1922 and 1953.<sup>3</sup> Makerere's British character remained substantially intact following flag independence in 1962, even after it joined with two recently founded institutions in Nairobi and Dar es Salaam to form the University of East Africa in 1963. At the dissolution of the University of East Africa in 1970, the constituent colleges became the autonomous national universities of Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. In each case the Head of State became the Chancellor, turning what had been a merely ceremonial post into a means of political control. At Makerere, President Apolo Milton Obote, a Makerere dropout, began to move the university in a "socialist" direction through the University Act of 1970.

Such is the story until early 1971. Some six months after Makerere became the national university of Uganda, Idi Amin took power in a coup that many Ugandans initially welcomed as relief from the increasingly dictatorial Obote. The new Chancellor, his large face filling the front page of the student newspaper, soon brought tragedy to Makerere and the nation. After Amin's defeat in 1979, the atrocities during the Obote II period (1980-85) worsened Makerere's decline. Planning for its rebirth began soon after forces led by Yoweri K.

Museveni took power in January 1986; a donors' conference in July 1987 set the stage. The Makerere that evolved during the 1990s was a product of both the donors' conference and some bold decisions that ripped the university painfully out of the British colonial mold. Grown enormously in size and scope by century's end, Makerere has undergone a "quiet revolution" and is again being supported by the triumvirate of American foundations that supported it in its glory days, the later 1950s and 1960s—Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie.<sup>4</sup> If the university has developed in size and scope in ways that could hardly have been anticipated fifty years earlier, the confidence animating those who have managed its resurrection was fostered at Makerere in earlier decades. Those reshaping Makerere have enjoyed the prestige that accrued during its first half century; they have also enjoyed an ironic advantage, for the wreckage inflicted by Amin and Obote afforded an opportunity to start afresh. Because the new Makerere has retained some of its colonial legacy, it is worthwhile to examine the basis on which (to quote its famous motto) it built for the future.

### **British Attitudes toward East African Higher Education**

Formal education everywhere in colonial Africa began as a missionary endeavor to give Christian converts the basic literacy necessary for religious instruction. East African governments, glad to cooperate in this civilizing work, had little need for literate Africans, for their clerks were Indian and Goan. African pressure for education beyond an elementary level came from those willing and able to go abroad. The Uganda government, fearing foreign contamination, may have been startled into action by a single private action in 1920, when a wealthy Baganda chief sent his son to Trinity College, Kandy, in Ceylon; for, said the Acting Governor, such education might produce Africans "imbued with spirit of disaffection or disloyalty."<sup>5</sup> Already the few Ugandans who studied in Britain were being encouraged to steer clear of subjects likely to "breed frothy political ideas"—the humanities, social sciences, or law.<sup>6</sup> In the early 1920s, in an even more draconian move, the Uganda government barred Africans who wished to study in the United States from receiving passports. The great worry was that African Americans—"negroes of a different calibre," as the Governor of Kenya called them—might destabilize East African minds.<sup>7</sup> Rather than exporting students, colonial and

missionary authorities preferred to import (and control) the accommodationist American ideology represented by Tuskegee and Hampton. Meanwhile, African pressure caused an expansion of basic education, and from the first decade of the twentieth century, products of "bush" schools could proceed to so-called "secondary" schools. The missionary sensibility that prevailed everywhere was illustrated at Makerere in 1936 when the Debating Society discussed whether schools should "be controlled entirely by the Missions or by the Government." Despite a "hot exchange of opinions," the debate reached a foregone conclusion, for every student present had passed through missionary schools.<sup>8</sup> It was at Makerere that "the final stages of brainwashing took place."<sup>9</sup>

Government promotion of education in East Africa can be traced to the appointment in 1923 of a standing Advisory Committee on Native Education in British Tropical African Dependencies. Chaired by W. G. A. Ormsby-Gore, the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, the committee issued bromides typifying European attitudes toward African education:

Education should be adapted to the mentality, aptitudes, occupations and traditions of the various peoples, *conserving* as far as possible all sound and healthy elements in the fabric of their social life; *adapting* them . . . to changed circumstances and progressive ideas, as an agent of natural growth and evolution.<sup>10</sup>

These sentiments, inflated by hot air, were reiterated in many subsequent reports, but "there was a wide gulf between what was stated and what was actually practiced."<sup>11</sup> "Adapting" meant forcing Africans into whatever mold foreign benefactors thought best; improvement of African "character and efficiency" took precedence over intellectual training. Behind the smokescreen of "adaptation" and "conservation" lay vocational education construed so as to retard modernization. Ideas and skills necessary for full participation in the modern world had no place in the post-primary education for Africans propounded by the Ormsby-Gore committee. It was "habits of industry, of truthfulness, of manliness," rather than intellectual capacity, that ranked first in determining which boys might benefit from such an education.<sup>12</sup>

The establishment and ideology of Ormsby-Gore's Advisory Committee were influenced by a stock-taking of education in

West and Southern Africa sponsored by the Phelps-Stokes Fund, an American organization. The warm British reception of the first Phelps-Stokes report, published in 1924, inspired a second commission for East and Central Africa, with another foray into South Africa. Thomas Jesse Jones, the white sociologist who wrote both of the Phelps-Stokes reports, assumed that what he called "higher and specialized education" for Africans should develop along the lines of the "adapted education" for black Americans initially promoted by Booker T. Washington. This meant courses to train rural teachers and "Native assistants required by Government and economic organizations," as well as academic courses leading to the quasi-vocational fields of "medicine, engineering, agriculture, law or theology," none of them studied to university level; aside from theology and law, this was the curriculum being formed at Makerere in the 1920s.<sup>13</sup> Jones feared as much as any colonial official that an academic education would lead to radical agitation, and by the time he went to Africa he had long experience in telling black people what they needed.<sup>14</sup> In Uganda, Jones and his colleagues perceived an "acute" need for vocationally oriented education arising from "the phenomenal increase of cotton raising by the Natives" and the "corresponding increase of income which it is difficult to believe they are in a position to use wisely." African wealth "use[d] wisely" would "become the means of bettering sanitary conditions and otherwise improving community life," and achievement of these goals required local "education relating to their daily needs."<sup>15</sup> A "balanced agricultural education" would prevent concentration on cash crops (cotton, coffee) at the expense of subsistence agriculture. Sidelining cash crops was intended to forestall any more of the accumulation of wealth in African hands that had alarmed the Phelps-Stokes committee (and, earlier, the Uganda government) by enabling African fathers to send their sons abroad. Ten years after the Phelps-Stokes tour, Ernest Balintuma Kalibala—a Ugandan and the kind of educated African who rattled whites—wrote a Columbia University Master's thesis in which he pointed to a blunt fact: subsistence agriculture would not help Africans to earn even the cash to meet "the top-heavy demand of [colonial] taxation."<sup>16</sup> Kalibala understood that behind the economic argument lurked the political motive evident in the Phelps-Stokes remark that vocational education would prevent the "Native organizations . . . wisely maintained" by the colonial government from "giv[ing] expression to their opinions" in a "dangerous" fashion.<sup>17</sup> Replete with contradictions, the Phelps-Stokes

report urged that Africans too irresponsible to use their alleged wealth "wisely" should nonetheless be made responsible for the kinds of public betterment ("sanitary conditions") that British citizens received from their government.

Although expected to undertake such adult responsibility, Africans were so childlike as to need guidance by Europeans: this contradiction was embedded in the Ormsby-Gore report and the second Phelps-Stokes report, both published in the same year (1925) that Eric Hussey became the first Director of Education of the Uganda Protectorate. Somewhat more progressive, Hussey thought that Makerere "should become the nucleus of . . . a 'Higher College,' . . . recruiting boys from the leading schools of secondary character."<sup>18</sup> He chose his words wisely, for schools "of secondary character" fell short of a British secondary education, and Makerere would have to fill the gap before aspiring to anything "higher."<sup>19</sup> Even as it stood, the pool of candidates for admission was tiny: in 1925, Tanganyika was an educational desert; Makerere's main Kenyan feeder school, Alliance High School, did not exist until the next year; and in all of Uganda, where African education was somewhat more advanced, only about 100 Africans had gone beyond the fourth standard.<sup>20</sup> Nor was anyone sure what African higher education meant. Early in the century, the headmaster of King's College, Budo, was at pains to deny that his school was "educating the native too much."<sup>21</sup> Such anxiety dissipated before long in Uganda, for colonial officials there were more supportive than their Kenyan colleagues of the Devonshire Declaration that the British were "trustees" for African interests. Such "paternal racism," writes Apollos O. Nwauwa, "was some kind of improvement."<sup>22</sup> With "vocational" ranked above "technical" and below "academic," however, Makerere students were given "vocational training—medical, agricultural, veterinary and engineering," as well as teacher training.<sup>23</sup> In the battle between vocational and academic education, which pitted a black American model against a white British model, the British won: African pressure and Colonial-Office progressives together overcame the Phelps-Stokes and Ormsby-Gore predilection for Tuskegee-style "adapted education." Inaugurated in 1933, the CSC course mentioned above began the tilt toward academic education. Building on this beginning in the same year, a Colonial Office committee chaired by James Currie made the radical recommendation that "the present vehement demand for education" be satisfied by developing a few institutions (Makerere among them)

"up to a real University standard" in "close relation with London University."<sup>24</sup> Two years later, however, the East African Directors of Education refused to endorse this conclusion, thinking it "unwise to accelerate" African demand for a full-fledged university in East Africa; they said Makerere should offer nothing beyond courses to prepare a few students for admission to British universities.<sup>25</sup>

Given the small demand for educated Africans, the College did not need to be very big to serve the entire region. Education mainly prepared students for government service. Before there could be more African civil servants, however, the generation of colonial officials ascendant in the 1930s, for whom African colleagues were inconceivable, "would have to die" or be "otherwise pushed out."<sup>26</sup> Hints of the future could be discerned meanwhile. As Makerere trained medical students to increasingly higher levels, Africans glimpsing the promised land of university education pushed enrollment in the medical course higher and higher: from 25 in 1937 to 36 in 1938 to 53 in 1939.<sup>27</sup> Such pressure intensified colonial officers' fear of displacement by educated Africans; in Uganda, such anxiety was moderated by the benevolent paternalism of two governors who were great friends of Makerere. Governors Sir Philip Mitchell (in the 1930s) and Sir Andrew Cohen (in the 1950s) enabled Makerere to grow while withstanding the hostility of Kenyan Europeans. Makerere was out to create an elite, but on British lines; Mitchell's speech at a ceremony for new students in March 1954 illustrates its planners' limited vision.<sup>28</sup> At the same time that he advised the students to take pride in African cultures, Mitchell enumerated the gifts brought by Europeans: "peaceful government, tradition and communications, the control of famine and disease"—benefits "which their own people had never succeeded in achieving to any great extent by their own efforts." When Mitchell noted that "on entering Makerere they were being given the opportunity to share the finest fruits of European culture," his grammar reveals his assumption that passive reception of European culture ("being given" it) outweighed active exercise of African culture.

### **Perceptions of African Abilities**

Behind the discussions of appropriate education for Africans lay European suppositions about African ability that were more explicitly articulated in the settler colony of Kenya than in Uganda. "Experts"

explained that the adult African mind had evolved only to the intellectual level of a European adolescent, an idea that sometimes deformed African self-perceptions. Some contributors to the Makerere student magazine in the 1930s described their uneducated brethren as mentally "primitive" and themselves as mentally advanced along European lines. Many pre-1950 Makerere staff probably agreed with the views expressed in a "Memorandum on the Teaching of History at Makerere College, at the Present Stage of Its Development" by Joan Fox, who taught history from August 1944 to December 1946.<sup>29</sup> Alarmed by the push toward university level that was being accelerated by the Asquith Report, Fox wrote that Makerere students, despite their "boundless enthusiasm" for history, lacked the "adult mind" required for higher-level study. Africans could not understand "complex political or economic society," for they had "grown up in a society without a literature, without an explicit philosophy, without any body of scientific knowledge, and practically without art"; indeed, they were "not part of a civilisation at all, as we understand it." Strangely, these premises led Fox to endorse the current history syllabus for the Higher School Certificate—English and European history, eighteenth century to the present.

Blinkered though she was, Fox recognized that the typical Makerere student,

wants, when he picks up the newspaper, to be able to understand what it is all about. He is almost pathetically anxious to have such phenomena as Communism and Fascism explained to him . . . Briefly, he wants to be in a position to be able to take an intelligent interest in world affairs.

An education satisfying such yearnings, she feared, might produce "half-educated Africans . . . making political speeches." The real worry of many Europeans was that the University College then being planned would produce *fully* educated Africans "making political speeches." Such a result was clear, and clearly desirable, to George Turner, Makerere's principal at the time; in a confidential memo in 1941, Turner told a high government official that the education of Africans "would fail" unless "it could produce young men mentally alert and beginning to ask questions and criticise."<sup>30</sup> Revolt was not the result. For several decades, Makerere graduates were reluctant to rock the boat; and European fears dissipated as many Makerere staff

retired, replaced by young expatriate idealists determined to help Africans prepare to run their own countries. When Obote enrolled in 1947, keen to study history, Fox had gone; to his disappointment, however, no one had replaced her.<sup>31</sup> Yet the Historical Society was "flourishing in spite of the official death of history at Makerere."<sup>32</sup> Joyce Sibly, the wife of a lecturer in English, was "hurriedly recruited after a question had been asked in the House of Commons as to why there were no plans to teach history"; the Inter-University Council delegation that visited East Africa in July-August 1949 made known its dismay at the absence of history teaching.<sup>33</sup> Despite her lack of formal qualifications for university-level teaching, Sibly drew up a syllabus for a B.A. in History that later proved acceptable to the University of London authorities and to her successor, Kenneth Ingham. Challenged by London to justify "teaching British and European history to African students," Sibly "replied, to help them develop imagination and judgment."<sup>34</sup> Makerere was lucky to get her.

### Moral and Religious Education

Another source of British reluctance to embrace university status for Makerere was worry—felt more by Protestants than Catholics, and particularly strong in Kenya—that students lacked the moral resilience to endure successfully the greater freedom of a university. E. Carey Francis, the renowned headmaster of Alliance High School in Kenya, railed against the London affiliation in the Makerere Council, "the purple rising in his body, reaching his face," as he prepared to declaim against "the dangerous course Makerere was taking."<sup>35</sup> Carey's anxiety lest the moral fiber of Alliance graduates break under the strain of self-reliance was understandable given the doubts of African moral strength and the Christian moralism that pervaded schools. Colonial education policy placed "religious teaching and moral instruction . . . [on] an equal standing with secular subjects" in schools and teacher-training colleges; in bush schools, religion was primary, for their purpose was "to evangelize the people and teach them the word of God," and piety was the teachers' sole qualification.<sup>36</sup> Kalibala wrote from experience in his Columbia thesis (1934):

There is no hint in this kind of educational program of helping the children to understand and use their environmental resources or to improve their natural state. The most distinc-

tive outcome of this misguided procedure is the production of morons and disqualified members of village life.<sup>37</sup>

He condemned as "empty theory" the claims that missionary schools taught "health and sanitation, ability to raise native crops, moral training, and . . . [retention of] 'tribal life.'"<sup>38</sup> Arguing for "functional" education, he recommended phasing out the bush schools and installing in their stead "practical" education teaching business or farm management—subjects that would enable Africans to get rid of Indian traders and "murderous" European child-labor practices.<sup>39</sup> Back in Uganda, Kalibala contributed to lobbying against "adaptative" education meant to keep Africans in their rural places. "We knew it was a trick," he told an interviewer in 1971, "and we advised our people against it."<sup>40</sup> Successful in that advice, Kalibala was unable to promote the positive elements on his agenda. No education authorities, at any level, sustained instruction in business; and, because "Makerere could not produce businessmen . . . , the Asians tightened their grip on trade and commerce during the colonial era," with consequences disastrous to themselves and all other Ugandans.<sup>41</sup>

In the meantime, the heavily Christian emphasis of the schools produced early results that caused the Phelps-Stokes commissioners to erupt in premature enthusiasm: as monotheism had supplanted polytheism, so "the spiritual and ethical teachings of Jesus of Nazareth" had overcome "the quackery of some witch-doctor."<sup>42</sup> Yet the Nuffield study group traveling on behalf of the Colonial Office some thirty years later found the "tribal moral code" still clashing with imported "civilization," and Africans "in danger of becoming an amoral people."<sup>43</sup> Rejecting African preferences for secular government schools, the Nuffield group "naturally look[ed] to Christianity for our guidance," admitting in an ecumenical gesture that "the Muslim religion provides such guidance to many good men and women." About the same time, an official committee on primary and secondary education chaired by Makerere's Principal took a similar line when it stated its "unanimous . . . conviction that true education in the fullest sense must have a religious basis" and include "daily corporate worship."<sup>44</sup>

Despite this claim to unanimity, three African members—including Y. K. Lule, later the first African Principal of Makerere—issued a minority report objecting to the virtual ownership of schools by religious denominations. The only concession to their objection

in the majority report was the recommendation that single-denomination schools accept children of other faiths.<sup>45</sup> The minority report gave three reasons for preferring further development of nondenominational schools, for which they said there was "a widespread demand." The first reason, reflecting one of the basic premises sustaining Makerere, was that "education in Uganda should . . . [create] a national . . . community out of accepted differences." The second reason was practical: there could be more schools because if they were nondenominational, children would have easier access (some children walked as many as eight miles to primary or intermediate school).<sup>46</sup> Finally, there was a precedent set by European and Asian nonsectarian schools in Kampala, which were "running smoothly." Nowhere in the report was there a suggestion to dismantle racial segregation in schools. In being explicitly nonracial, Makerere was unusual and, until very late in the colonial period, unique in East African education.

Obviously, then, "moral values" of a generally Christian sort underlay much of the thinking of Makerere students and staff. The place of religion at Makerere was symbolized by the Protestant and Catholic chapels flanking the rear of the Main Hall, which were joined in 1948 by a small mosque just inside the main gate. In the 1940s and 1950s, recalled a staff member, a small faction of the staff were Evangelical Christians who "believed themselves to have been called personally to ensure that higher education in East Africa was in their sense Christian," and they used "nineteenth century British missionary zeal" to shape the "new African elite."<sup>47</sup> Most staff, whether Protestant or Catholic, were milder than that in their Christianity (there were even a few unbelievers). Africans found unremarkable the assumption that education should have "a religious basis," for in "traditional Africa . . . religion pervaded all aspects of life"; the sticking point was whether education should be based in African traditional religions, in Christianity, or in Islam.<sup>48</sup> When the Makerere Department of Religious Studies was founded in 1963 on resolutely nonsectarian principles, it taught these and other religions.

### Vocational vs. Literary Education

24 The wisdom of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure: and he that hath little business shall become wise.

25 How can he get wisdom that holdeth the plough, and that

glorieth in the goad, that driveth oxen, and is occupied in their labours, and whose talk is of bullocks? (*Ecclesiasticus* 38)

In accordance with ancient traditions contrasting the "learned man" with the man "whose talk is of bullocks," British education had long maintained a "fundamental antithesis between liberal [or "literary"] and vocational education."<sup>49</sup> This antithesis played itself out in Africa in curious ways. Africans saw that the "learned man" led a far more agreeable life than the man driving the oxen; a literary education led to white-collar jobs. The British intended Africans to hold the plough, not the pen, to avoid contamination by dangerous ideas. Africans themselves interpreted the power of a literary education in pragmatic terms, recognizing a brighter future in salaried positions, and became increasingly bitter at discrimination against those few Africans with professional qualifications.<sup>50</sup> The one exception to the high value placed by colonial Africans on academic studies was girls' education, which, befitting their lower status, was vocational.

Another worry was shared by Africans and Europeans. It was, in the words of a 1920 government report, that literary education would make "the native . . . apt to regard himself as a superior being for whom the ordinary duties and responsibilities of life have no significance."<sup>51</sup> Even as he pointed out the poor quality of missionary education, Kalibala observed that the people of the pen disdain the people of the plough: the village teacher, who "regards literary knowledge as superior," is himself alienated from village life and has no clear idea of education other than inculcating rote knowledge of the Bible.<sup>52</sup> Such perceptions cut no ice. In vain, the Phelps-Stokes committee advocated agricultural education; in vain, at King's College, Budo risked its prestige in a long and ultimately failing effort to maintain instruction in business and agriculture.<sup>53</sup> At Makerere, the "formal, bookish and unreal" curriculum—complained the headmaster of a Ugandan high school—alienated students from their home environments,<sup>54</sup> but alienation was a price parents were willing to pay in order to reap the benefits of their sons' advancement. Another unfortunate effect of literary education was scorn for any sort of manual work. When W. Senteza Kajubi, a Makerere graduate, was studying at the University of Chicago in the early 1950s, he was struck by the absence of "any feeling of inferiority on the part of those destined for manual or practical labour, or superiority on the

part of those studying in more academic fields."<sup>55</sup> It was not until Kajubi's second term as Makerere's Vice-Chancellor (1989-93) that students had to do their own laundry.

The supposition that education must be *either* literary or vocational created a false dichotomy. Vocational education properly understood, Kalibala, wrote in 1926, must be "founded on a good mental equipment" such as literary education affords, and without which the African would become "a tool and a footmat" of the colonial power.<sup>56</sup> In Uganda, resistance to agricultural education withstood such an argument, for Africans and Europeans interpreted differently the fact that 90% of the population was rural. To Africans, it was inconceivable that anyone who had escaped a peasant's hard life would willingly revert to it. "No boy or girl having successfully entered the school system," said Valentine Elliott, a missionary who later taught education at Makerere, "had any ambition to continue the peasant existence of his or her parents."<sup>57</sup> Gender roles reinforced the bias, for subsistence agriculture was the work of women and children, cash crops the work of men; too much African success with cash crops alarmed colonial authorities, as we have seen. Compounding these social biases, the schools themselves cultivated distaste for agricultural labor by assigning digging and grass-cutting as punishment for pupils' misbehavior. In short, the agricultural education on offer did not respond to the need that Africans felt "to form the new African culture that is to arise."<sup>58</sup> At Makerere, a student reported in 1941, studying agriculture was "*infra dig*."<sup>59</sup>

Thus literary education stood alone. Its triumph over vocational and technical education, which was greatest in Uganda and least in Tanganyika/Tanzania,<sup>60</sup> lasted at Makerere until the renewal of the 1990s, when technical education was finally seen as exactly what Uganda needed. In the colonial period, Africans had to overcome their colonial inferiority complex—to prove that they were as capable as Europeans of ascending the topmost pinnacle of European knowledge. Their success shocked some Europeans: when students at the two leading African secondary schools in Kenya took the CSC examination for the first time (in 1940), they beat the leading European secondary school and caused "a furore among settler opinion."<sup>61</sup> Politics played a role, because African literacy and African aspirations were linked even more in European than in African minds. By insisting on English-medium instruction on the secondary as well as tertiary level, the liberal lobby triumphed over those who thought

that teaching European languages "to natives . . . will facilitate the spread of Bolshevism, Trade Unionism, Socialism and various other-isms of the left wing."<sup>62</sup> Such "-isms" did arise in Kenya, stimulated by the settlers' repressive culture, but not in Uganda or Tanganyika, where the path to independence was less bumpy.

In Africa, as in Britain, ability to pass written examinations with the requisite high marks determined the next step up. In good part because the English language was such a powerful transmitter of culture, the higher an African child rose on the education ladder, the more the British model dominated, and with it the English language. By mid-century, it was "not unusual" for an educated African to speak "English extremely well but his own language very imperfectly."<sup>63</sup> Because fluency in written and spoken English was a key to such progress, educated Africans throughout the British colonies often denigrated their own languages in favor of English. When the Uganda Protectorate Department of Education decreed in 1925 that primary-school children study their own vernaculars, Africans raged against "this new evil," seen as a plot to keep Africans down.<sup>64</sup> In 1948, the colonial Department of Education recognized six languages of instruction (including Kiswahili) in primary schools, with English the sole language from junior secondary school onward. At independence, the only language taught at Makerere was English, eventually followed by French, German, and Russian; these were trailed, many years later, by African languages.<sup>65</sup> More than half a century later, the only "national" language is English—foreign to all but a minority of the population.

### **The Myth of Egalitarian Education and the Creation of an Elite**

The colonial authorities thought they had created a meritocracy at Makerere. A poor East African peasant's son who was skilled at taking examinations might climb to the pinnacle of the educational pyramid, and some did. Rather than purely rewarding merit, however, the system was marred by "inequalities of opportunity"<sup>66</sup> that stemmed from three sources. First, access to education varied (and still varies) widely among different communities in East Africa. Second, Western and African sexism conspired to exclude most girls from formal education beyond primary school. Third, an examination system that was supposed to negate inequities did no such thing. Despite claims to assess intellectual attainment regardless of social background, tests

measured something more narrow: ability to score well on a certain type of written examination, an ability conditioned both by social background and by access to education. The superior pass rates of schools such as King's College, Budo, and Gayaza Girls' School may have resulted not only from effective teaching but also from the more privileged backgrounds of many pupils. Budo enrolled chiefs' sons (and a few daughters); Gayaza served "Native girls of high social standing," providing Budonians with suitably educated wives as well as training teachers and health workers.<sup>67</sup> The docility of which some Makerere staff complained in the 1950s and 1960s was byproduct of examinations favoring rote memorization over creative thinking; for Africans, education was "less a process of learning than . . . a commodity with which to bargain for elite positions."<sup>68</sup> Inadequate proficiency in exam-taking and in English excluded (and still excludes) many potential undergraduates from post-primary education—most obviously girls, children of people too poor to pay school fees, and those who live in regions with few and inferior schools. In short, the myth of egalitarian education concealed ideological contradictions that continue to bedevil African education.

One thing is certain: the missionary goal, declared in the late nineteenth century, of creating an intellectual elite was fulfilled. As Western education made inroads in East Africa, an "aristocracy of education" arose<sup>69</sup>: a man with primary or junior secondary schooling might be a knight; an Old Budonian, a duke; and an Old Makererean, royalty. The Nuffield study group took it for granted that anyone with more than four years of education belonged to the elite; it argued irrationally that agricultural education, by definition nonelite, must be central in primary and secondary schools.<sup>70</sup> Atop the education pyramid, the needle of Makerere arose infinitesimally thin. Most school-age children—70% of them in 1941—never attended school. In that year, there were only twenty candidates for the Cambridge School Certificate; the ten who passed were the only Ugandans eligible for admission to Makerere.<sup>71</sup> The figures soon improved, as they had to if Makerere was to expand. In 1948, 84 students (one of them a girl) passed the CSC, a number that reached about 230 five years later and twice that by 1955; ten years later, there were 397 Ugandan first-year students at Makerere.<sup>72</sup> Because primary education expanded much faster than secondary and tertiary education, the tip of the needle remained extremely thin; in subsequent decades, the dangers of forming a small, disproportionately powerful elite became

clear all over Africa.

The pressures experienced by the Makerere elite are illustrated in four typed essays submitted for the 1953 Uganda Bookshop Essay Prize on the topic "there is no problem more difficult than that which faces an educated man in a primarily uneducated society."<sup>73</sup> How fully the essays reflect the writers' views is unclear for two reasons. First, like all students, the writers would naturally have tailored their essays to the perceived values of their readers, who were expatriate "liberal" intellectuals. Second, it is not clear how original the essays are: two of them use the same unascrbed source, praising the products of indigenous education for "such dignified and tactful behaviour and reveal[ing] so much refinement that they well deserve to be called educated."<sup>74</sup> Such caveats aside, Bernard Onyango's eight-page essay shows a subtlety of analysis and grace of expression befitting the man who became the longest-serving Registrar of Makerere in the twentieth century.<sup>75</sup>

The burden of Onyango's essay is the complex social and personal pain intrinsic in belonging to the Aristocracy of Education. He starts by pointing out the sacrifices required of parents to send their sons to school: "The parent who sacrifices his sods services at home to take him to school is in fact drawing out an insurance policy against poverty and the miseries of old age, for his child will look after his material welfare."<sup>76</sup> Education was thus "a means of accumulating wealth and of raising the social and material status of a family." The son might use his education in ways unanticipated by his parents, striving "to emancipate" his family "from the bonds of their ignorance, suspicion and suicidal conservatism" by (for example) urging them to build latrines. Such a suggestion by a young man might inspire older family members not to raise a grateful shovel but to regard him as "a bully and a prig." Whether or not they welcomed such efforts at betterment, they were sure to equate a bachelor's degree with wealth, regardless of the graduate's actual salary. Onyango writes of the "stream of beggars," the "merciless influx of money collectors," issuing forth from the graduate's and his wife's families, all of them interpreting . . . "'lend' and 'give' [as] . . . synonymous."<sup>77</sup> As he took his place in society amid myriad social laws devised before the era of European education, he was obliged to marry; and, given the rarity of educated women, his wife would most likely be unable to offer him intellectual companionship.<sup>78</sup> There were psychological and social consequences for the "frustrated and broken down"

graduate, a modern leader too young to be an elder according to tradition. Onyango's essay reminds us that people like him retained their ties to their community of origin, yet it also reminds us that European education emphasized the individual with little except lip service paid to African needs, while traditional education fit people for roles within their communities. Traditional education tended to be general and multi-skilled, European education to be specialized;<sup>79</sup> and the Honors degrees for which Makerere students clamored in the 1950s and 1960s were still more specialized. If Ugandan secondary schools formed "a class of Afro-Saxons bent on individual achievement,"<sup>80</sup> Makerere was *the* Afro-Saxon institution in East Africa.

Despite regional and continental variations, it is possible to make some generalizations to show that traditional education and European education were not, after all, polar opposites. First of all, "progressive" elements in traditional education fostered "intellectual growth, constructive thinking, conceptualisation and inventiveness"—qualities associated with "Western" education.<sup>81</sup> The complex indigenous decision-making depicted in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* illustrates how traditionally educated people handled new situations. Secondly, while conformity with established norms is ordinarily a feature of all education, the colonial context set up conflicts. African conformity to European ideas may have retarded integration of modernity with traditional societies, and schools deprived children of the opportunity for traditional education while teaching them Western knowledge in a foreign tongue. The high value that Europeans placed on individuality, questionable in Africa, was strikingly illustrated in 1958 in Kenneth Ingham's inaugural lecture as Professor of History at Makerere. Historical studies, Ingham proposed, would convey "the importance of the individual and the need for individual decision and action"; they would teach "the need to formulate reasoned opinions."<sup>82</sup> He repeated the current commonplace belief that East Africans, stunned by "the novelty of the ideas which have been poured into East Africa," would "accept passively whatever directions anyone may care to give." One might infer the lecturer's desire for more active engagement with ideas, but a common denominator in Ingham's examples of East African "heroes" presented as models to Makerere students is their ability to cooperate with others, most often with Europeans. One example cited as praiseworthy by Ingham was the Maasai leader Lenana (Olonana), "who guided his warlike followers into paths of friendship towards the Europeans." It fell to

later writers to describe Lenana in unheroic terms: "no longer broker but broken" by British power, a collaborator with those who used Africa "to feed the ever-demanding god of profit."<sup>83</sup>

Lenana provides an instance not only of a hero demoted by postcolonial reconsiderations but of a person caught up in historical circumstances that placed him at odds with large sections of his community. Makerere, an institution inconceivable in Lenana's time (he died in 1911), produced graduates who struggled in not dissimilar fashion to reconcile their private needs with those of their community. One of the tasks of university education in Africa was (and is) to prepare graduates to meet community expectations while working according to "world standards." The tensions between these two demands have been frequent subjects of African narratives, both fiction and nonfiction. In a fictional Ugandan example, the hero of *Upon This Mountain* (by a Makerere don, Timothy Wangusa) excels at his colonial secondary school, and his family and village expect rewards from his anticipated success at Makerere. Their expectation is foiled when his community ostracizes him for declining to participate in circumcision rites; for he has already had the procedure performed in a "modern" fashion, in a hospital.<sup>84</sup> Such conflicts between tradition and modernity were unavoidable given the rarified seclusion of boarding institutions. At Makerere, students were preparing to descend from the Ivory Tower to work among their own people. Yet few staff had any idea who those people were; and, except for social scientists and a few unusual people in other disciplines, they were not seriously interested in remedying their ignorance of African daily life. Far more important than the gap between staff and students, though, was that between educated and unschooled Africans. The general belief that the educated were superior created unrealizable expectations. One way to lighten the burden, Onyango, thought, would be to persuade more parents to send their children to school, so that literacy would become ordinary. Mass primary education could "eliminate the bad from African culture and incorporate the good from imported ways of foreigners."<sup>85</sup> Onyango may have been trying to please his readers, for he omitted the corollary: "eliminate the bad from the imported ways of foreigners, and incorporate the good from African culture."

Onyango presumably advocated the balanced syncretism of the "good" in both cultures that was the goal of the African universities then being born, which had to maintain

. . . a loyalty to their own society and a loyalty to world-standards of higher education. If the first loyalty fails, the university is cut off from the people and serves only an esoteric elite. If the second loyalty fails, the consequences are even worse: the people—including the educated élite—are condemned to limp behind the rest of the civilised world.<sup>86</sup>

In this "dual loyalty," world standards weighed more heavily; in Makerere's case, these were British, for there were "no . . . African universities—yet."<sup>87</sup> Nonetheless, intense postcolonial pressures to claim a local identity produced lofty rhetoric behind which there was often little substance. In a typical instance, Obote told the Makerere Arts Festival in 1968 that "the soul of a nation is to be found in the temple of its literature and arts."<sup>88</sup> From Obote's premise it followed that Makerere, the inner sanctum of the temple, would be central to Uganda's "soul" as its scholars strove to reveal the indigenous arts in which the nation's "feelings, aspirations and thoughts [were] hidden away." In a myopic postcolonial commonplace, Obote complained that because botany students in Uganda could not study daffodils *in situ*, Makerere students of literature should not be forced to study Wordsworth's famous poem about daffodils. Similarly, Makerere should exclude Shakespeare, Michelangelo, and Beethoven in favor of "[David] Rubadiri, [Pio] Zirimu and [George] Kakooza" (members of the departments of Literature and Fine Art).<sup>89</sup> Obote's cheap populism had little effect, for intellectuals refused to make black-and-white distinctions. It took some two decades before African scholars abandoned another false dichotomy that arose during the colonial period—that between African tradition and modernity, which in fact interpenetrated each other from the start. Today, having demonstrated—in Ade Ajayi's heavily ironic words—that Africans "once built empires and we can sing and dance," African universities must "generate the knowledge, skills, ideas and attitudes necessary for our survival and to sustain our growth."<sup>90</sup> If Makerere and other universities now coming into their own shed their negative heritage, their new and established strengths may contribute to the hoped-for "African renaissance" of the twenty-first century.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> E. M. K. Mulira, *Troubled Uganda*. London: Fabian Publications and Victor Gollancz, 1950, 21.

<sup>2</sup> Margaret Macpherson, *They Built for the Future: A Chronicle of Makerere University College, 1922-1962*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964, 18. The CSC was equivalent to British O-levels; entrance to Makerere itself depended on passing the Junior Secondary Leaving Certificate Examination.

<sup>3</sup> J. E. Goldthorpe, *An African Elite: Makerere College Students 1922-1960*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, for East African Institute of Social Research, 1965, 90, 93.

<sup>4</sup> See David Court's draft paper for the World Bank, "Financing Higher Education in Africa: Makerere, the Quiet Revolution" (April 1999). Another American foundation, the MacArthur, has now joined these three in supporting African higher education.

<sup>5</sup> Quoted in Nizar A. Motani, "Makerere College 1922-1940: A Study in Colonial Rule and Educational Retardation," *African Affairs* 78.312 (1979): 360.

<sup>6</sup> Quoted in Motani, *ibid.*, 362.

<sup>7</sup> Quoted in Kenneth J. King, *Pan-Africanism and Education: A Study of Race Philanthropy and Education in the Southern States of American and East Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971, 62; on the withholding of passports, see King, 71-72. Prior to the 1950s the "tiny minority" with foreign education had studied at a very few institutions—in Ceylon (at Kandy), in South Africa (at Fort Hare), in Ghana (at Achimota), and in the United States (only two students, according to D. A. Low in *Political Parties in Uganda 1949-62* [London: Athlone Press for the University of London Institute of Commonwealth Studies, 1962], 13). Alliance High School was founded in 1926 in part to stop Kenyan Africans from seeking education abroad (King, 124). Europeans all over the continent echoed the suspicions of Europeans in South Africa early in the twentieth century "that higher education and political aspirations are indissolubly linked"; "liberal" advocates of the founding of Fort Hare said that it would produce "the talented few, who will not only be able to transfer to their own people the results of European civilisation, but will, by their example, influence, and studies, effect a rapid uplift of the Native people" (Charles T. Loram, *The Education of the South African Native* [1917; rpt. New York: Negro Universities P, 1969], 302, 306).

<sup>8</sup> *Makerere College Magazine* 1:2 (1936): 35.

<sup>9</sup> Ado K. Tiberondwa, *Missionary Teachers as Agents of Colonialism in Uganda: A Study of their Activities in Uganda, 1877-1925*, 2nd ed. (Kampala: Fountain, 1998), 72. See Goldthorpe's summary of education in East Africa from its beginnings to the 1950s (2-9).

<sup>10</sup> [Ormsby-Gore, W. G. A., Chairman], Great Britain, Colonial Office, Advisory Committee on Native Education, *Education Policy in British Tropical Africa: Memorandum Submitted to the Secretary of State for the Colonies*, Cmd. 2374 (1925), 4; emphasis mine. In the lexicon of the Phelps-Stokes report discussed in the next paragraph, "adapt" indicated nonacademic education.

<sup>11</sup> K. A. Busia, *Purposeful Education for Africa*. The Hague: Mouton, 1968, 21.

<sup>12</sup> Ormsby-Gore, 4-5.

<sup>13</sup> Thomas Jesse Jones, *Education in East Africa: A Study of East, Central and South Africa by the Second African Education Commission Under the Auspices of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, in Cooperation with the International Education Board*. New York: Phelps-Stokes Fund, 1925, 155. Among the main interests of the Phelps-Stokes Fund, established in 1911, was the "education of negroes, both in Africa and the United States," conceived on accommodationist lines (quoted in King, 3). William E. F. Ward attributed the founding of both Makerere and Achimota to the joint influence of the Phelps-Stokes Report and the "new though modest prosperity" of Uganda and Ghana (*African Education: A Study of Educational Policy and Practice in British Tropical Africa* [Oxford: Oxford University Press on behalf of the Nuffield Foundation and the Colonial Office, 1953], 2-3). On "adapted education," see discussion and references in Gita Steiner-Khamsi and Hubert O. Quist, "The Politics of Educational Borrowing: Reopening the Case of Achimota in British Ghana," *Comparative Education Review*, 44:3 (2000): 272-99; they show that in the 1920s, when the Phelps-Stokes Fund was promoting this kind of education in Africa, it was already "visibly fading" in the United States (289). For background, see Edward H. Berman, "Educational Colonialism in Africa: The Role of American Foundations, 1910-1945," in *Philanthropy and Cultural Imperialism: The Foundations at Home and Abroad*, ed. Robert F. Arnove (Boston: G. K. Hall, 1980), 179-201.

<sup>14</sup> King, 29-43. Berman notes that "Jones's antiegalitarian and white supremacist views were always close to the surface" (*Educational Colonialism*, 183). Shula Marks classifies Jones and the Phelps-

Stokes Fund as "white ideologues of segregation" (*The Ambiguities of Dependence in South Africa: Class, Nationalism, and the State in Twentieth-Century Natal* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986], 4).

<sup>15</sup> Jones, 142. Kenyan colonial officials thought that the advice of the Phelps-Stokes report would produce "an intelligent, cheerful, self-respecting, and generally docile and willing-to-learn African native" who would not, like some natives, exhibit "annoying conceit and self-assertiveness" (qtd. Berman, 188).

<sup>16</sup> Ernest Balintuma Kalibala, "Education for the Villages in Uganda, East Africa" (master's thesis, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1934), 45.

<sup>17</sup> Jones, 142. In Kenya, the Phelps-Stokes commission warmly sympathized with the settlers' "civilizing mission" for the benefit of "backward" peoples (King, 113).

<sup>18</sup> E. R. J. Hussey, *Tropical Africa, 1908-1944: Memoirs of a Period*, intro. Angus Gillan. London: St. Catherine Press, 1959, 65.

<sup>19</sup> Jones, 43; Tiberondwa, *Missionary Teachers*, 34.

<sup>20</sup> Jones, 152.

<sup>21</sup> H. T. C. Weatherhead, quoted in G. P. McGregor, *King's College, Budo: The First Sixty Years*. Nairobi: Oxford University Press, 1967, 35.

<sup>22</sup> Nwauwa, *Imperialism, Academe and Nationalism: Britain and University Education for Africans 1860-1960*. London: Frank Cass, 1997, 94.

<sup>23</sup> Hussey, 65. On Hussey's advocacy of vocational education, see J. C. Ssekamwa and S. M. E. Lugumba, *Educational Development and Administration in Uganda, 1900-1970: Selected Topics*. Kampala: Longman Uganda, 1973, 8.

<sup>24</sup> Currie Report (1933), rpt. in Eric Ashby, *Universities: British, Indian, African: A Study in the Ecology of Higher Education*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1966, 478.

<sup>25</sup> Nwauwa, 77-78; Sivonen 227.

<sup>26</sup> Nwauwa, 82.

<sup>27</sup> Uganda Protectorate, *Annual Report of the Education Department*, 24. The same page of statistics reveals continuing declines in fields less attractive to Africans and less well paid—between 1938 and 1939, schoolmasters dropped from 59 to 36, and "engineering" (not the real thing) from 28 to 13—while the "matriculation" (i.e., CSC) class rose from 10 to 48; agriculture, holding steady at about 30, was

to drop precipitously in the 1940s.

<sup>28</sup> Public Record Office, London (hereafter PRO), BW 90/224, a report "From a Correspondant in Africa" of Mitchell's speech "Education and Racial Understanding," copy dated 24 Apr. 1954; Mitchell spoke when Kenya was convulsed by the Mau Mau struggle, with which he had coped at the end of his stint as governor (1944-52). The same attitude can be found in Mitchell's explanation in 1936 that "interfer[ing]" suitably with African customs would enable development "towards the only standards of civilisation open to them—our own" (quoted in Richard Frost, *Enigmatic Proconsul: Sir Philip Mitchell and the Twilight of Empire* [London: Radcliffe Press, 1992], 73).

<sup>29</sup> PRO, BW 90/14; six typed pages dated 6 Oct. 1947. George Turner, Makerere's Principal, supported African-oriented education and must have disagreed with Fox; in wartime, however, he had to settle for whatever staff he could get.

<sup>30</sup> Quoted by Sunanda Kr. Sanyal, "Imaging Art, Making History: Two Generations of Makerere Artists" (dissertation, Emory University, 2000), 71. Turner went on to warn that if "the educated young man . . . is not allowed freedom" to question, he "easily becomes a difficult and discontented member of society." Governor Charles Dundas agreed: "We see the native too much as a person to be kept in perpetual tutelage from which he will never emerge unless we ourselves advance one step further" (quoted by Sanyal, 72).

<sup>31</sup> Kenneth Ingham, *Obote: A Political Biography*. London and New York: Routledge, 1994, 31. More than a year later, an editorial in *Makerere* raged politely against the "deplorable" lack of instruction in *History* (2:6 [Sept. 1948]: 106).

<sup>32</sup> *Makerere* 2:6 (Sept. 1948): 112.

<sup>33</sup> Kenneth Ingham, "Makerere and After," in *The Emergence of African History at British Universities: An Autobiographical Approach*, ed. A. M. H. Kirk-Greene (Oxford: WorldView Publications, 1995), 114; London School of Economics, Carr-Saunders Papers B/3/15, "Draft of Preliminary Report of the Inter-University Council Delegation to East Africa, July-August, 1949," 5.

<sup>34</sup> Information on Joyce Sibly comes from her memoir (dated 2 Sept. 1984) in Mss. Afr. s. 1825, Box LXI, Oxford Development Records Project (ODRP), Rhodes House, Oxford University; this collection is cited hereafter as ODRP. John Sibly came to Makerere in 1946 as lecturer in English; Joyce Sibly, who had previously taught English

and history at Budo, taught history at Makerere 1949-50.

<sup>35</sup> Bernard de Bunsen, Principal of Makerere at the time, interview with Alison Smith and Ian Maxwell, 15 Oct. 1982; ODRP, Box IX/24.

<sup>36</sup> Ormsby-Gore, *Education Policy*, 4; Kalibala, "Education for the Villages," 13-14.

<sup>37</sup> Kalibala, 17. A product of Budo, Kalibala was "the first Muganda to gain a Ph.D. degree" (from Harvard in 1946); he then worked in the Research Section of the United Nations (Tiberondwa, *Missionary Teachers*, 80; King, *Pan-Africanism*, 69n3, 283; *Makerere* 3.1 [Dec. 1948]: 5). Kalibala's master's thesis was "a valuable and, for East Africa, very early African criticism of educational theories which were then the stock-in-trade of European experts on indirect-rule education" (King, 240).

<sup>38</sup> Kalibala, 32. In most colonial African schools, as indicated in a May 2000 discussion thread on H-Africa, teaching of African "tradition" masked an intent to corral Africans within their own cultures; see [www2.h-net.msu.edu/~africa/threads/index.html](http://www2.h-net.msu.edu/~africa/threads/index.html), postings on 5 May (Philip Zachernuk, on Nigeria; Chris Lowe, on Swaziland) and 6 May (Benoit de L'Estoile, on French West Africa; Nicholas Omenka, on Nigeria; Peter Limb, on South Africa).

<sup>39</sup> Kalibala, 36, 26-29.

<sup>40</sup> Tiberondwa, 79.

<sup>41</sup> T. B. Kabwegyere, "The Asian Question in Uganda, 1894-1972," in *A Century of Change in East Africa*, ed. W. Arens (The Hague: Mouton, 1976), 51.

<sup>42</sup> Jones, *Education in East Africa*, 15.

<sup>43</sup> Ward, *African Education*, 67.

<sup>44</sup> Bernard de Bunsen, chairman, *African Education in Uganda: Being a Report of a Committee Set up by His Excellency the Governor to Study and Make Recommendations on the Future of African Education in the Protectorate*. Entebbe: Government Printer, 1953, 5, 33. Little has changed in fifty years. In 2000, Vice-President Specioza Kazibwe drew "thunderous applause" when, arguing that "God is a prerequisite to success," she rejected proposals "to phase out religion from the school syllabus" (Nicholas Kajoba, "Kazibwe Defends Religion in Schools," *New Vision* [Kampala], 21 August 2000).

<sup>45</sup> The minority report is in de Bunsen, *African Education in Uganda*, 12. The other signatories were M. Senkatuka and S. W. Kulubya; Mulira considered the latter, a high official in the Buganda government in the 1930s-40s, to be "the most outstanding man in public life

in Uganda" at mid-century (*Troubled Uganda*, 25).

<sup>46</sup> Goldthorpe, *African Elite*, 50-51.

<sup>47</sup> S. J. Colman, *East Africa in the Fifties: A View of Late Imperial Life*. London: Radcliffe Press, 1998, 92.

<sup>48</sup> Busia, *Purposeful Education*, 103-04.

<sup>49</sup> Lord Cyril Asquith, Chairman, *Report of the Commission on Higher Education in the Colonies*, Cmd. 6647 (1945), 11. Tiberondwa traces the distinction to Aristotle and to the Jewish academic who wrote *Ecclesiasticus* c. 180 BC (60-61).

<sup>50</sup> Mulira cites the example of two Uganda students, one white and the other African, who both held Cambridge degrees and a diploma or certificate in education from the University of London (the African had also completed studies in Education at Makerere): "The African graduate is now headmaster of a secondary school under the supervision of his white contemporary" (*Troubled Uganda*, 42).

<sup>51</sup> Government report (1920) quoted in Kenneth Prewitt, "University Students in Uganda: Political Consequences of Selection Patterns," in William John Hanna, et al., *University Students and African Politics*. New York and London: Africana Publishing, 1975, 172. Colonial authorities so "dreaded" the effects of a literary education that students who entered Makerere's first CSC class in 1933 had to promise to undergo vocational training later, a sequence that became entrenched (Motani, "Makerere College 1922-1940," 367; F. Musgrove, "A Uganda Secondary School as a Field of Culture Change," *Africa* 22.3 [1952]: 242). A statement in the Kenyan settler paper the *East African Standard* represented widespread European opinion: "The African requires to be taught his duty to himself. In his present stage to give him book learning is a waste of energy and funds" (1 Mar. 1924, quoted in King, 126).

<sup>52</sup> Jones, 162-63; McGregor, *King's College, Budo*, 60, 134-35. The Budo Vice-Principal explained that "Africans whose danger is conceit" had a "tendency to despise manual work of any kind" (quoted by Theophilus M. Mazinga-Kalyankolo, "The Development of Art Education in Secondary Schools in Uganda," Master's thesis [Education], Makerere University, 1974, 54).

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in O. W. Furley and T. Watson, *A History of Education in East Africa*. New York: NOK, 1978, 195. Sir George Grey, Governor of Cape Province, leveled the same charge in 1854—that the education offered in missionary schools was "too bookish, and that what was most needed was instruction in manual work" (report qtd. by Loram,

*Education of the South African Native*, 49).

<sup>54</sup> PRO, BW 90/216, "Record of the Proceedings of a Conference of Ex-Overseas Students Held at Makerere College, December 17th-21st, 1957" (summaries, not verbatim reports). A. B. K. Kasozi notes that student strikes foiled post-independence efforts to persuade them that manual labor was a normal part of being African (*The Crisis of Secondary School Education in Uganda 1960-1970*, mimeographed [(Kampala?), n.d. (1976?)], 73-75). According to Francis Agbodeka, in the 1930s students of Achimota were exceptional because they "neither regarded themselves as superior persons . . . nor felt it an indignity to wield a pick, spade or broom"; however, when Achimota succumbed to pressures for a heavily academic education, its graduates were just as alienated from their rural roots as African elites elsewhere (*Achimota in the National Setting: A Unique Educational Experiment in West Africa* [Accra: Afram Publications, 1977], 67, 140). Fort Hare offers another exceptional instance of successful propagation of the "sound principles" that the "college man had to work with his hands and not be afraid to soil them" (Z. K. Matthews, *Freedom for My People: The Autobiography of Z. K. Matthews: Southern Africa 1901 to 1968*, ed. with a memoir by Monica Wilson [London: Rex Collings; Cape Town: David Philip, 1981], 51).

<sup>55</sup> Kalibala, 58-59. At the same time, Kalibala pointed out the poor quality of missionary education.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in King, 229.

<sup>57</sup> Quoted in C. R. V. Bell, *Education in Uganda Before Independence* (ODRP, Report 11), Preface by A. H. M. Kirk-Greene and A. S. Bell (Oxford: Rhodes House Library, 1985), 16.

<sup>58</sup> Hosea K. Nyabongo in 1934, quoted in King, 230. In the first quarter of the twentieth century, missionary schools taught "hand-work," or crafts, as a means of correcting "an unhealthy attitude to manual work and practical subjects, as well as "to help encourage native industries" (Mazinga-Kalyankolo, 54). Although not intended to lead any further, this approach enabled the later development of art education, which was stimulated by the Makerere Art School (which started in the late 1930s).

<sup>59</sup> [Ali] Muhsin, "Of the Careers Open to the Modern Educated African, Agriculture Is of Most Value," *Makerere College Magazine* 3.1 (1941): 38.

<sup>60</sup> Uganda, but not Kenya, resisted importing the Jeanes School from the United States to train village teachers of vocational subjects (King,

116-17, 150-76). Boniface I. Obichere's contrast of socialist Mali, with its "brand new educational system," and capitalist Ivory Coast, with its colonial literary education, seems to resemble that between socialist Tanzania and capitalist Kenya ("Politicians and Educational Reform in French-Speaking West Africa: A Comparative Study of Mali and Ivory Coast," in *Education & Politics in Tropical Africa*, ed. and intro. Victor C. Uchendu [Owerri: Conch, 1979], 196-97). Later data suggest that socialism and capitalism may have little to do with it. Mali, which later collapsed, had a literacy rate in 1990 of 32% while Tanzania's was 67.8% in 1995—lower than before, but still substantial—and capitalist Kenya's 1990 rate was 69%.

<sup>61</sup> Goldthorpe, 4.

<sup>62</sup> Huxley, *Africa View*, 327.

<sup>63</sup> E. M. K. Mulira, *The Vernacular in African Education*. London: Longmans, Green, 1951, 11.

<sup>64</sup> Mulira, *Vernacular*, 2.

<sup>65</sup> The teaching of English at Makerere was on a far higher level than that of other foreign languages since a substantial grasp of English was required for admission. Students preparing to teach English in schools could study Kiswahili and Luganda, but only "as an aid to the diagnosis of interference in language learning"; in 1956, George Perren found it "impossible to get students to take any serious interest in their languages, they seemed to think it a bit *infra dig*" (quoted in Robert Phillipson, *Linguistic Imperialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992, 125). In the complex colonial politics of language, Christian missionaries demonized Kiswahili as an alien tool of Islam; and, because they controlled the schools and, hence, the media of instruction, they prevailed over strong government arguments for Kiswahili as a unifying *lingua franca*. Later governments gave up on Kiswahili, except for Amin's hated attempt to make it a national language. For a concise yet detailed account of the colonial politics of language, see A. B. K. Kasozi, *The Social Origins of Violence in Uganda, 1964-85*. Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1994, 227-34. Uganda's current policy, articulated in a White Paper on education in 1992, makes English the medium of instruction in all secondary schools, in urban primary schools, and in rural primary schools from P5 on; five major Ugandan languages are examinable by the Uganda National Examinations Board (Gordon P. McGregor, "National Policy and Practice in Language and Literature Education: Some Reflections from Afar," in *Language and Literacy in Uganda*:

*Towards a Sustainable Reading Culture*, ed. Kate Parry [Kampala: Fountain, 2000], 9). Mfantsipim and Achimota schools in Ghana illustrate a somewhat different politics of language in the colonial period. By 1940 Mfantsipim (a missionary school) taught four major local languages, and in the 1930s Achimota (founded as a government school) replaced European languages on the School Certificate by local languages. In order to develop curricular materials, Achimota sparked fundamental research into linguistics and orthography; but these emphases smacked too much of adaptive education, and by the 1950s local languages had given way to two foreign languages—Latin and English. See A. Adu Boahen, *Mfantsipim and the Making of Ghana: A Centenary History, 1976-1976* (Accra: Sankofa, 1996), 343; and Agbodeka, *Achimota*, 85-86 and 138-39.

<sup>66</sup>Goldthorpe, 32.

<sup>67</sup>Jones, *Education in East Africa*, 157. Graduates of Alliance High School in Kenya, Budo, and "the rest" (including Gayaza) were "the three tribes" at Makerere in the late 1940s and early 1950s (Sarah Ntiro, interviewed by the author, Kampala, 19 June 1998). In the period immediately after Makerere decided to admit girls in 1945, hardly any of the few applicants had reached the level required for admission. In 1939, eight of the 179 pupils at Budo were female, and the total enrollment at Gayaza was 12 (Uganda Protectorate, *Annual Report of the Education Department*, 24-25).

<sup>68</sup>Prewitt, "University Students," 173.

<sup>69</sup>Kenneth Ingham, "Some Aspects of the History of Buganda," in *The Kingdom of Buganda* (Kampala: Uganda Society, 1956), 11, quoted in David E. Apter, *The Political Kingdom in Uganda: A Study of Bureaucratic Nationalism*, 3rd ed., London: Frank Cass, 1997, 129; on the missionaries' goal see Apter, 74. In a similar vein, Sir Philip Mitchell asserted at a Makerere Conference in 1938 "that there is an aristocracy of culture to guide and control the masses" (quoted in Frost, 92).

<sup>70</sup>Ward, *African Education*, 90-91, 98-100. In fact, the relation between elite status and the level of education a person attained varied according to locality.

<sup>71</sup>Bell, 18-19.

<sup>72</sup>Bell, 25, 36-37; Prewitt, 173.

<sup>73</sup>The essays, collected by Goldthorpe when he was researching *An African Elite*, are among the materials that he donated to the ODRP (Box XX/59).

<sup>74</sup> The two essayists are J. C. Katuramu and Bernard M. A. Onyango. They may have sincerely endorsed this statement, which reflects progressive European views.

<sup>75</sup> Goldthorpe breached his rule of anonymity to quote extensively from Onyango's essay to illustrate kinship relationships (75-76). There is an instructive contrast in tone between this essay and one by a British schoolmaster covering similar ground; the schoolmaster, although sympathetic to the "social stresses" experienced by educated men, cannot convey the emotional cost as Onyango does (see Musgrove, "A Uganda Secondary School," 240-41). On Onyango, see Chapter 12, note 31??.

<sup>76</sup> With Onyango's metaphor, compare Pontian Walakira's: "Sending a child to school was regarded as buying shares in a prospective unlimited company. If the company goes bankrupt you lose; but if it succeeds your gains are innumerable" ("Part of the Establishment: Catholicism in Uganda," in *African Reactions to Missionary Education*, ed. Edward H. Berman [New York: Teachers College Press, 1975], 160).

<sup>77</sup> Onyango, 4. This was hardly surprising, since a Makerere graduate "earning £1000 a year or more may well have a brother earning £60, and is virtually certain to have uncles living at a bare subsistence level as peasant cultivators" (Goldthorpe, 68).

<sup>78</sup> Marriage was a painful issue for Makerereans prior to the 1960s. One older graduate said that "every Makerere man should have a Makerere wife," but another advised marrying uneducated women so that ordinary people could see that the educated husband was "not so different from us" (Goldthorpe, 74). Goldthorpe surmised that younger Makerere men hoped to marry educated women. The problem was widespread. Achimota began "a two-year Domestic Science Course . . . in 1936 as a training for illiterate girls engaged to marry educated husbands" (Agbodeka, *Achimota*, 82).

<sup>79</sup> This point is made by Tiberondwa, 81.

<sup>80</sup> James H. Mittelman, *Ideology and Politics in Uganda: From Obote to Amin* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1975), 147. With Mittelman, compare African critiques of colonial education such as those by Ngugi wa Thiong'o (a Makerere graduate), who likewise uses the term "Afro-Saxon." See Ngugi's essays "Literature and Society," "Literature in Schools," and "Return to the Roots" in *Writers in Politics* (London: Heinemann, 1981; in revised forms in *Writers in Politics: A Re-engagement with Issues of Literature & Society*

[Oxford: James Currey; Nairobi: EAEP; Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1997]).

<sup>81</sup> Tiberondwa, 81.

<sup>82</sup> Kenneth Ingham, *It Started with Herodotus: An Inaugural Lecture Delivered at Makerere College, the University College of East Africa, on 31 March 1958*. London: Oxford University Press, 1958, 20.

<sup>83</sup> John Lonsdale, "The Conquest State, 1895-1904," in *A Modern History of Kenya 1895-1980: In Honour of B. A. Ogot*, ed. William R. Ochieng' (London: Evans Brothers, 1989), 19; Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Petals of Blood* (1977; reprint New York: Dutton, 1978), 214.

<sup>84</sup> Wangusa, *Upon This Mountain*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1989, 116.

<sup>85</sup> Onyango, 7. Goldthorpe quotes a contemporary of Onyango: "We [educated people] do not observe all these customs; we drop the bad ones. The uneducated classes are very conservative" (79).

<sup>86</sup> Eric Ashby, "The Functions of West African Universities." In Modjaben Dowuona and J. T. Saunders, eds., *The West African Intellectual Community*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press for the Congress for Cultural Freedom, 1962, 50.

<sup>87</sup> Ashby, "Functions," 49.

<sup>88</sup> A. Milton Obote, "The Soul of a Nation: An Adaptation from a Speech Delivered to the Makerere Arts Festival in November, 1968," *East African Journal* 6.1 (1969): 5.

<sup>89</sup> Obote, 6. David Rubadiri and Pio Zirimu taught in the Makerere Department of English; George Kakooza, a sculptor, taught in the School of Fine Art. All three were Makerere graduates.

<sup>90</sup> Rubadiri's poem was first published in *Penpoint*, the magazine of the Makerere English Department, and was reprinted in *Origin East Africa: A Makerere Anthology*, ed. David Cook (London: Heinemann, 1965), 78-80.

<sup>91</sup> "Presidential Address." In *African Education and Identity: Proceedings of the 5th Session of the International Congress of African Studies Held at Ibadan, December, 1985*, ed., Abiola Irele. London: Hans Zell, 1992, 25.