

The impact of the 1900 buganda agreement history essay



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There were many effects that emanated from the signing of the 1900 Buganda agreement. One of the noteworthy effects of the Buganda agreement was the doing away with the ultimate functions of the Kabakaship. The Kabaka was deprived of his rights to make laws, as well as lost his authority and say over Buganda's land which brought about the individual land ownership system. Buganda also got to see the existing political organization get shuffled. The existing chiefs were placed under a colonial government representative known as the European District Officer who they became subject to. The head chiefs, who were not used to being ordered around, were replaced with their minors, the traditional chiefs to who receiving orders were part and parcel of their day-to-day life. By doing so, it would be easy to manipulate the chiefs into British puppets who now had to receive orders from the British and not their fellow Africans. These chiefs were used in a type of leadership known as indirect rule which involved a higher power (in this case the British) instructing local natives (in this case the African chiefs) on how to govern the people.

Following the signing of the 1900 Buganda agreement was the reduction of Buganda's boundaries as well as the division of Buganda's land. Uganda's land was divided into Mailo land for the Buganda government, and crown land for the British government. The Buganda government land was further divided among individuals such as the royal family members, the Lukiiko, the Muhammadan chief and some land was left for the private land owners

The signing of the Buganda agreement brought about the establishment of a taxation system based on possession of fire arms (gun tax) as well as areas of residence (hut tax). It is from this taxation system that money to run

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administrative activities was obtained. A hut tax of 4 rupees per annum was charged on any house, hut, or habitation used as an area of residence while a gun tax of 3 or 4 rupees was charged for any individual who was in possession of a gun, rifle or pistol. Limits were also placed on how many fire arms an individual could possess. For example, the locals were permitted only five guns, while the Kabaka was given fifty guns license free. However, the possession of canons and machine guns was prohibited. This was very powerful artillery which would be of great use to the locals if there was an uprising against the British.

EVALUATION OF SOURCES

A Political History of Uganda

This is a didactic textbook that contains a very descriptive step by step history of Uganda's political arena from 1500-1971. By setting a time limit for each chapter, the author made accessing topics easier. However, the writer through his prefatory proclamation openly states that his work is based on his personal views which may not be universally applicable and this therefore leaves the reader with the task of differentiating between truth as well as the writer's viewpoint. The writer is also inclined towards his country Uganda and the Ganda society as this is his area of origin.

Karugire uses original sources that talk about the Buganda Agreement such as earlier publications about the Buganda agreement as well as letters from individuals such as Sir Harry Johnston to the Baganda chiefs who played a significant role in towards the signing of the Buganda agreement.

The story of the Uganda agreement

J. V. Wild's story about the Buganda Agreement is the most eloquent source of information I have used. J. V. Wild gives a step by step narration about the history of Buganda before as well as after the signing of the Buganda agreement, events that led to its signing and the impact it had on its signatories. However, the writer from my point of view is Eurocentric and some of his views clash with Karugire's. Unlike Karugire who says that the agreement was dictated and unfair, J. V. Wild says that the Buganda chiefs were given time to think out the terms of the agreement before putting pen to paper. The book has primary sources of information such as letters that were written by Henry Johnston to Her Majesty the Queen, as well as Buganda officials, and quotes from the individuals that had a hand in the signing of the Buganda Agreement. The writer does not embroider any details and this rules out any feelings of bias.

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Analysis

The signing of the Buganda agreement affected the political life of Baganda in such a way that it trashed their existing system of administration and replaced it with the British administrative system. The Kabaka along with his chiefs were robbed of their political power and became puppets for British administrators. Therefore Baganda got to experience a new system of administration which was characterized by the use of indirect rule.

In the social field, the signing of the Buganda agreement had a quite significant impact on the Baganda. Its signing brought about the introduction

of a taxation system that involved payment of hut tax which helped curb polygamy. Polygamy in traditional African societies was a source of pride and joy to many. However, a tax of three rupees was quite a burden to African men who had to dump the practice. This was simply due to the fact that the more wives one had the more huts he would own and therefore the higher the taxes he would have to pay. However the local natives resorted to overcrowding so as to reduce the amount of taxes paid and this term was abolished in 1909 only to be replaced by poll tax.

The Buganda agreement, without doubt had an impact on the people of Buganda in both the political and social context. However not all the changes that Baganda experienced can solely be apportioned to the Buganda agreement. Other factors apart from the agreement itself are partially accountable for the political and social changes that Baganda went through: religion such Islam and Christianity, trade and the 1953 Kabaka Crisis

Christianity: Baganda were introduced to Christianity around mid 18th century by a couple of missionary groups such as the Christian Missionary Society, The White Fathers, The Mill Hill fathers and the list goes on. These missionary groups came with their main agenda which was to spread Christianity though some African historians believe they had a hidden agenda which was to lay foundation stones for their colonialist governments. Through their activities, missionaries polarized Buganda where they divided people along religious lines which brought about the creation of the W'Ingeleza-W'Fransa conflict that resulted in a destabilized Ganda society which could not stand up and resist British rule. Along with this came their

teachings which pitted the Kabaka in opposition to his subjects leading to loss of power as well as authority.

Islam: Islam was introduced to the East African community in 700AD and in Buganda, it was introduced in 1844. Before Islam came to Buganda, aspects of the Ganda culture were incessantly changing. What Islam did was to hasten these changes which eventually had a quite significant impact on the Baganda way of life such as customs and traditions. Islam, with its emphasis on monotheism and individual salvation not only ushered in the process of the Baganda as a social unit but also changed their view of the cosmos. Buganda's religion, based on the belief in one god (Katonda) was undergoing change and was slowly drifting away from the decentralized era and heading on towards the centralized. When Islam came, it completed the process as well as altered, the way Baganda perceived the world.

The 1953 Kabaka crisis is another factor that was responsible for bringing about political change in Buganda. The Kabaka crisis came about due to disagreement between Sir Andrew Cohen and Kabaka Muteesa II and resulted into the Kabaka being exiled to England due to his inability to follow the 1900 Buganda Agreement terms. The crisis brought about the Lukiiko being given absolute authority to propose who the Kabaka's ministers would be and therefore the Kabaka was to be answerable to the Lukiiko and not the British government as it was under the Buganda Agreement. The Kabaka under the Buganda agreement was robbed of his right to nominate members of the Lukiiko. However, as a result of the Kabaka crisis, he was given his rights to nominate his officials and the Kabaka became a constitutional monarch as his position was redefined.

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Another vital factor that influenced Buganda socially was Buganda's participation in the long distance trade as well as the slave trade that existed on the African continent in the 19th century. Buganda was a major participant in both types of trade, providing slaves, hides as well as bark cloth to the outside world (Arabs, Asians and Europeans). The participation in these trades brought about Buganda's rise and expansion as from these trades. Buganda got guns which she used to acquire territories such as Busoga, Karagwe which became her tributary states through raids for slaves as well as territory.

(767 words)

Conclusion

The illustration of the area under discussion shows that the signing of the Buganda agreement brought about change in Uganda political and social way of life. The signing of the Buganda agreement undermined the powers of the Kabaka as the Kabakaship functions were swept away: he lost his say in Buganda's land matters. He could no longer appoint chiefs without the approval from the protectorate government and other concepts upon which the governance of the territory was based were swept away. In areas such as Busoga, Kigezi and Ankole, the existing political structures were shuffled and the traditional chiefs were all placed under the European District Officer. These actions raised a question among today's writers, " did the flag follow the cross?"

However, by the time Uganda was finally granted her independence, most of the terms of the agreement had been swept away and Uganda was no longer subject to the British government.

(151 words)