

## **Violence and Political Advocacy in the Lost Counties, Western Uganda, 1930–64\***

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Violence is, among other things, a prompt for discourse. Violent deeds, when enacted in relation to an infrastructure that can interpret and publicize them, are a particularly powerful means of generating conviction and animating political action. By positioning themselves as victims of violence, subject peoples can show otherwise unremarked inequities to be unjust and inhumane. By pursuing latent antagonisms through violent means, activists can make hitherto interwoven human communities appear to be involved in a battle to the death. It is the power of spilt blood to heighten the seriousness of human conflict. Violent deeds can make complicated political problems into morality plays. In this essay I distinguish between two registers of violent behavior: evidentiary violence and classificatory violence. Evidentiary violence is reported, publicized, and discussed. It is fodder for petitions and demands for recompense. Evidentiary violence is the violence of victimhood: when chronicled and dramatized in reports and pleas, it helps cast political authorities as brutes. Its audience is an external organization—the state, the international community, the church, the empire—that can be moved to action to alleviate injustice. Classificatory violence, by contrast, is ordinarily unpublicized and unreported. Its audience is internal: it is the violence by which insiders are sorted from outsiders and natives are distinguished from interlopers. It is the violence by which human communities are stage-managed and demographic constituencies are established. It is the work by which a people claim a particular tract of territory as their native homeland.

This essay chronicles the changing architecture of political advocacy around the “lost counties” dispute in western Uganda. The lost counties were a vast territory that the British had carved out of the conquered kingdom of Bunyoro and handed to the kingdom of Buganda, their premier ally, in the late nineteenth century. British colonial administration was deliberately ignorant of the multi-linguistic diversity of Uganda’s people. Guided by the philosophy of indirect rule, officials reinforced the supposedly traditional prerogatives of the kings of Buganda, Bunyoro, Toro, Ankole, and Busoga. Cultural minorities experienced this form of government as totalitarianism. In the lost counties and elsewhere in colonial Uganda, they got leverage over the architects of neo-traditionalism by speaking in the historical idiom of abolitionism. They configured their language, their cultural life, and their history so to differentiate themselves from their

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African overlords, and with the evidence of their distinctiveness in view, they framed the homogenizing tactics of indirect rule as tyranny, a form of cultural and political violence. Abolitionism was for minority groups a powerful strategy of advocacy, for British officials were obliged to act to suppress slavery. Their rationale for imperial government, structured by late eighteenth and early nineteenth century debates over slave emancipation, burdened British officials to act as agents of abolition. In the hands of subject peoples in Uganda, abolitionist discourse attenuated the political and geographic distance between colony and metropole. It brought historic British ideals to bear in measuring the inequities of local colonial administration. It made the bargains that British officials had struck with African kings appear to be illicit, corrupt, and iniquitous.

The logic of subaltern advocacy underwent a dramatic shift with Uganda's independence in 1962. Where in colonial Uganda subaltern petitioners could move British officials by the evidence of their oppression, after Uganda's independence they needed to take matters into their own hands. Uganda's new leaders were not obliged to uphold the civilizing promises of the British empire. There was no heroic history to appeal to, no humanitarian legacy to uphold. It was the narrowing of the space for political advocacy that gave rise to the violence that gripped the lost counties in the early 1960s. In one register, subaltern activists had to generate hard facts that could be used in a court of law. The *corpus* of evidence was created by activists who stage-managed incidents of violence, wrote up reports, reproduced them on cyclostyling machines, and posted them to the relevant authorities. Evidentiary violence was carefully choreographed, performed in relation to a campaign infrastructure. It helped to capture the attention of national leaders. In a second register, subaltern activists engaged in the dark, bloody, shrouded work of sorting out indigenes from interlopers. Cultural differences that had been formulated as strategies of abolitionist politicking became the criteria through which the population of the lost counties could be consolidated. The aim was to establish and maintain a demographic majority, a constituency of Nyoro speakers that could be counted on. Having achieved a discursive momentum during the decades preceding Uganda's independence, the project of cultural and political emancipation became the logic of the pogrom.

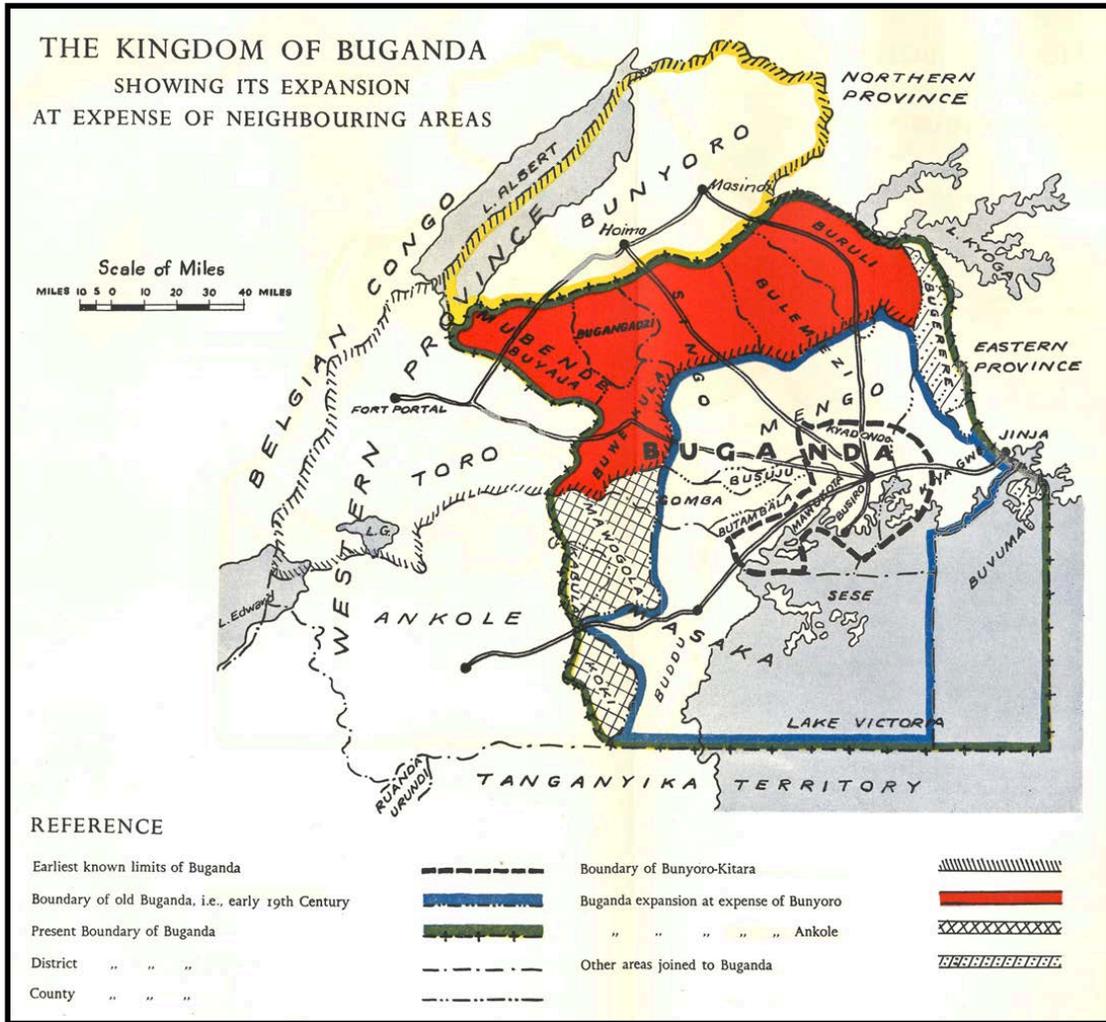
### **Abolitionism and Political Advocacy in the “Lost Counties”**

The Nyoro state had been one of the most innovative and commercially oriented polities in nineteenth century eastern Africa. Under *Omukama* (“King”) Kabalega, Bunyoro's professionalized armies had successfully pushed the kingdom's boundaries to the east at the expense of the neighboring kingdom of Buganda. But in the late nineteenth century British conquistadores forged a close alliance with Kabalega's enemies in Buganda, and in 1890 14,000 Ganda troops backed by British soldiers invaded Bunyoro. During the eight-year war of attrition that followed, Bunyoro's population was decimated, its economy was destroyed, and its people were scattered. So devastating was the assault that Bunyoro's population did not recover until the mid-twentieth century.<sup>1</sup> Kabalega was finally captured in 1899, and sent into exile in the Seychelles. The British commander rewarded his Ganda

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<sup>1</sup> This paragraph is largely derived from Shane Doyle, *Crisis and Decline in Bunyoro: Population and Environment in Western Uganda, 1860–1955* (Oxford: James Currey, 2006), Chapter 3.

allies by extending the northwestern frontier of Buganda to the rivers Kafu and Ngussi, and to Lake Kioga in the north. The ceded territory—some 4,300 square miles in size—consisted largely of Mubende district and its three counties, Bugangaizi, Buyaga, and Buwekula, which were the historical heartland of the Bunyoro kingdom. From an early date, Nyoro activists called this vast area the “lost counties.”



**Map 1.** From Tito Gafabusa Winyi IV, *To the Queen’s Most Excellent Majesty* (Bedford: Sidney Press, November 1958). Used with permission.

The British strategy for dealing with the lost counties was to treat them as an integral part of the kingdom of Buganda. A British officer set the agenda in 1896. As “these provinces became part of the Kingdom of Buganda,” he wrote, “so would their native inhabitants become Waganda [people].”<sup>2</sup> Ganda chiefs were appointed to govern the territories wrested from Bunyoro, while the Ganda language became the official standard

<sup>2</sup> Archival material is cited as follows: UNA: Uganda National Archives; HDA: Hoima District Archives; UKNA: United Kingdom National Archives, Kew; SOAS: School of Oriental and African Studies archives; Rubaga: Rubaga Cathedral archives, Kampala. This reference is to Berkley to the Marquis of Salisbury, 19 November 1896, UKNA, CO 536/1789.

for government and the courts. By 1955, the British governor could tell Bunyoro's politicians that "the clock of history ... could not be turned back." Buganda's government over the lost counties was a *fait accompli*. The governor would not "accept that there was a great difference between the Banyoro and the Baganda," and recommended that Nyoro and Ganda people set themselves to "learning to live together."<sup>3</sup> For their part, Ganda patriots argued that their government over the "lost counties" was the just reward for their long and fruitful collaboration with their British rulers. "The Lost Counties were acquired by reconquest from what were the Enemies of Great Britain and the Baganda," wrote a group of Ganda activists. "We feel that as loyal and faithful allies and cooperators with Great Britain ... a great breach of faith would be committed if the Lost Counties were removed from the Kingdom of Buganda."<sup>4</sup>

But Nyoro people in the lost counties would not agree to be folded neatly into imperial Buganda's population. In reply to the demand that they conform to their rulers' culture, Nyoro activists practiced nativism. They worked to identify themselves as a distinct people, unjustly governed by a foreign power. The 1930s and 1940s witnessed a wave of historical writings, as Nyoro entrepreneurs mined the distant past in order to find evidence of the their people's particular character. Bunyoro's king, Tito Winyi, published three historical articles in the *Uganda Journal*. He emphasized the longevity of Bunyoro's ruling lineage, and gilded its kingship by describing the royal regalia in great detail.<sup>5</sup> Other historical writers likewise elaborated on Bunyoro's long and glorious history. John Nyakatura, a long-serving government chief, published *Abakama ba Bunyoro-Kitara*, the "Kings of Bunyoro-Kitara" in 1947.<sup>6</sup> Nyakatura began his book by assuring readers that "Kitara was a very extensive, prestigious and famous kingdom at the height of its power," and argued that the ancient kingdom was in fact the ancestor of Buganda itself. Bunyoro and Buganda were therefore siblings, co-equals in politics. Nyakatura made a point of listing the ancient kings of Buganda and of Bunyoro side by side, in columns. In his historical writing he sought to align Bunyoro's political status with Buganda's.

This glorious but distant history was not enough for the Nyoro people living in the lost counties. They needed to establish their claim over the disputed territory. In 1957 Metusera Katuramu, nephew to the king of Bunyoro, spent several weeks in the Public Records Office in London, uncovering paperwork concerning the earliest years of British administration in Uganda.<sup>7</sup> The research he and his colleagues conducted structured a

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<sup>3</sup> Minutes of meeting in secretariat, Entebbe, 5 October 1955, "District Council" file, HDA.

<sup>4</sup> Buganda Landowners Association to Prime Minister of Uganda, 25 July 1962, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA. Buganda's political role in Ugandan independence is discussed in Jonathon Earle, "Political Theologies in Late Colonial Buganda" (Ph.D. dissertation, Cambridge University, 2012).

<sup>5</sup> K.W., "The Kings of Bunyoro-Kitara," Parts 1 to 3, *Uganda Journal* 3 (1935), 155–160; *Uganda Journal* 4 (1936), 78–83; and *Uganda Journal* 5 (1937), 53–69. See Justin Willis, "A Portrait for the Mukama: Monarchy and Empire in Colonial Bunyoro, Uganda," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 34, 1 (2006), 105–122.

<sup>6</sup> J.W. Nyakatura, *Abakama ba Bunyoro-Kitara* (1947; reprint, Kisubi: Marianum Press, 1999).

<sup>7</sup> Roger Southall, interview with Metusera Katuramu, 1 March 1971, MS 380513 file 1/5, SOAS.

petition that King Winyi submitted to the British crown in 1958.<sup>8</sup> It was a work of great erudition. In forty pages the petitioners offered quotations from Margery Perham's biography of Lord Lugard; Sir Harry Johnston's account of the early years of the Uganda Protectorate; and the administrator J. Postlethwaite, who in his memoir wrote that "the inclusion of Mubende District in Buganda kingdom is considered by many to be one of the greatest blunders we committed in the past." "In Buyaga lie the graves of the Banyoro Bakama [kings], where every creature, hill, rock and blade of grass cries aloud to those interested that they are Banyoro and can never be anything else," wrote Postlethwaite.<sup>9</sup> The evidence showed, argued the petitioners, that "historically and ethnographically the six counties form part of the Kingdom of Bunyoro Kitara."<sup>10</sup> King Winyi's petition had little immediate effect on British policy.<sup>11</sup> But notwithstanding its effectiveness in shaping British policy, the petition had a long afterlife in Nyoro political discourse. References to Postlethwaite's evocative memoir appeared in a September 1961 memorandum to the Uganda constitutional conference, and again in a 1962 memorandum submitted to the Privy Council by the Mubende Banyoro Committee.<sup>12</sup> Some petitioners expanded on the set text. In 1960 the petitioner P. Eribanya told a visiting British commission:

The stones, hills, mountains, valleys, hillocks, rivers, streams, trees, grass, the soil itself and even the winds of the air blow hard their horns that they belong to Bunyoro Kitara ... Insects, birds, and animals have locally been and are crying to be returned to their Motherland.<sup>13</sup>

This petitioner was widening the memoirist Postlethwaite's geography, populating the landscape with animal and aviary life, adding to the sonic chorus demanding recompense for the injustices done to Bunyoro's homeland. A map prepared for King Winyi's 1958 petition made the point in cartographic terms. It represented Buganda's "expansion at the expense of neighbouring areas," highlighting with vivid red ink the vast territory that Buganda had, with British support, wrested from Bunyoro (see map above).<sup>14</sup> By 1963 Bunyoro's government could argue that "the link between us and the Lost Counties is natural; is not man made but God made ... It is he who made the Banyoro as one tribe and

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<sup>8</sup> Tito Gafabusa Winyi IV, *To the Queen's Most Excellent Majesty* (Bedford, UK: Sidney Press, 1958); UKNA, CO 822/1739.

<sup>9</sup> Margery Perham, *Lugard: The Years of Adventure, 1858-1898* (London: Collins, 1956); H.H. Johnston, *The Uganda Protectorate* (London: Hutchinson, 1902); J.R.P. Postlethwaite, *I Look Back* (London: T.V. Boardman, 1947). Postlethwaite's quotation is in Winyi, *To the Queen*, 20-21.

<sup>10</sup> Winyi, *To the Queen*, 19.

<sup>11</sup> Crawford to Lennox-Boyd, 28 July 1959, UKNA, CO 822/1739.

<sup>12</sup> Hon. N.K. Rugemwa to Uganda constitutional conference, 23 September 1961, UKNA, CO 822/2786; Mubende Banyoro Committee to the Commission of Privy Councilors, n.d. (but 1962), MS 380513, file 1/7, SOAS.

<sup>13</sup> P.T. Eribankya to the Relationships Commission, 6 October 1960, 02 Bp 211/26, Church of Uganda archives, Uganda Christian University.

<sup>14</sup> "Kingdom of Buganda, showing its expansion at expense of neighboring areas," n.d. (but 1961), "Local Government Policy, Lost Counties" file, HDA.

gave us a particular land to live in.”<sup>15</sup> Nyoro entrepreneurs were drawing the lost counties into a foreordained orbit.

The partisan cartographers of the lost counties were also demographers, enlisting the region’s human inhabitants as carriers of an essential Nyoro culture and as subjects of the Nyoro king. Language work proved particularly helpful in establishing the demographic evidence for a Nyoro presence in the lost counties. The British policy was to use Luganda as the language of government: the Governor thought in any case that “Luganda and Lunyoro are both Bantu languages with great similarities.”<sup>16</sup> But Nyoro population-builders could not consent to speak the Ganda *lingua franca*. They filled up British officials’ mailboxes with evidence about Buganda’s cultural imperialism. In 1938, the “Mubende Banyoro Committee” wrote to Uganda’s governor to complain that:

in every meeting, we are compelled to talk a foreign language such as in courts, in churches etc. In every school, our children are forced to be taught in Luganda ... In both birth and baptism registers our children’s names are generally reduced to Luganda ones which is a very bad and wonderful habit indeed.<sup>17</sup>

Nyoro petitioners represented Buganda’s efforts at cultural assimilation as totalitarianism. In a meeting with the British governor, the chief judge of Bunyoro cited census data as evidence of Bunyoro’s claim over the counties. Seventy percent of the people in one of the lost counties were Nyoro, he argued, while only 21 percent were Ganda.<sup>18</sup> These statistics allowed Nyoro petitioners to represent the counties’ population in monochromatic terms. In 1955, the Bunyoro government asked politicians in Uganda’s Legislative Council to adopt a motion protesting that the “natural culture of the people in the [lost counties] is in fact being destroyed.”<sup>19</sup> By 1961, a tract could describe Buganda’s government over the lost counties as “foreign rule.”<sup>20</sup>

Abolitionist rhetoric gave Nyoro activists a framework with which to draw British officials onto their side in this dispute over governance. In August 1930, Zakaliya Lugangwa and thirty-two compatriots addressed themselves to the British official responsible for Buganda. “Oh! You the honourable Government, the true protector, when you transferred these counties from the King of Bunyoro to Buganda, you did not know that those people to whom you gave us will make us slaves,” they wrote.<sup>21</sup> Lugangwa and his companions complained about the absence of educational opportunity for Nyoro

<sup>15</sup> Press release, September 1963, “Local Government Policy, Lost Counties” file, HDA.

<sup>16</sup> Crawford to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 2 July 1957, UKNA, CO 822/1738.

<sup>17</sup> Mubende Banyoro Committee to Governor, 27 April 1938, D.39 f.5, Rubaga.

<sup>18</sup> Minutes of a meeting at the Secretariat, Entebbe, 5 October 1955, “District Council” file, HDA.

<sup>19</sup> O. Magezi to chair, Representative Members Organization, Kampala, 14 October 1955, “District Council” file, HDA.

<sup>20</sup> Byarufu Masobhe to “All people in the lost counties,” 20 November 1961, “Local Government Policy, Lost Counties” file, HDA.

<sup>21</sup> Lugangwa et al., to P.C. Buganda, 2 August 1930, file C.00144, box 41, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

students, the expropriation of their land by greedy Ganda landholders, and the inequalities of local government. “We thank the British Government which abolished the slavery to be plundered and sold,” they wrote, “but we of Mubende District are like [people] who did not get rid of those.” It is not a coincidence that Lugangwa was also the *Mugema*, the keeper of the tombs of the Nyoro kings in Mubende district. Appointed to the post by the king of Bunyoro early in 1930, he was a member of the clan that had for generations been responsible for the maintenance of the tombs. Upon his arrival in the district Lugangwa refused to present himself before the Ganda county chief, a breach of etiquette that earned him a rebuke from the authorities. He urged the Nyoro peasantry to refuse to carry headloads for their Ganda chiefs. Within two years of Lugangwa’s appointment the collection of taxes was in arrears, as he exhorted peasants to withhold their payment in anticipation of the day when the counties would be returned to Bunyoro. His ally, an Anglican schoolteacher named Tomasi Wamala, replaced the Ganda language books in his school with Nyoro language texts that he brought in from Hoima, the capital of Bunyoro.<sup>22</sup>

British officials thought that Lugangwa was “conducting himself so as to be dangerous to peace and good order.”<sup>23</sup> But Lugangwa was more than an agitator. In his political and organizational work Lugangwa was setting his people apart from their Ganda overlords. By this means he sought to make Ganda government in the lost counties appear to be an affront to human freedom. In 1931, Lugangwa and sixty-three colleagues addressed the governor as “the Peace and Civilizer in the Uganda Protectorate, a country over which the Union Jack waves.”<sup>24</sup> With the governor’s role in view, Lugangwa and his colleagues could meaningfully announce that, “Slavery has been practiced over us since [the lost counties] were cut off from Bunyoro Kingdom and added to Buganda.” Lugangwa proved his case by contrasting an old order of cultural self-possession with the new, debased world in which he and his colleagues lived. Before “being cut off,” he wrote, “we had inheritable lands; we had our own language, Runyoro; we had power in our country; we had honour and we could get everything that comes out of our country at ease.” But under Ganda overlordship Luganda, not Lunyoro, was used in schools and in courts, and “so we are slowly turned into Baganda, this shows the presence of slavery.” Lugangwa and his compatriots were naming themselves as oppressed victims of Ganda tyranny. The petition concluded by asking “the British Government that every country subject to the English Flag should enjoy freedom and that slavery should be done away with.”

Nyoro petitioners used abolitionist rhetoric to remind British officials of their moral duties, and to oblige disinterested administrators to take an active role in upholding British honor. They were burdening British officials with evidence of their oppression. In 1938, sixty-six signatories from the “Mubende Banyoro Committee” petitioned the governor to complain that “1. we lost the rights in our mother country 2. we lost the power in our

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<sup>22</sup> This and other incidents are described in D.C. Mubende to P.C. Buganda, 1 June 1932, file C.00144, box 41, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>23</sup> P.C. Buganda to Chief Secretary, Entebbe, 21 June 1932, file C.00144, box 41, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>24</sup> Zakaliya Lugangwa to governor, 1 December 1931, file with no cover, HDA.

mother country 3. we lost the dialect language 4. we are slaves.”<sup>25</sup> Like Zakaliya Lugangwa and his colleagues, the 1938 petitioners represented the imposition of Ganda language in the lost counties as a mark of Buganda’s inhumane tyranny. “We are afraid of this slavery to touch to our poor children as well as our grand children,” they lamented. With the issues so clearly drawn, British government should feel itself obliged to act in the favor of an oppressed people. The 1938 petitioners asked for “the just kindness of the British government to order ... that we may be set free from slavery.” Other petitioners similarly invited British officials to follow William Pitt’s lead. “We are under the same flag and serve the same government of His Majesty the Great King of England, George,” wrote a petitioner in a 1933 letter to the Secretary of State for the Colonies.<sup>26</sup> “We are to be treated in the same way as other races that are near us, to make us equal to the other parts of the Protectorate.”

Nyoro petitioners framed the political situation in the disputed territory in such a way as to make the region’s residents look like an oppressed people. And by drawing officials’ eyes to the Union Jack fluttering over the Uganda Protectorate, entrepreneurs contrasted British ideals with the evidence of local inequalities. In reminding Uganda’s administrators of their membership within Britain’s empire, they laid out a path of action for colonial officials to follow. As upholders of Britain’s civilizing mission, colonial authorities were morally obligated to set slaves at liberty.

This line of argument proved to be surprisingly durable, and even into the early 1960s—the era of Africa’s national independence—the debate over the lost counties was conducted as an argument over Britain’s civilizing mission. The prospect of Uganda’s national independence lent urgency and conviction to Nyoro people’s abolitionist claim-making. In 1958 Ugandans, for the first time, elected representatives to sit on the colony-wide Legislative Council. By the early 1960s delegates were hammering out a constitution for independent Uganda in a series of conferences in London. Even as the architecture of independent Uganda came into view, Nyoro petitioners were emphatically reminding British authorities about their imperial duties. When the British governor toured Bunyoro, he found dozens of placards along the roadway denouncing slavery, and crowds of children chanting “lost counties.”<sup>27</sup> “All people in the Protectorate are ... anxiously looking forward to the not-far-away day when Uganda will be a self-Government country, when they will have a full say in affairs affecting their Local Government,” wrote a Nyoro activist. But in the lost counties “we are still in slavery and we are demanding immediate and unconditional emancipation.”<sup>28</sup> He wanted the lost counties returned to Bunyoro before Uganda’s independence. Nyoro activists argued that it was Britain’s duty to right the wrongs done to them in the past. “If self-rule were granted to this country before the ... restoration of these counties to Bunyoro-Kitara, then we would definitely be attempting to

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<sup>25</sup> Mubende Banyoro Committee to Governor, 27 April 1938, D.39 f.5, Rubaga.

<sup>26</sup> Anonymous petitioner at Hoima to Secretary of State, 1933, file with no cover, HDA.

<sup>27</sup> Crawford to “Will,” 19 June 1957, UKNA, CO 822/1738.

<sup>28</sup> E. Kabanyanga, President of the Banyoro Committee Muhororo Branch, to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 13 Sept. 1961, UKNA, CO 822/2786.

build the future sovereign state of Uganda upon a murram foundation,” wrote the Mubende Banyoro Committee in a petition to the Queen.<sup>29</sup>

British authorities were bemused by this belated upsurge in talk about the character of the civilizing mission.<sup>30</sup> But even as they distanced themselves from the moral demands of the colonial project, British officials nonetheless felt obliged to address the lost counties problem. The Congo’s bloody war was a particularly vivid warning to other European states brokering the independence of African colonies. British authorities feared that independent Uganda might, like the Congo, become an embarrassment. As a Nyoro activist warned in 1961, “If we are left in Buganda there will be no peace in future except fighting and killing people as it is now in the Congo, and the case will be upon the British people who made us slaves of Baganda.”<sup>31</sup> The nightmare of the Congo made Uganda’s officials uneasy about the future. “If this issue is not settled before Uganda becomes independent,” warned a Colonial Office bureaucrat in a 1960 memorandum about the lost counties issue, “it could easily lead to early disruption of the new self-governing state or even to civil war.”<sup>32</sup>

Torn between the moral demands of the civilizing mission and the practical realities of governance, the British prevaricated. Buganda’s authorities adamantly refused to countenance the return of the disputed territories to Bunyoro. Ganda politicians discounted the archival and historical evidence that Nyoro activists had so assiduously collected, and vowed “not an inch of Buganda soil will be returned to Bunyoro.”<sup>33</sup> When, in 1962, a Privy Council commission recommended that Buyaga and Bugangaizi counties should be transferred to Bunyoro before Uganda’s independence, the Buganda parliament refused to accept the report, calling it “an insult to Buganda.”<sup>34</sup> For a brief time, the British government considered offering a monetary payment to Buganda in exchange for the return of the disputed territory to Bunyoro.<sup>35</sup> But in June 1962, at the very end of the last plenary session of the conference dedicated to the drafting of Uganda’s new constitution, the Colonial Secretary imposed a solution on the lost counties issue. Buyaga and Bugangaizi counties were to be excised from the kingdom of Buganda and administered by the central government. After a period of two years, the independent government of

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<sup>29</sup> Erisa Kalisa and two others to the Queen, 26 October 1959, UKNA, CO 822/1739.

<sup>30</sup> Shane Doyle, “From Kitara to the Lost Counties: Genealogy, Land, and Legitimacy in the Kingdom of Bunyoro, Western Uganda,” *Social Identities* 12, 4 (2006), 464.

<sup>31</sup> Yesofatia Rukyalekere to the Relationships Commission, 8 March 1961, file REL/8/21, box 71, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>32</sup> “The Lost Counties” briefing note, Sept. 1960, UKNA, CO 822/2786.

<sup>33</sup> Extract from April intelligence summary, UKNA, CO 822/2786.

<sup>34</sup> Walter Coutts to W. Monson, 14 May 1962, UKNA, CO 822/2786; Kabaka’s Government, *Lord Molson is Wrong* (Kampala: Information Department, May 1962). See Doyle, “From Kitara to the Lost Counties,” 466–67.

<sup>35</sup> Webber, Foreign and Colonial Office, to Governor, 1 June 1962, UKNA, CO 822/2786.

Uganda was to organize a referendum on the future governance of the two counties.<sup>36</sup> The British thereby handed the most intractable of Uganda's political problems on to Milton Obote's independent government.

It is not a coincidence that the first political murder in the lost counties took place on 26 June 1962, within a day of the Colonial Secretary's announcement at the Uganda constitutional conference. The victim was Yowana Kalibala, a Ganda parish chief in Bugangaizi county. He had been drinking in a bar in the evening; on his way home, he was ambushed and shot with an arrow by Nyoro activists.<sup>37</sup> There was no confrontation, no argument. Kalibala probably did not see his killers. They were working on principle, not out of private motives. Their struggle for the restoration of the lost counties had for decades been conducted through the work of ethnography, through the culturally, linguistically and historically solidifying labor of cultural self-constitution. In 1962, Nyoro activists lost the British audience to which their appeals for emancipation had long been directed. The political categories with which they had long worked—slave and master, Nyoro and Ganda, native and foreigner—thereupon found a new life, as the racial and historical antimonies generated by abolitionist thought became the grounds for violence.

### **The Evidence of Violence**

Until the late 1950s, Nyoro advocacy rested on the generalized evidence of history, and on the lessons of ethnography, in order to make Ganda government over the lost counties appear unjust. Nyoro advocates had dealt with cultural blocs, not with individuals. They agglomerated the population of the lost counties into wholes—the Ganda and the Nyoro—each with their own distinctive culture, language, religion and political future. Subaltern abolitionism relied for its power on the contrasts that activists could draw between their culture and that of their rulers. Their evidence was the history book, the map, the dictionary, the ancient monument. That was the proof that activists needed to establish their historical presence on disputed ground.

In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Nyoro advocacy moved into a different register. Uganda's new African government was not obliged to uphold the emancipatory promises of the British empire. Uganda's politics were majoritarian, and Prime Minister Milton Obote was not honor-bound to liberate subject peoples. After independence Obote's Uganda People's Congress entered into a power-sharing arrangement with Kabaka Yekka, the party of the Buganda royalists. Nyoro activists could get little leverage in the face of this parliamentary coalition. "We have suffered a great deal, we have been tortured, we have been insulted, we have been exploited, we have been stunted politically, economically and socially and we have been subjected to all sorts of indignities," wrote the Mubende Banyoro Committee's president in a plea to Prime Minister Obote. It was an encompassing litany. But it was not clear how or why the Prime Minister could be made to

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<sup>36</sup> Secretary of State to the Governor of Uganda, 27 June 1962, UKNA, CO 822/2786. See Phares Mutibwa, "Internal Self-Government, March 1961–October 1962," in G.N. Uzoigwe, ed., *Uganda: The Dilemma of Nationhood* (New York: Nok Publishers, 1982), 295–97.

<sup>37</sup> S.O.G. to Governor, 26 June 1962, file C.GLP 32, box 84, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

act upon the injustices that Nyoro people had suffered. There was no civilizing mission to which to refer, no anti-slavery legacy to uphold, no history to invoke. The petitioners were left to appeal to Milton Obote's personal decency. "We sincerely ask you, who are a great lover of freedom, to help us shake off our enslaving masters," they rather lamely wrote.<sup>38</sup>

As Uganda moved from colony to independent state, so were the rhetorical resources available to subject peoples in the lost counties stripped away. There were, still, claims about the duties that rulers owed to their people. But as imperial Britain withdrew from Uganda, so did the lost counties debate come to be reframed in narrowly legal terms, as being about the individual rights that specific categories of Ugandans ought to enjoy. Where in an earlier time Nyoro activists had argued for justice for the whole body of Nyoro people in the lost counties, in the 1960s activists were obliged to frame their argument in the discourse of human rights. They were obliged, that is, to engage with the postcolonial state not as an upholder of moral values but through the legal process. Here there was a procedure they had to follow. Activists had to identify individual cases of governmental malpractice that they could pursue in the courts. They had to shed light on the technical competence of specific government officials. They had to identify actionable evidence, specific cases that could be documented and presented before a court. Needing proof with which to indict specific Ganda authorities, Nyoro activists chronicled, created, or prompted episodes of violence.

One of the earliest petitioners to make a human rights case regarding the lost counties was Erisa Kalisa. In 1957, Kalisa, writing on behalf of ninety-one members of the Mubende Banyoro Committee, petitioned the Queen in the ringing tones of abolitionism. Under the heading "Virtual Slavery," Kalisa noted that "that the Buganda Kingdom alone appears to be the only country, among the many British Dependencies, that still cherishes and revives the vestiges of slavery and exploitation."<sup>39</sup> In its abolitionist rhetoric Kalisa's petition was part of a long line of Nyoro advocacy. But where in earlier times Nyoro petitioners had relied on the evidence of ethnographic and linguistic difference to sustain their argument about the injustice of Ganda government over the lost counties, Kalisa's petition turned to forensics. He sought to open up a legal investigation into particular wrongs done to specific people by their Ganda chiefs. In several pages he described what he called "recriminatory acts against innocent persons," listing specific instances of discrimination and injustice. Two men, Anderea Tementara and Yozeefu Bikongoro, had been accosted by a Ganda chief one evening on their return from a meeting of the Mubende Banyoro Committee. In Kalisa's recounting of the incident the chief had bellowed at the two men "Get away from us, and betake yourselves back to Bunyoro and to your own ruler!" They had in turn replied "It was he himself who ought to pack up and return whence he hailed." The chief had punished them with nine months of hard labor for their impertinence. To this example Kalisa added two more instances of unjust imprisonment. Kalisa's petition, with its evocation of particular human interactions,

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<sup>38</sup> Erisa Kalisa to Milton Obote, 28 August 1962, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>39</sup> Erisa Kalisa et al. to Lennox Boyd, 14 October 1957, UKNA, CO 822/1738.

indicted specific Ganda chiefs for particular misdeeds. This was a form of advocacy that was meant for the courtroom.

Forensic procedure gave Nyoro activists a whole new register in which to work. Over the course of time the lists of evidence they produced became longer, more standardized, and more pertinent to a court of law. In June 1963, for instance, Erasto Kamara wrote to the government administrator of Mubende District with verbatim evidence from six Nyoro people who had suffered various forms of maltreatment in the hands of their Ganda chiefs.<sup>40</sup> The statements were dated and signed. They were impossible to ignore: they obliged government officers to conduct investigations, interview more witnesses, and open up litigation to try the guilty. The government administrator in Mubende seems to have spent several days pursuing the claims that Kamara's witnesses made. The report that he sent to Prime Minister Obote ran to several pages.<sup>41</sup> That was what forensics could do: make otherwise forgettable human actions into evidence that demanded judicial action. Testimonial evidence was the currency in which Nyoro advocacy worked in postcolonial Uganda. In February 1963, Kosiya Rwebembera and other members of the Mubende Banyoro Committee filed a petition with the government administrator of Mubende County. The covering letter was composed on a typewriter, but the appendices included a cyclostyled document entitled "Evidence Given by Messrs. Petero Bitaka and Mateni Birikimwoha Who Were Present when Zakaliya Kirakaija was Beaten Up by Kabaka Yekka Askaris on 19 February 1963."<sup>42</sup> It is not clear where the statement traveled, who read it, or how it was used. What is clear is that it was duplicated, circulated and read by more than one audience. The record of Zakaliya Kirakaija's beating was multipurpose. It was part of an archive concerning Ganda misgovernment, a collection of paperwork from which Nyoro activists could withdraw evidence.

Nyoro activists were always adding to their archive and producing new material for distribution. It was the Mubende Banyoro Committee that performed the critical work of generating, collating, and circulating the paperwork. Formed in the 1920s, the committee's earliest leader was Zakaliya Lugangwa, keeper of the king's tombs and author of the first abolitionist petitions regarding the lost counties (see above). By the 1950s the committee was led by the ex-soldier Joseph Kazairwe and Erisa Kalisa, who worked as a salesman for Iron and Steelwares Ltd. in Kampala.<sup>43</sup> The committee collected no dues from its members, and had no bank account. For each memorandum that it prepared committee leaders had to solicit for funds for the purchase of stationary and postage. The material for the petitions came from a sub-committee, headed by the historian John Nyakatura, whose

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<sup>40</sup> Erasto Kamara to Administrator, Mubende, 4 June 1963, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>41</sup> Government Agent, Buyaga and Bugangaizi, to Prime Minister, 20 June 1963, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>42</sup> Kosiya Rwebembera et al. to Administrator, Mubende County, 23 February 1963, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>43</sup> Roger Southall interview with Henry Mirima, 4 March 1971, Ms. 380513, SOAS.

task it was to conduct research.<sup>44</sup> Erisa Kalisa alone authored nineteen petitions to the Queen between 1931 and 1959.<sup>45</sup> When Kalisa was arrested by the police in August 1962, they took away a file “containing all the documents and letters that the Mubende Banyoro Committee has ever sent to the Government and the Colonial Secretary since that body was formed.”<sup>46</sup>

In Kalisa’s file we can see the discursive origin for some of the violence that gripped Mubende in the early 1960s. Needing material proof of Ganda misgovernance, Nyoro activists produced, chronicled, and advertised incidents of violent interaction. This is what might be called evidentiary violence, violence that was meant to prove a point. Here was a register in which Nyoro activists worked to identify or compose instances of oppression, write up a précis with all the details, and disseminate the evidence through petitions and reportage. Evidentiary violence was violence that was meant to persuade, to dramatize oppression, to cast Ganda governance in the lost counties as a legal problem. An episode at Kaluguza market in Buyaga county illuminates how Nyoro activists created physical, visible, bloody evidence of their oppression. Kaluguza was one of the organizational centers of the Mubende Bunyoro Committee: the Secretary-General, Joseph Kazairwe, owned a shop and a bar at the market.<sup>47</sup> During the first months of 1962 traders refused to pay market dues to the Buganda government. When a large contingent of police arrived at 11 a.m. on 24 February, the crowd vowed that they would only pay tax if the money were given to Bunyoro. The police closed the market, and were soon surrounded by an angry crowd. One man in the crowd ran toward the police lines shouting, “Shoot me!”<sup>48</sup> The police threw tear gas grenades; when people failed to disperse, they fired over a dozen rounds. The policemen claimed to have used their weapons with moderation. In all, some five people were injured, two of them seriously.<sup>49</sup>

No sooner had the gunfire ceased than the activists of the Mubende Bunyoro Committee set to work arranging the scene, establishing a plot line, and making Kaluguza into the scene for a legal inquiry. As panicked people fled, Joseph Kazairwe calmly tended to the wounded and had them all moved up to the roadside, where they could be found and identified by the police. He collected two empty gas grenades and one rifle cartridge, which he produced at the inquest that followed the incident.<sup>50</sup> Another witness, Petero

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<sup>44</sup> Commissioner of Police, Bunyoro, to Chief Secretary, 27 September 1955, UKNA, FCO 141/18305.

<sup>45</sup> Kalisa, evidence given to the Uganda Constitutional Committee, 26 October 1959, UKNA, FCO 141/18331.

<sup>46</sup> Erisa Kalisa to Prime Minister, 28 August 1962, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>47</sup> Special Branch to Resident, Buganda, 8 November 1962, UKNA, FCO 141/18328.

<sup>48</sup> Statement of S.I. Mulundu, 5 March 1962, UKNA, FCO 141/18328.

<sup>49</sup> The description of the Kaluguza incident comes from Governor of Uganda to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 25 February 1962, UKNA, CO 822 2786; and from P.A.G. Field and S.M. Locke, “Report of Enquiry into the Circumstances in which Protectorate Police Opened Fire at Kaluguza and Kasoga on 24<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> February 1962.”

<sup>50</sup> Evidence of Joseph Kazairwe, Busana Village, n.d. (but March 1962), UKNA, FCO 141/18328.

Tibamwenda, typed up an account and had it cyclostyled and distributed. It described how the police had fired, unprovoked, into a peaceful crowd.<sup>51</sup> Two days after the incident the Prime Minister of Bunyoro made a speech from the floor of the kingdom's parliament, announcing that the police had "shot and wounded the innocent Banyoro who are fighting for freedom and their rights" and "wishing farewell to those people who are doing acts supporting imperialism and colonialism." Parliamentarians stood in silence for a minute in sympathy for the injured.<sup>52</sup> By early March, British officials could report that Nyoro politicians were widely convinced that the police had gone round Kaluguza firing gas shells into the homes of innocent people.<sup>53</sup>

The incident at Kaluguza helps us see how Nyoro activists worked to generate, elicit, and advertise evidence. The man who invited the police to "Shoot me!" aimed to become an object lesson, a martyr whose injuries could inspire Nyoro patriotism and open up a legal investigation into the justice of Ganda government. Joseph Kazairwe worked to transform the bloodied bodies of the victims into visible proof that could be noticed, chronicled, and written up by observers. Petero Tibamwenda created a record of the event that could be circulated as evidence in petitions and campaigns. There was a machinery at Kaluguza, an infrastructure that transformed a complicated, clouded incident into evidence of Ganda misgovernment.

Other activists were likewise producing proof of the violence they endured. One Nyoro man named Kato filed a law case against Yosamu Kintu, his Ganda chief, claiming to have been assaulted. As evidence of the beating he had endured he produced two teeth that he claimed had been knocked from his mouth by Kintu's blows. The attack on Kato became evidence that Nyoro activists could use in their chronicle of Ganda oppressions: it made its way into an August 1961 petition of the Mubende Banyoro Committee. Only later did the truth come out. The two teeth that Kato claimed to have lost in Kintu's assault had in fact been extracted by a dentist some months before the incident took place. The British official who reviewed the case thought it to be an "example of how far members of the Mubende Banyoro Committee are prepared to go in fomenting trouble by spreading inaccurate and exaggerated stories."<sup>54</sup> For our purposes Kato's honesty is less important than his strategy. Like the men at Kaluguza market, Mr. Kato hoped to become an object lesson. His teeth were the physical evidence that could potentially swing the judicial process in his favor.

Evidentiary violence was violence that claimed an audience in a court of law and in the halls of government. It worked to convict Ganda rulers for their brutality, contrasting the innocence of Nyoro victims with the unreasoned, unlawful aggression of Ganda perpetrators. It was this kind of evidence that Prime Minister Milton Obote demanded when, in August 1962, he responded to a memorandum from the Mubende Banyoro

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<sup>51</sup> Evidence of Peter Tibamwenda, n.d. (but March 1962), UKNA, FCO 141/18328.

<sup>52</sup> Katikiro's speech at the opening of the Rukurato, 26 February 1962, UKNA, FCO 141/18340.

<sup>53</sup> P.C. Western to Chief Secretary, 5 March 1962, UKNA, FCO 141/18398.

<sup>54</sup> Minister of Security and External Relations, memorandum, 11 September 1961, UKNA, CO 822/2786.

Committee by telling its leaders that “it is of the utmost importance that you should substantiate your allegations, giving me names ... what they have and are doing, on what dates they did the things you mentioned, how they do or did it and where, as well as the names of persons who heard and saw these [men] do or say what you allege.”<sup>55</sup> In March 1963 Obote placed the two most disputed counties—Buyaga and Bugangaizi—under the supervision of a British civil servant, Robin Tamplin. Tamplin reported directly to the Prime Minister’s office, not to the Buganda government. It was he who investigated the legal claims that the Mubende Banyoro Committee filed. Obote kept the reports on the lost counties close at hand, in file numbered ‘P.M. 1.’<sup>56</sup> He read them closely: there are notes in the margins and underlining in the text. That was the power of evidentiary violence. It made the inequities and brutalities of local government visible, actionable, and relevant to national politics.

A much wider, less public field of behavior was what can be called classificatory violence. This was a register of violent action that was not meant to be advertised. It was animated by the racial and geographical thinking that earlier generations of Nyoro activists had developed in their efforts to identify and classify the inhabitants of their ethnic homeland. In the 1930s Nyoro petitioners had illuminated their unique cultural heritage in order to oblige British officers to defend their interests. In the 1960s Bunyoro’s cultural politicians lost their British audience. What had been conceived as a strategy of imperial advocacy became a form of racism. The Mubende Banyoro Committee’s flier of 1961 highlights the absolutist character of their discourse. It read “Objective: Lost counties to be returned to their master ... GOD KNOWS THAT WE ARE BANYORO. The Baganda, you yourselves prove us that we are Banyoro from in and out, and perpetually shall be Banyoro.”<sup>57</sup> Classificatory violence involved the sorting of people into categories, the distinguishing of indigenes from natives. In 1961 Nyoro residents of the lost counties began a campaign of disobedience against their Ganda rulers. Letters distributed by Nyoro activists urged that “all Banyoro ... must fight the Baganda until they leave their counties.”<sup>58</sup> The palace that the king of Buganda had built in one of the lost counties was burnt down in July.<sup>59</sup> In October 1961 the parliament of Bunyoro resolved that, because the “indigenous people in the claimed lands are being ill treated and also unjustly sent to prison by the Government of the Kingdom of Buganda,” the lost counties would henceforth be recognized as “having reverted to Bunyoro and thus [are] known as Bunyoro territory.”<sup>60</sup> Early in 1962 Nyoro activists were destroying banana and coffee trees on

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<sup>55</sup> Obote to Rwebembera, 11 August 1962, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>56</sup> File P.M. 1: Lost Counties, box 26, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>57</sup> Bunyoro Kitara Public to Makerere schoolmaster, 11 February 1961, “Relationships Commission” file, HDA.

<sup>58</sup> “Freedom Ddembe,” 25 July 1961, “Local Government Policy, Lost Counties” file, HDA.

<sup>59</sup> *Uganda Eyogeria*, 12 July 1961.

<sup>60</sup> Legislative Council question, 21 November 1961, file 001, box 62, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

Ganda people's farms, and mobs of people were attacking the houses of the Ganda chiefs. In late February the governor reported that the authority of the Ganda chiefs had entirely broken down.<sup>61</sup> The government was obliged to send in the police Special Force to impose order.

The violence of classification, of demography, and of population control was animated by Ganda and Nyoro peoples' contending efforts to govern and administer the lost counties. Taxation was a particular point of conflict. Tax collection was a means of generating revenue, but was also a politically meaningful act. In Mubende and in other parts of the kingdom of Buganda, taxpayers were made to kneel before their chief when handing over their tax payments.<sup>62</sup> Nyoro people complained that chiefs obliged their subjects to proclaim "Kabaka Yekka" ("The [Ganda] King only") fully ten times when paying their taxes.<sup>63</sup> The phrase was an acknowledgement of the Ganda king's suzerainty; more, "Kabaka Yekka" was the name of the political party of Ganda traditionalism. Ganda chiefs sought by all means to extract tax payments and other signs of fealty from their Nyoro subjects. On 6 July 1962, the county chief of Buyaga, Mikaeli Matovu, resolved to arrest Joseph Kazairwe, the secretary-general of the Mubende Banyoro Committee, for his failure to pay the poll tax.<sup>64</sup> When he arrived at Kazairwe's home in the company of several police, Kazairwe brought out ten men armed with sticks, hoes, and slashers, walked to where the police were standing, and drew a line in the dirt, warning them that they crossed the line at their peril. A large crowd gathered behind Kazairwe; chief Matovu brought in police reinforcements. It was on this terrain that, around midday, Atanasio Nyakatura appeared on the scene. He was a Nyoro man, a hotel keeper in a nearby trading center, widely thought to be an informer for the Ganda chiefs. When he approached the line that Kazairwe had drawn in the earth, Kazairwe struck him on the head with a stick, fracturing his skull. The crowd then began to throw stones at the police, who beat a hasty retreat.

In the line that Joseph Kazairwe drew in the rich earth of Buyaga we can see how classificatory thinking helped to animate the violence of 1962 and 1963. Kazairwe and his colleagues sought to carve out a *terroir* in which the administrative powers of the Ganda chiefs had no hold. Their campaign against the Ganda chiefs was conducted as a contest over the routine functions of government bureaucracy. In the latter part of 1961, the Mubende Banyoro Committee set up assessment committees throughout the lost counties, evaluating the worth of Nyoro taxpayers and collecting tax payments on behalf of the

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<sup>61</sup> Governor to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 22 February 1962, UKNA, CO 822/2786.

<sup>62</sup> Kosea Rwebembera to Milton Obote, 18 August 1962, file P.M. 1, box 26, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>63</sup> Erasto Kamara to Administrator of the Lost Counties, 2 February 1963, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>64</sup> The following account is taken from CID to Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs, 13 July 1962, file P.M. 1, box 26, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA; and from "Memorandum on recent incidents in the Kibale area, Buyaga county, Mubende," July 1962, UKNA, CO 822/2787.

Bunyoro government.<sup>65</sup> Committee members intervened to thwart Ganda chiefs who attempted to collect tax. In December 1962, a crowd of thirty Nyoro activists appeared before the county jail in Buyaga at 1:30 in the morning, demanding the release of two prisoners. They had been jailed by their Ganda chiefs for their refusal to pay tax. When the warder refused to open the cell doors, the crowd overpowered him and released the prisoners themselves. Other prisoners were similarly set at liberty by Nyoro interlopers.<sup>66</sup>

The war of classification reached a violent crescendo in March 1963, when the Kabaka, the king of Buganda, began what he called a “hunting trip” in the lost counties. In his company was a large party of “bakawonawo,” ex-soldiers who had served in the British army during the Second World War. The Kabaka planned to locate the ex-soldiers on land that he owned, forming a defensive settlement that would influence the political future of the region.<sup>67</sup> The night before he arrived Nyoro activists burned the guesthouse where he was to stay; and on the day of his arrival the road on which he was to travel was demolished, culverts were dug up, bridges collapsed, and trees dragged across the road. Nineteen people were arrested, and one of them died in the custody of the Ganda police.<sup>68</sup> By May, there were some 3,500 Ganda ex-soldiers in the lost counties.<sup>69</sup> Many of them were settled at Ndaiga, in Buyaga county, where they established fortified homesteads and erected checkpoints across public roads.<sup>70</sup> They located their homes with little regard to their Nyoro neighbors: in one place government surveyors found that the ex-soldiers had built their houses in the midst of well-established banana gardens owned by Nyoro farmers; in another place the ex-soldiers had placed a fence across the courtyard of a Nyoro peasant’s home.<sup>71</sup>

Ganda chiefs used these ex-soldiers in order to reinforce their precarious authority over Nyoro residents of the lost counties. It is plain that their methods were brutal. On 23 March, a party of Ganda police and ex-soldiers arrested two-dozen Nyoro people for defaulting on their taxes. They beat one woman who was pregnant. As she was being carried off to a police car Constant Kiiza, a member of the Bunyoro royal clan, appeared on the scene, telling the soldiers that they had “better not torture this woman, as she is

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<sup>65</sup> Governor of Uganda to Secretary of State for the Colonies, 8 March 1962, UKNA, CO 822/2787.

<sup>66</sup> See Tamplin to Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, 15 December 1962, file C.10482 II, box 19, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>67</sup> Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs, to Prime Minister, 3 April 1963, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>68</sup> Government Agent, Mubende, to Office of the Prime Minister, 24 March 1963, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>69</sup> R. Tamplin to Prime Minister, 13 May 1963, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>70</sup> Record of a Meeting of the Mubende District Security Committee, 7 June 1963, file S.10932, box 90, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>71</sup> R. Tamplin to Prime Minister, 20 June 1963, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

bearing a child. You had better take me instead.”<sup>72</sup> The Ganda police struck his jaw, and after he fell to the ground, they beat him on his testicles. When the Uganda police investigated the death of Kiiza, they were met with closed-mouthed reticence from the Ganda ex-soldiers, who refused to reveal the circumstances of the incident or the names of the people who had been present.<sup>73</sup> Nyoro witnesses, by contrast, offered vivid accounts of the ex-soldiers’ brutality: they produced and cyclostyled a document that they titled “Investigations into the Death of Prince Constant Kiiza, Who was Killed by Ssabaija Kabaka’s Police Men.” It described how Kiiza was taken, bound, before the Kabaka himself, and that the Kabaka had ordered him to be killed. “Every soldier gave him a kick,” reported one witness, “others boxed him until a certain soldier came, lifted him up and dropped him heavily on the ground.”<sup>74</sup> In this and in other circulating reports Kiiza’s violent death was added to the accumulating archive of evidence that illuminated the injustices of Ganda governance.

There was a proliferation of evidence of violence in the lost counties in May and June 1963. The reporters of the Mubende Banyoro Committee seem to have been everywhere. In May and June 1963, Ganda ex-soldiers killed at least five people in Mubende district.<sup>75</sup> A particularly bloody incident took place at Kaluguza market. In April 1963, a Ganda police constable had been shot and wounded in the market while attempting to enforce the collection of tax on market traders. Two weeks later a party of fifty Ganda soldiers and police accompanied the Kabaka himself to close the market. When they arrived, they found 400 Nyoro people armed with spears and sticks. They were anticipating a confrontation: many of them had slept in the market the night before. The police opened fire with sub-machine guns, killing one person and wounding several others.<sup>76</sup> There were several political assassinations. During the night of 26 September, Yosefu Mugenyi, a leading member of the Mubende Banyoro Committee, was shot to death near his home. His neighbors reported that two days before the shooting four Buganda government policemen had stopped their Landover on the road, surveying the neighborhood in search of Mugenyi’s house.<sup>77</sup> Nyoro activists worried that the Ganda chiefs were planning to kill or imprison all the strong men of Bunyoro, to make for an easier victory in the event of a

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<sup>72</sup> “Investigations into the Death of Prince Constante Kiiza, Who Was Killed by Ssabaija Kabaka’s Police Men,” 23 March 1963, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>73</sup> Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Internal Affairs, to Milton Obote, 19 April 1963, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>74</sup> Chair of the UPC Mubende to Milton Obote, 2 April 1963, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>75</sup> Record of a Meeting of the Mubende District Security Committee, 7 June 1963, file S.10932, box 90, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>76</sup> Tamplin to Prime Minister Obote, 13 May 1963, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>77</sup> R. Tamplin to Prime Minister, 3 October 1963, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

war.<sup>78</sup> Early in 1964, members of the Mubende Banyoro Committee formed a military wing that they called the “Kabalega Force,” referring to the warrior king of late nineteenth century Bunyoro. All Nyoro men between twenty and twenty-five years of age were to be enlisted; their vocation was to launch a war against the Ganda ex-soldiers and chiefs.<sup>79</sup>

It was in this context that, in September 1964, the National Assembly passed the Referendum Bill, inviting the residents of two of the lost counties—Buyaga and Bugangaizi—to choose whether their territory would remain in Buganda, join the kingdom of Bunyoro, or become a separate district. The referendum was the fruit of decades of Nyoro activism. On the first page of his private file concerning the referendum, Milton Obote carefully tabulated, by hand, the census figures for Buyaga and Bugangaizi counties, showing 3,542 Ganda, 13,602 Nyoro, and 152 members of other ethnicities.<sup>80</sup> It was the numerical evidence, the statistical proof showing Nyoro people to be in the majority, which seems to have been foremost on Obote’s mind. Some 250 schoolteachers and ex-chiefs were shipped in from outside Bunyoro and Buganda to supervise the election.<sup>81</sup> The Mubende Banyoro Committee designed special uniforms for the occasion, featured a red and white shirt with the names of the disputed counties imprinted across the front.<sup>82</sup> Other Nyoro activists made badges for supporters in the lost counties to wear.<sup>83</sup> They were sold throughout Bunyoro to raise funds for the referendum.<sup>84</sup> This sartorial campaign went hand-in-hand with the effort to establish numerical evidence of Nyoro people’s demographic weight. Members of the Mubende Banyoro Committee toured the region, giving prospective voters a tutorial on how to mark the paper ballots.<sup>85</sup> When the votes were counted, the results were clear: in Buyaga 86 percent of 13,000 voters wished to return to Bunyoro, while in Bugangaizi nearly 70 percent of 9,600 voters favored Bunyoro.<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Chair of Uganda People’s Congress, Mubende District, to Administrator, Mubende, 11 May 1963, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>79</sup> Mubende District Security Committee meeting, 28 February 1964, file S.10932, box 90, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>80</sup> File P.M. 15, box 100, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>81</sup> Described in Eric Norris, “The Lost Counties of Bunyoro,” in Douglas and Marcelle Brown, eds., *Looking Back at the Uganda Protectorate* (Perth: Frank Daniels, 1996), 276–88.

<sup>82</sup> Mubende District Security Committee meeting, 30 July 1964, file S.10932, box 90, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>83</sup> Mubende District Security Committee meeting, 28 February 1964, file S.10932, box 90, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>84</sup> Police Officer Commanding, “Summary of Events at Hoima from 9 March to 13 March 1964,” file PML C.59, box 21, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>85</sup> Anonymous letter, 3 October 1964, file S.10482, box 15, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>86</sup> E. Norris to Obote, 16 November 1964, file S.10482, box 15, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

In the days following the referendum there were riots in Buganda, and the Prime Minister of Buganda, Michael Kintu, was forced to resign over his handling of the referendum. There were panicky rumors that twenty-five Ganda ex-soldiers had been massacred in the lost counties, and Ganda partisans in Kampala commandeered several vehicles to go and “save our people.”<sup>87</sup> The police arrested eighty-eight people in Buganda for riotous conduct.<sup>88</sup> The Kabaka, who was the constitutional head of the Ugandan state, refused to recognize the vote. It was Prime Minister Milton Obote who signed the results of the referendum into law. Within the space of a few weeks, Ganda chiefs were obliged to depart from their official posts. They carried off all moveable government equipment with them, even stripping dispensaries of medicines, beds, and furniture.<sup>89</sup> Nyoro chiefs were appointed to replace them. Erisa Kalisa, the long-time president of the Mubende Banyoro Committee, was made county chief in Buyaga; Joseph Kazairwe, the committee’s leading firebrand, was made chief in Bugangaizi. At the ceremony marking the handover of power, 7,000 attendees listened to the long history of the county, told by the grandson of the Nyoro chief who had ruled the county in the time of Kabalega.<sup>90</sup>

## Conclusion

As anthropologist Harri Englund has recently observed about contemporary human rights discourse in Malawi, “new freedoms entail new prisoners.”<sup>91</sup> For residents of the lost counties, Uganda’s political independence closed off a productive avenue for collective action. The subaltern abolitionists of the 1930s had cast light on a wide range of areas in which Nyoro people were subject to oppression. In the early 1960s, this broad, multi-sited field of activism was suddenly foreclosed. After Ugandan independence, it was the technocratic state to which political claims had to be channeled. What had formerly been a campaign for cultural and political restitution became a machine for the generation of violence. As evidence, violence helped Nyoro litigants create legal proofs of the iniquities of Ganda governance in the lost counties. As an act of classification, violence helped organize people into constituencies, establish a majority in a particular tract of territory, and generate hard numbers that could be counted in censuses and elections.

In the aftermath of the 1964 referendum, a group of Nyoro activists wrote to Milton Obote to assure him that the “Banyoro of the two counties ... look to you as their hero, redeemer and their Second Moses because it is you who has delivered them from the yoke

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<sup>87</sup> Norris, “The Lost Counties,” 287.

<sup>88</sup> Meeting at police headquarters, 7 November 1964, file P.M. 15, box 100, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA. See Ian Hancock, “The Buganda Crisis of 1964,” *African Affairs* 64, 275 (Ap. 1970), 109–23.

<sup>89</sup> E.T. Ochwa, D.C. Bunyoro, to Private Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister, 11 January 1965, file P.M. 15, box 100, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>90</sup> No title, no date (but January 1965), “Local government policy: Lost counties” file, HDA.

<sup>91</sup> Harri Englund, *Prisoners of Freedom: Human Rights and the African Poor* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006), 4.

of slavery to Buganda rule into which they had been plunged by the British.”<sup>92</sup> For Nyoro activists, the return of the lost counties to Bunyoro was an emancipation. For Prime Minister Obote, the Nyoro campaign against the Ganda ruling class seems to have dramatized the obligations of the Ugandan state. In May 1966, a year and a half after the lost counties had been wrested from Buganda, Obote sent the Uganda army to storm the palace of the Kabaka.<sup>93</sup> The Kabaka fled into exile and the kingdom of Buganda—together with the kingdoms of Ankole, Busoga, Toro, and Bunyoro—were dismantled. The new constitution, hurriedly adopted in 1967, consolidated power in the hands of the president. Obote argued that the centralization of Uganda’s political infrastructure was an act of liberation. He told an audience at a rally that “Before 1966 our governmental structure was towards service to particular persons ... and these individuals were not all of you but only about five of them throughout Uganda.” But after the abolition of Buganda and the other kingdoms, “the common men—from top to bottom—are ruling Uganda. They are the rulers in the villages, they are the rulers in the counties, they are the rulers in the districts.”<sup>94</sup> In 1969, Obote’s Uganda People’s Congress adopted the “The Common Man’s Charter” as its credo. “The people of Uganda,” it proclaimed, must “move away from the hold of tribal and other forms of factionalism ... and accept that the problems of poverty, development and nation-building can and must be tackled on the basis of one Country and one People.”<sup>95</sup>

Milton Obote’s government had found its political rhetoric in Nyoro activists’ campaign for the restoration of the lost counties. There were, of course, other populisms from which Obote might have drawn: in Zanzibar, an army claiming to represent the interests of commoners had overthrown the centuries-old government of the Sultan; in Rwanda, a majoritarian party had overthrown Rwanda’s king.<sup>96</sup> But no other populist political theory was so available, so fully documented in Obote’s own archives, or so carefully attended to. After Ugandan independence, Nyoro activists had framed their campaign to accord with the legal and political procedures of the national government. They created or documented instances of violence, typed them up in petitions and

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<sup>92</sup> Five signatories (illegible) to Milton Obote, 4 June 1966, file P.M.L. C.59, box 21, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>93</sup> These events are described in Phares Mutibwa, *The Buganda Factor in Uganda Politics* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2008); Samwiri Karugire, *Roots of Instability in Uganda* (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 1988); and particularly in Edward Mutesa, *The Desecration of My Kingdom* (London: Constable, 1967).

<sup>94</sup> Speech by H.E. the President at a rally in Bombo, 12 December 1968, file S.10482 III, box 63, Office of the President, Confidential Files, UNA.

<sup>95</sup> Apollo Milton Obote, *The Common Man’s Charter* (Entebbe: Government Printer, 1969), articles 7 and 19.

<sup>96</sup> For which, see Jonathon Glassman, *War of Words, War of Stones: Racial Thought and Violence in Colonial Zanzibar* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2011); Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001), Ch. 4; Catherine Newbury, *The Cohesion of Oppression: Clientship and Ethnicity in Rwanda, 1860–1960* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), Ch. 9.

statements, presented them to the political and legal authorities, and invited the state to intervene. Drawing from the linguistic and organizational work that earlier generations of activists had performed, they contrasted the liberal promises of self-government with the evidence of Ganda tyranny. It was this body of demographic and legal evidence that Obote found convincing. The logic of Nyoro activism—the contrast between the popular will and the narrow self-interest of the Ganda ruling class; the claim that a self-governing African state should blot out inherited inequalities; the condemnations of feudalist tyranny—became the guiding logic of Ugandan socialism, and a rationale for a one-party dictatorship.