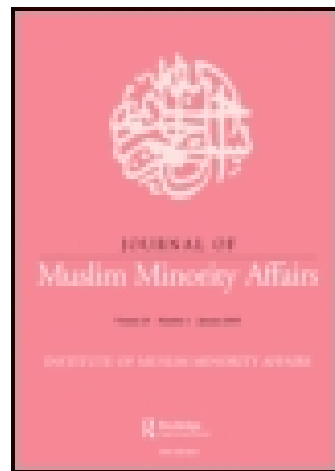


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### The status of the Muslim community in Uganda

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## **The Status of the Muslim Community in Uganda** *Suleiman I. Kiggundu & Isa K.K. Lukwago*

### **The Muslim Advent in Uganda**

Islam was brought to Uganda in the middle of the nineteenth century by Arab traders coming from the East African Coast and especially from the trading centre of Zanzibar. The exact date of their arrival at the palace of the Kabaka of Buganda is still a matter of dispute and a subject for further research, but all opinion is agreed that this must have been during the last "fifteen years of (King) Sunna II's reign, that is between 1839 and 1854".<sup>1</sup>

The fate and fortunes of Islam at this early stage were closely tied to the palace of the Kabaka of Uganda. The first Kabaka to be most aware of the existence of an outside world and to cultivate strong trade relations with foreigners was Mutesa, the First, whose reign stretched from 1854 to 1884. Mutesa is noted to have been a very wise ruler who was very keen and able to deal with foreigners in a way that tended to strengthen his kingdom. His trade with the Arabs increased his power by strengthening his army which could now be equipped with modern arms. In addition to the assistance they gave him in modernising his army and in streamlining the administration, the Arabs also taught Mutesa the religion of Islam:

Thus Mutesa came to know many Arabs and hence their religion. He began to trust them and to listen to what they taught him. As a result he began to read Islam. As he was a King of immense power, he used this power to extend Islam to all his subjects. This is why we think that Mutesa I, was the first most important cultivator of Islam in Uganda. He used power to influence people in becoming Muslims ....<sup>2</sup>

After the demise of Mutesa, Christianity which had been introduced by Henry Morton Stanley, started to vie for influence and converts with Islam. During 1888 -1889, or what Sir John Gray has called "The year of the three Kings"<sup>3</sup> there occurred a fierce struggle between the Muslims and Christians, with each party seeking to dominate Buganda society. Nevertheless, throughout this period, and until they were defeated by the Christians with the assistance of the colonising British, the Muslims "were the arbiters of the political situation":

The Muslims were by far the largest and militarily the most formidable group. They had among them several dynamic leaders. All the palace armed guards for instance were Moslems and they even used to refuse access of the King to the Prime Minister, something unheard of in Kiganda history.<sup>4</sup>

The desire for continuation of Muslim dominance led to pressure on successive Kabakas to ensure that they did not challenge that dominance, or allow an upperhand to the Christians. Mwanga and Kiwewa resisted conversion to Islam despite the preponderance of the Muslims among their subjects.

Kiwewa was overthrown and killed by the Muslims who saw him as fast becoming the rallying point of the forces opposed to them.

The Muslims gave the throne to Nuhu Kalema who agreed to undergo circumcision and to become truly a Muslim. This led the Anglican Protestants, the Roman Catholics and the traditional religionists to unite against what they regarded as a common enemy. In a series of battles the Muslims suffered debilitating defeats especially due to the modern weaponry supplied to the other side by Lord Lugard. Their last-ditch stand was at Kijungutte in Bunyoro led by their King Kalema. Kalema was killed and the Muslims were disarmed by Lord Lugard. The cease-fire and eventual settlement was negotiated on behalf of the Muslims by Prince Nuhu Mbogo, Mutesa's brother, who had now taken over the leadership of the Muslims. Throughout these troubled times, the Arabs stood faithfully with the Baganda Muslims and suffered with them. Apolo Kaggwa, the leading Protestant army leader, directed the burning of sixty Arab teachers and traders at a village called Natete, near Kampala.<sup>5</sup>

Nuhu Mbogo, a highly respected member of the Buganda royal family, thus became the leader of the Muslim community in Uganda. Had it not been for him, Muslims would have been hard put to survive. "Being a son of the royal drum, he legitimised the existence of the defeated Muslims in a society of Christian Baganda who otherwise might have finished the Muslims off."<sup>(6)</sup>

Many Muslims unable to withstand these religious wars and their aftermath in Buganda fled to what later came to be known as the British Protectorate of Uganda. They took their religion with them and implanted it in these parts. Abdul Effende and Kawuuzi, Muslim generals at Kijungutte (the last Muslim-Christian encounter), settled in Ankole (Western Uganda). Effende became well-known as a chief and used his influence to convert many locals to Islam. Ali Lwanga, Salimu Bwagu, Adam Kironde, Katetemera and Yusuf Kitungulu went and settled in various parts of Busoga where they gained differing degrees of influence and acceptability. Ali Lwanga, who was proficient in Swahili, became an interpreter to the District Commissioner and ultimately a county chief. Both stations enabled him to acquire a great deal of influence and to travel widely, and to spread the message of Islam as he went along.

Abdullah Gatungo and Amiri Mbuga went to Toro (Central Western Uganda) and preached and taught Islam there.

The killing of Arab and Swahili teachers and traders scared off such people from coming to Uganda for sometime. Not until Prince Mbogo returned from exile in June 1896, did Muslims from the coast venture into Uganda to revive their efforts at spreading Islam. But now conditions were completely different. British colonialism had taken root, and Christian missionaries had the full support of the new administration.

#### **Muslims Under the British Colonial Administration**

As noted above, with the advent of British colonialism the stage was set for a vigorous proselytisation of the natives to Christianity. The Protectorate Agreement of 1900 signed between the Baganda and the British, apart from being an agreement with the British on the one hand, was, on the other, a war settlement between the combatants of the religious wars. The victorious allies, namely, the Anglican Protestants and the Roman Catholics divided

the spoils among themselves in terms of allocating land and sharing the most important political posts. Out of the 20 country chieftainships, 11 were reserved for Protestants and 7 for Catholics; the Muslims received only two. All positions of heads of departments (*Ebintongole*) in the *Lubiri* (palace) went to Christians. The Prime Ministership (*Obwatakikiro*) was to be held by a Protestant, as also the Ministry of Finance (*Obuwanika*), while the Ministry of Justice (*Obulamuzi*) went to a Catholic. Each post conferred prerequisite to the holder, including the possession of a large acreage of land, a relatively large salary, a seat in the *Lukiiko*, (the highest council of state in Buganda) and access to the colonial authorities.

The Christian missionaries were allocated vast areas of land for development. They could therefore build schools, hospitals and carry on economic activities of different descriptions. Church organisations as well as individual Christians stood to gain immeasurably by this exclusive share in the land resources. Muslims were not allocated any land. The only Muslim to receive some was Prince Nuhu Mbogo.<sup>7</sup> It was part of this land which was later granted by his son Prince Badru Kakungulu to the Muslim community. Hence, Kibuli, where this land is situated, has become the centre of Muslim education.

Denying the Muslims possession of land and keeping them away from official posts, both in the local and colonial administrations, had a number of adverse implications for the Muslim community. The pattern of religious conversion in Buganda and Busoga in particular, and in the whole of Uganda in general, very much depended on the religion adopted by the chief of the area. When Mutesa took to Islam, the whole of Buganda was virtually Islamised. The story of Menya Munulo, hereditary chief of Bugweri, principality of Busoga, was another case in point, Munulo, who was circumcised by one of the Baganda refugees of the religious wars of Buganda, Yusuf Luzige, in 1896, became a staunch Muslim.<sup>8</sup> However, his Islamic activities did not meet the favour of his colonial masters. He was soon deposed from his chieftaincy and imprisoned. Later, another Muslim county chief in Busoga named Salehe faced more or less the same fate. Salehe used his position to influence his subjects to accept Islam much in the same way as was the practice with Christian chiefs. On learning about this the Governor of Uganda, Sir Harry Johnston, observed:

.....it is not in the interests of the British Government that Mohammedanism receive any more adherents than we can help as Muslims are proverbially difficult to manage and are always opposed to the administration of a Christian power.<sup>9</sup>

He circulated a letter to the chiefs advising them that it was decidedly detrimental to their own interests and their peoples, to listen to the teachings of the Mohammedan faction. Salehe was dismissed from the post of county chief.

Furthermore, by denying them land and chieftaincy Muslims were *ipso facto* denied the means of developing an educational system for themselves. Education at that period was wholly controlled by the different religious organisations:

.....Muslims were rendered unable even to start their own schools. In the first instance they lacked land on which to erect this building. Secondly they lacked funds to enable them to send their children to school, buy land

or back up sound education projects. Further still, the Muslims, unlike the Christians, lacked political power to influence government policies.<sup>10</sup> The Muslims were thus caught in a vicious circle. They did not have money therefore they could not receive education; and because they had no education they could not be employed in public posts. They thus remained poor.

In the history of this period the role of Prince Mbogo was very crucial. It was because of the high regard in which he was held by the British that Islam was saved from total extinction. Mbogo was prepared to maintain cordial relations with the colonialists and tried to use those relations to make many pleas on behalf of the Muslims. Under the circumstances this was certainly the wisest course of action left to follow. Nevertheless, till his death in 1921, Muslims were unable, despite Mbogo's best efforts, to improve their lot in any way or to seek redress from the colonial administration for the grievous wrongs done to them. In the next thirty years Mbogo's son and successor to the leadership of the Muslim community, Prince Badru Kakungulu was to grapple with some of these issues and to face new ones. In the following section we shall examine attempts made by the Muslims to devise ways of overcoming these hurdles to their social, political and economic advancement.

#### **Muslims Efforts at Uplift**

Despite the respect accorded to Mbogo, Muslims leaders were generally kept "under surveillance and out of the mainstream of power."<sup>11</sup> Economically, Muslims were reduced to the role of butchers, taxi-and-lorry drivers and small *dukawallas*. They were treated as social outcasts and the saying "we met two people and one Muslim" was never a joke. This social ostracisation and economic deprivation were grossly aggravated by political discrimination.

Nevertheless, realization gradually came to the Muslims that the acquiring of education would be of great assistance to future generations in their survival in the ruthlessly competitive and stratified society of Uganda. For Muslims, secular education started in Uganda in 1922 when, according to pattern, a school was opened at Kibuli for the education of the sons of Prince Mbogo, namely Prince Badru Kakungulu, Golooba and Ssimbwa.<sup>12</sup> However, between the establishment of this first Muslim secular school and the 1940s, efforts to establish an educational system came to very little. The situation was aggravated by divisions that broke out after the death of Mbogo over the issue of leadership. These divisions later developed into doctrinaire sects. They have been ably and extensively discussed elsewhere and need not unduly detain us here.<sup>13</sup> Briefly stated, three groups came into existence among Muslims. The Uganda Muslim Community (or Kibuli Group), headquartered at Kibuli and led by Prince Badru Kakungulu; African Muslim Community (Bukoto-Natete) led by Sheik Zaidi Mugenyiasooka, and the Zukuli group headquartered at Kawempe near Kampala and led by Sheik Mivule.

Notwithstanding these divisions, Prince Badru Kakungulu as leader of the largest group and having inherited the mantle of Nuhu Mbogo, soon became the dominant Muslim figure in Uganda and played a leading role in spearheading the advancement of Muslim secular education. He himself attended King's College, Budo, the leading Protestant grammar school in the country. This had a symbolic impact on the Muslims, who had been skeptical about sending their

children to Christian schools for fear that they might become targets of conversion.

Apart from continuing with the struggle of making representations on behalf of Muslims to the colonial and native governments, Prince Kakungulu made a very adventurous innovation which, in times to come, proved to be of great benefit to the Muslims. One of the greatest weaknesses of the Muslim community had been the general poverty of its members. This coupled with the fact that, unlike their Christians counterparts, they did not receive any special attention from the government nor any assistance from foreign sources, made it virtually impossible for them to undertake any serious projects. The Native Anglican Church (NAC), as the Protestant organisation was called, and the Roman Catholic Church (RCC) received considerable assistance from their parent organisations in London, and some from Christian organisations elsewhere, especially from Canada and France. This aid came in the form of money to build schools, hospitals etc, and in the form of personnel to man these institutions. Even such social services as were provided by the colonial system in the field of educational and health, were left in the hands of the missionaries. The major objective of the school system was to convert and civilise the pagan African in order to render him governable.<sup>14</sup> Schools were used as "ideological tools to combat Islam and the oriental influence".<sup>15</sup> It was not surprising therefore for education to receive massive foreign aid and substantive grants from the colonial government itself.

Muslims had no foreign missionaries to fall back upon. There was no counterpart to Rome and the Canterbury in the case of the Uganda Muslim community. Kakungulu therefore used his ingenuity to seek allies from a different quarter, the Muslim Asian community in Uganda and East Africa. The Asian Muslims in East Africa, particularly those who belonged to the Ismailia community whose Imam was His Highness the Aga Khan, became relatively rich through the dominant position they occupied in trade and commerce. The organisational framework provided for them by the Aga Khan and the inter-communal assistance this organisation afforded to individual members made the Ismailis a very strong community, but one which was inclined to assist others. The Aga Khan, Sir Sultan Mohamed Shah, founded a social welfare organisation whose main objective was to pool the resources of Muslim in East Africa and to channel donations for African Muslim projects. This organisation was called the East African Muslim Welfare Society (EAMWS) and was founded in 1945. As the leading Muslim in Uganda, Prince Kakungulu was elected its Vice-President for Uganda. He played a very vigorous role in its activities and solicited substantial funds through the good offices of the organisation to assist Muslim projects on Uganda.

In 1955, reviewing ten years of its activity, the Secretary General of the Society noted that shs. 7,000,000/- had been collected to assist Muslim projects all over East Africa. Under the 1945 generous offer by the Aga Khan to contribute £ for £ towards the Society's funds, the total of shs. 3,040,000/- had been donated by him. In its first ten years the Society had built and/or aided in Uganda:

48 schools, 30 mosques, one training college, three technical schools and one boarding house which includes the beautiful mosques at Kibuli, Masaka,

Soroti, Jinja and Mabale and the large schools at Kibuli, Kampala, Wandegeya, Jinja, Bwala, Buyoko, Soroti, Bukedi, Lira and Bugemba.<sup>16</sup>

Over the same period the Society aided or built 29 schools and 38 mosques in Tanganyika and 21 schools and 16 mosques in Kenya.<sup>17</sup> Uganda was therefore enjoying a lion's share of the Society's aid principally because the aid depended on original collections from the beneficiaries themselves, and the Uganda African Muslims were very enthusiastic and better organised to carry on self-help schemes, thanks to Prince Badru's untiring efforts.

By 1959 the number of schools and mosques built and/or aided by the Society in Uganda had risen to 75 and 63 respectively. The most prominent mosques were at Kibuli and at Wandegeya where a new, grand one was opened by the new, young Aga Khan in September that year. The Society had contributed generously towards the construction of the first Muslim Secondary School at Kisubi for African Muslim students. It paid for the *muballighs* who carried on *tabligh* work throughout East Africa; it set up libraries; it paid for the publication of Islamic literature and so on. And most importantly:

The Society has been helpful in providing higher education to numerous African Muslim students of Uganda at Makerere and in many other colleges in the United Kingdom and USA by awarding handsome bursaries. The flow of applications for award of scholarships is continuous and regular, and the Society has in most cases always met the demand.<sup>18</sup>

The assistance of the East African Muslim Welfare Society to the Muslims in Uganda would not have had the impact it did had it not been for the fact that they themselves had created an effective organisational structure to cater especially for their educational needs. The existence of the Uganda Muslim Education Association contributed in no small measure to the success registered by the EAMWS in Uganda. The Uganda Muslim Education Association had been started to fill the vacuum within the Muslim community as compared to the other denominations. Partly due to the argument of the Protectorate government that they could not aid Muslim schools unless they had one organisation supervising those schools and partly due to the persuasion of Prince Kakungulu the Uganda Muslim Education Association was formed in 1947 with trustees from all the Ugandan sects.<sup>19</sup>

The aim of the Association was to "encourage educational development among the African Muslims of Uganda and to deal with the Education Department on their behalf".<sup>20</sup> Through the vigorous work of its indefatigable Secretary General, Ramadhan Gava, the Association was able to establish an effective educational system for Muslims, building a web of schools throughout Uganda. It usefully tapped the resources from the EAMWS for this purpose and also solicited government grants. By the time it ceased operation in 1963, UMEA controlled 180 full primary schools, 8 junior secondary schools, one senior secondary school and one teacher training college, the last two being situated at Kibuli Hill (see Appendix)

UMEA, however, was not altogether safe from the problem of inadequacy of funds. Its main source of financial support was the EAMWS. But the Society itself had a limited resource base depending mainly on collections from members and donations from generous patrons. It had not yet built up any *waqf*

worthy of its name to provide a steady income base. And yet, unlike the other denominational organisations which could receive aid from foreign sources, the Muslims were not allowed to solicit help from Islamic countries. The attitude of the colonial government is evidenced by the following story. One Dr. Khalid of the University of London sought permission to visit Uganda to study the problems of Muslim education with a view to preparing a report which could then be used to raise funds from abroad. The colonial authorities refused to grant him permission. When he later found his way to Uganda under a pseudonym, he received the impression that the colonial government would not allow outside donors to come to the assistance of Muslims. He therefore gave up the idea. Prince Badru Kakungulu also tried to get teachers from Pakistan and India but was dissuaded by the colonial officials from doing so on the pretext that they were making alternative arrangements to satisfy UMEA's requirements for teachers.

Another problem bedeviling UMEA was lack of qualified teachers. The only source of teachers for UMEA schools was the small Muslim T.T.C. at Kibuli. But because this college was grant-aided by government it could not limit its admissions to Muslim applicants only. After all, the Muslims did not always obtain the entry requirements since their primary schools had poor teachers and relatively poorer facilities. The Association was therefore quite often forced to employ third-rate teachers, and mainly those that had been dismissed from Anglican and Catholic schools for misdemeanours of all sorts. For these and other factors, UMEA found itself, more often than not, hampered in accomplishing its objectives by forces beyond its control.

#### **Independence and After**

Nevertheless, by the time independence came in October 1962, the fruits of UMEA's efforts had started to appear. A number of young Muslim had qualified from institutions of higher learning such as Makerere, Teacher Training College, Kyambogo, Mombasa Institute of Muslim Education (founded and run by EAMWS), etc. However, although they had passed through the same institutions as other young men in Uganda, they found that they did not get jobs commensurate with their qualifications. Modernization, in the peculiar circumstances of Uganda, was always perceived as coextensive not only with Westernization but with Christian values and modes of behaviour. Muslim young men therefore founded a number of organisations to enable them to relate to each other and to provide protection from anti-Islamic social activities and influences emanating from the existing socio-economic milieu. They considered it desirable to try to prove that one could be educated and participate in modern life without losing ones African and Muslim identity.

Two such organizations deserve mention: These were the Young Men's Muslim Association (YMMA) and the Uganda Muslim Students Association. The former had actually been founded as early as 1937 by Prince Badru Kakungulu, Kassim Nale, Musa Musoke, Ramadhan Gava and others. But when the Uganda Muslim Education Association came into being the tendency was for its officials who were also the officials of the YMMA to concentrate on the activities of the former. Moreover, Ramadhan Gava was a fulltime employee of the Association. His work and travel, left him little time for YMMA.

Therefore, when the UMEA closed shop in 1963, it left a vacuum. It had however been a progeny of the YMMA, so on its demise, the mother was resuscitated to continue to play the part it had played before. Thus through the 1960s YMMA became active once again.

The aim of YMMA was to mobilise Muslim youth and to inculcate in them an Islamic ethos in contradistinction to the dominant ethos inculcated through the prevailing educational system for well over sixty years. This was by no means an easy task. Particularly because with the advent of the National Association for the Advancement of Muslims, sectarian wranglings among Muslims had intensified, fanned by nationalist politicians who wanted to exploit Muslim differences for their own political ends. The YMMA was almost diverted from its earlier practice of being intersectarian and catering to the needs of all educated Muslim youth regardless of sectarian connections. But it was saved. And to this success must be attributed the fact that the Muslim of today is less imbued with a commitment to sectarianism than characterised the fifties and early sixties.

The Uganda Muslim Students Association held similar objectives to those of YMMA, but sought to address itself to the youth at an earlier stage of growth while he was still at school. The Association organised annual conferences from its inception up to 1972, when its existence was discouraged by the newly formed Uganda Muslim Supreme Council. It denounced sectarianism and pleaded and struggled for Muslim unity and for a modern way of approaching the teaching and practice of Islam. The young were encouraged to be proud of their religion by pointing out to them the richness of Islamic culture to which they belonged. It became a training ground for Muslims to participate in national organisations.<sup>21</sup>

#### **The Uganda Muslim Supreme Council**

Sectarianism had riddled the Muslim community in Uganda since the death of Mbogo in 1921. The crisis over leadership which gripped the community in the twenties had its roots in the disquiet created by Apolo Kaggwa, the long serving *Katikkiro* (Prime Minister) of Buganda, who feared Muslims. He encouraged the Muslim county chief of Butambala to work against Mbogo. Although Magatto failed to create a dissident group while Mbogo was alive, he gave Mbogo endless headaches, and, after the latter's death, led the so-called Butambala group which became the first faction to ever break away from the mainstream of Islam led from Kibuli.

Attempts to settle these differences by reference to Makkah during the forties were of no avail. But the worst situation was created in the 60s when a group called the National Association for the Advancement of Muslims was created. It was led by two politicians belonging to the ruling party, Akbar A. Hekyon and Shaban Nkutu. Its major objective was to challenge the leadership of Prince Badru Kakungulu. Its impact however was to politicise Muslim divisions and to open up a chance to politicians to interfere, often directly, in the affairs of Muslims:

.....the worst effect of their (Muslim) division has been their weakness to prevent tricky politicians entering their ranks and dividing them to political advantage (sic) without the Muslims gaining much. Thus Apolo

Kaggwa was able to penetrate the Muslims and using Taibu Magatto to his own ends to the disadvantage of Muslim who were (in turn) weakened. Apolo Milton Obote was able, under the umbrella of NAAM to penetrate Muslims, to divide them and use them for his own purposes. On both occasions the wounds left in the Muslim *Ummah* took time to heal....<sup>22</sup>

Therefore, as Obote has himself said "the single achievement of Idi Amin was to unite Muslims" under the umbrella of the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council. The Council was formed after a series of conferences of all Muslim leaders and representatives organised by Idi Amin in 1971 and 1972. For the first time in fifty years the Muslims once again came under a single leadership.

The formative years of the Council were certainly years of experimentation. It could have probably done well but for two outstanding weaknesses inherent in the first establishment of the Council. In the first place, most of the people appointed to positions of responsibility did not have any experience in running large modern organisations. The initial steps in setting up the organisational structure were therefore taken very falteringly and by very unsure hands. What compounded the issue was that the leaders of the Council were not given a free hand to run the affairs of the Council. There was always interference from the government and some times by Amin himself. The first leaders of the Council headed by the Maulana Sheik Abdulrazak Matovu were arbitrarily dismissed by Amin after having served in the office for only two years. The second chief Qadi, Sheik Yusuf Sirman Matovu was similarly dismissed in 1977, and the Council stayed without a leader until 1979 when the Amin government fell. At one time a military man with only a smattering of education and experience was chosen to be the Secretary-General of the Council. Naturally he did a very poor job, causing a lot of confusion in the administrative structure. The Council was not allowed to grow and function in accordance with the constitution governing it that had been adopted by the constituent assembly in 1972. From 1972 up to 1979 no single balance sheet was issued by the Council, no annual report was made, and the manner in which the affairs of this body were run left very much to be desired. Its projects were not always well managed, and there were no proper rules and regulations controlling the behaviour of its officials. Missuse of public funds in the Council was therefore always an open possibility, and a very tempting one at that.

In spite of all these, and notwithstanding some of the other rapacities of his government, Amin did give the Muslims, for the first time in seventy years, some air to breathe. He attempted to redress the imbalance against them in terms of public job distribution, participation in trade and commerce, access to public resources, like scholarships, bank loans etc. But most importantly Amin opened the frontiers of the Muslim World to the Muslims of Uganda and allowed their case to be stated in Islamic forums. As a result of this, avenues were opened for the Muslim community to receive aid from Muslim countries, something that had been made very difficult for them in earlier times. The practice of discriminating against Muslims *qua* Muslims was reduced to a minimum. Muslim countries gave substantial aid to the Muslim community.<sup>24</sup> Limitations on Muslims who wished to perform the *hajj* were more or less removed and Muslims travelled much more freely, which development enabled them to start establishing contact with the outside world. They could exploit those connec-

tions to advance their own well-being. Considering the history of the Muslims in Uganda these were steps in the right direction.

### **The New Challenges**

When Idi Amin was overthrown, many Muslim leaders, fearing for their lives, went into hiding or exile. The UMSC was left leaderless. In this hour of their greatest need, when virtually everybody had abandoned them, the Muslims of Uganda were lucky that the Grand Old Man, Prince Badru Kakungulu, was still around and still had the strength to pull them out of their debacle. His immense prestige, like in the time of his father after the religious wars, saved the Muslim community from genocide. He took to the field, called on the Muslims to remain united and to hold on to their faith. Soon the new government recognised him as the spokesman for Muslims. In consultation with other Muslim leaders, he convened a meeting of *ulemas* and other leading Muslims from their hideouts to establish an Interim Administration for the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council, to look after its affairs until such a time as there would be peace enough for a permanent leadership to be elected in accordance with the constitution of the Council.<sup>25</sup> Reporting on the effects on the Muslim community of the war that overthrew Idi Amin, the Annual Report of the Interim Administration stated:

.....Muslims suffered more than any other group of people in Uganda. Their places of prayers, the mosques, were looted more than other places. In most areas of Uganda, mosques were completely destroyed while in other areas they were used for functions for which they were not built..... A number of Muslims lost their property such as houses, farms, and most importantly, lives. They lost their lives for no other reason than because they were Muslims. This was particularly so in Ankole and Masaka Districts.<sup>26</sup>

Although the task before it was very grave, the Interim Administration was determined to make a fresh and firm start. Attempts were made to correct the mistakes made in the first decade of the Council's existence. A commitment was made to restore orderlines in the way the affairs of Muslims were run by strictly adhering to a proper set of rules and regulations. The Secretariat is receiving special attention and efforts are underway to streamline it and attract to it high calibre personnel. It was realised that an effective Secretariat will be very crucial in revitalising the Council and in placing it once and for all on a sound and firm foundation. The lessons to be learnt from history of UMEA are not lost on the current leaders of the UMSC.

A strong and united Muslim community, with an effective leadership, awake to the complexities of modern institutional management, is a necessity in Uganda. It will be the only assurance against the adverse effects on the community of the vagaries of political fortunes. Only such a community would have the strength to withstand political interference in the affairs of the Muslims.

Once this fundamental and necessary condition is met, the community has to focus its attention on the establishment of viable economic and growth institutions. Muslims in Uganda need to move away from their traditional roles as butchers, taxi-drivers and small retail shop owners. Their tutelage under Ismaili Asian traders and their contacts with the Arab world have moulded them

into a potential trading force. The area is still virgin. Muslims, however, need to make international contacts which could be used for promoting import-export trade. The UMSC could through well-defined programmes sensitize the community to the advantages of such promotions and the proper use of available funding and banking facilities in Muslim and especially Arab countries for cofinancing investment firms and community centered development programmes.

The field of joint ventures between Uganda Muslims and Muslims elsewhere holds a great deal of promise. In a country as richly and naturally endowed as Uganda foreign investment should not be difficult to attract. Local Muslim developers could be assisted in setting up enterprises which would ensure donors a fair share of return on their capital and at the same time provide an opportunity for the local partner to gain experience and expertise in self-reliance and economic self-sufficiency.

However, this economic interaction and cooperation between Uganda and the Muslim world has to an extent be preceded by strong socio-cultural links. Uganda Muslims have in this respect to take the initiative. And the most primary initiative rests in the area of language: Uganda Muslims should set up facilities for the teaching of Arabic to their business elite and to the young. Language teaching facilities like those available at Makerere, for example, should be utilized effectively for this purpose. Organizations like the Arab League could also be persuaded to take an interest in such a programme.

These are some of the practical possibilities open before the Muslims of Uganda for establishing firm and mutually beneficial relations with their brothers in the Muslim world. This area, as stated earlier, is pregnant with possibilities. But these possibilities have to be explored in a systematic and organized manner. Fortunately, the Uganda Muslim Supreme Council now provides a mechanism for doing so. The Organization is still frail, but given unreserved support and encouragement from the Muslim world it could effectively fulfill its destined role.

#### Notes

1. Badru Kakungulu and Abdul Kasozi, *Abasimba Obusiramu mu Uganda* (Those who implanted Islam in Uganda), Equater Books, 1977, p.3.
2. *Ibid.*, p.6.
3. Sir John Mulner Gray, "The Year of the Three Kings of Buganda, Mwanga, Kiwewa, Kalema 1888-1889", *Uganda Journal*, Vol. I, March 1950.
4. M.S.M. Kiwanuka, "Kabaka Mwanga and the Political Parties," *Uganda Journal*, Vol, 33, Part I, 1968, pp. 9813.
5. Kakungulu & Kasozi, *op. cit.*
6. Abdu Kasozi, *Cultivators of Islam in Uganda 1854-1947*, unpublished M.s. 1978.
7. Prince Mbogo was allocated twenty four square miles, three hundred and twenty acres of which were at Kibuli Hill.
8. Kakungulu & Kasozi, *op. cit.*, pp. 83 ff.
9. HM Commision (Johnston) to the Busoga Collector, 3rd December 1900, Hem A 11/1/53. Uganda's Entebbe Government Archives. Also quoted in Kasozi *op. cit.* p. 51. Dr. Kazosi delves into several other examples of the anti-Islamic attitude of the Colonial Administration in Uganda and its goal of wanting to render Uganda as a springboard for Christian expansion in East & Central Africa and creating a buffer to the Islamic expansion from the Sudan southwards.
10. Amin Mutyaba, *Muslim Education in Uganda (1922-64)* unpublished Ms. March 1974.

11. Regina M. Solzbacher, "Continuity through Change in the Social History of Kibuli," *Uganda Journal*, Vol. 33 Part 2, 1969, p. 163.
12. In Uganda the first schools were opened for the sons of chief Mbogo and possibly Twaibu Magatoo, the county chief of Butambala. These are the only Muslims who truly belonged to this very important strata of Buganda society which dominated the affairs of Buganda until the emergence of modern politician in the late fifties and early 60s of this century. It was not surprising that the first two Muslim schools were opened at Kibuli for Mbogo's sons and at Kabasanda near the Headquarters of Butambala county ruled by Magatoo.
13. See Abdu Kasozi, *op. cit.*; and Amin Mutyaba, *Muslim Divisions in Uganda: Their Origins and Effects on Muslim Development* (forthcoming).
14. Amin Mutyaba, *op. cit.*
15. M.S.M. Kiwanuka, *From Colonialism to Independence: An Appraisal of Colonial Policies and African Reaction: 1870-1960*, Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1973, p 70.
16. Seventh Report of the East African Muslim Welfare Society, 4th June 1955, Mombasa, Kenya, pp. 9 - 10.
17. *Ibid.* p. 10.
18. Souvenir of the East Africans-Muslim Welfare Society, Kampala, 1959.
19. The trustees of the Association were Prince Badru Kakungulu, President (Kibuli); Ramadhan Gava, Secretary General (Kibuli); Juma Mugerwa Masagazi (Bukoto); Sheik Abdulrahman Mivule (Kawemppe); Amir Malende (Kawemppe), Musa Musoke (Representative of the Protectorate Government).
20. Uganda Muslim Education Association, *Rules for the Regulation and Conduct of Muslim Schools in Uganda*, Kampala, 1950.
21. Yusuf-Aly Serugo-Lugo, its first President, later became the President of the National Union of Students of Uganda (NUSU); and Suleman Kiggundu, its second President, became the leading student leader at Makerere University during his stay: 1967-70.
22. Abdu Kasozi, *op. cit.*
23. Apolo Milton Obote when he paid a courtesy call on the Chief Qadi of Uganda.
24. Saudi Arabia gave a grant of US \$10 million to enable the Council to expand Kibuli T.T.C. and Demonstration School, to construct 21 convert-cum-health centres, and to purchase new machinery for the envelope-making factory owned by the Council. Libya made a contribution toward the construction of the new National Mosque at Old Kampala (which was left uncomplete in 1979); and, together with the Government of the United Arab Emirates, offered to build an Islamic Cultural Centre in Kampala. (Although the present leaders have reached an agreement with the Libyans that this project should go on, it has not up to now taken off the ground).
25. Declarations reported in the *Times* of 16/5/79
26. Annual Report — 1979/80 UMSC, Sept., 1980. (Presented at the Annual General Convention of the Council held at Makerere University, 23-26 September 1980).

**APPENDIX**  
**Schools Belonging To Each Of The Three Denominations At The Dawn Of The**  
**Government Take-Over Of All Denominational Schools In 1963**

|  | <i>Protestants</i> | <i>Catholics</i> | <i>Muslims</i> | <i>Government</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|--|--------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Primary Schools  | 981                | 1407             | 180            | 129               | 2697         |
| Junior Schools   | 130                | 152              | 18             | 62                | 362          |
| Senior Schools   | 11                 | 26               | 3              | 14                | 54           |
| Teacher Training College<br>(primary teachers)           | 9                  | 15               | 1              | 2                 | 27           |
| Teacher Training College<br>(secondary schools teachers) | 1                  | 2                | 0              | 2                 | 5            |
| Technical Schools  | 0                  | 1                | 0              | 5                 | 6            |
| Secondary Moderns (dealing with<br>commercial subjects)  | 4                  | 10               | 1              | 4                 | 19           |

NB. Private secondary schools have not been included in this table, but there were over fifty of them at this time and most of them had a non-Muslim atmosphere.