THE POLICY OF CENTRALIZATION OF EDUCATION IN UGANDA FROM 1964 to 1971

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INTRODUCTION

The primary task of this article is to analyse and examine the factors that prompted the then Uganda central government to introduce and intensify the policy of strong control of the system of education, a policy they knew was sensitive and controversial. Was it political factors? Was is economic factors or was it purely 'educational' considerations or a combination of all these elements? Was it an inevitable step to take? In short, is there a case really to sustain the government action?

Furthermore, an attempt will be made to sketch out what actually the policy of state control of education that was adopted in 1964 meant in practical terms. It is not my intention to assess the impact the policy of centralisation has had on the quality of education in terms of, say, performance in Primary Leaving and E.A.C.E. examinations or efficiency in the administration of education. Such an exercise is beyond the scope of this article.

One point deserves explanation at this stage for clarity's sake before plunging into full examination of the issue. That is the significance of the years 1964 and 1971 as starting and closing points of the discussion respectively. On the one hand, 1964 is regarded as a turning point in the development of education in Uganda because it is presumed that that is when the central government began to take a strong grip on the education system as a whole. That is when the policy of strong central government control was inaugurated. The year 1971, on the other hand, is regarded as crucial in the history of our education system in respect to the issue of central government control because it can be said that it closed the chapter that was began in 1964. That is when the consolidation of the policy embarked upon in 1964 reached a climax with the abolition of District Councils and District Education Committees.

GENERAL REMARKS ABOUT STATE CONTROL OF EDUCATION

Since 1962, the year Uganda attained independence, a number of far-reaching political, economic and social changes have taken place in the country. Whereas some of these changes have had a relatively easy passage, others have met with apathy and sometimes resistance largely because of their radical nature. One of these changes, which is the main concern of this

article, is to do with the policy changes in the administration and control of education. The most striking feature about this subject is that it was controversial and indeed it generated most heated debate in parliament, the press and the public as a whole.

The fact that it became controversial is not surprising at all. It is partly because of varying views people generally hold regarding the best way to manage or administer institutions or business in order to ensure equality of opportunity and efficiency.

It is arguable, for instance, that the most appropriate method to attain democracy and efficiency at the same time is by devolution of powers and responsibilities at the centre and their distribution to the regions or local authorities/government.[1] Equally significant, as a source of friction sometimes between the progressives and the state on the one hand, and the church on the other, is the latter's strong claims to be responsible for the provision and control of education rather than the state.[2] Such arguments and counter arguments of course raise the foundamental question of the role of the parent in determining the type of education for his children and the extent to which he should influence the process of imparting that education.[3] It can also be argued, with justification, that education is a national social service. The public pay for it and therefore every citizen is entitled to equal educational opportunities, and that the state is the sole reliable 'watchdog' of the interests and general well being of all the citizens regardless of their social background and religious beliefs. Indeed, it is ultimately responsible for the national policy of education. It is incumbent upon it therefore to 'lead boldly'.[4] It is in this broad context that the issue of the government takeover of schools and colleges from the voluntary agencies in Uganda in the years following independence will be considered.

THE FACTORS THAT MADE THE GOVERNMENT CENTRALISE EDUCATION

In January 1964, just over one year after the attainment of independence, the central government decided to take over the government-aided primary and secondary schools and the Teacher Training Colleges, thus ending the system of partnership between the voluntary agencies and the state in education, a partnership which had been in existence since 1925 when the government began to be actively involved in the operation of education. Further, it will be recalled that when the government was introducing the policy of takeover of schools, the Minister argued that they wanted to encourage the local governments to take a more active part in education. But by the end of 1960s it was apparent that the District Education Committees had been weakened rather than strengthened in control and management of education. So the question that must be asked is, first, what prompted

the government to want to phase the voluntary agencies out of control and administration of education? and, second, what made the government move so swiftly against the LEAS?

One of the chief concerns of the central government immediately after independence was how to use the system of education to bring about rapid economic progress on the one hand, as had been recommended by the International Bank Economic Commission in 1961, and to promote political integration in the country on the other. As a first step, the government set up an Education Commission to 'examine the content and structure of education and to consider how it might best be improved and adapted to the needs of the country'.[5] One thing became apparent straightaway. The government was aware of its weak position in education. It was therefore determined to exert its influence on the educational policy more than was known hitherto. This was demonstrated by its attitude in trying to clarify the ambiguities about the position of the central government in relationship with the local governments and the voluntary agencies in matters to do with distribution of responsibility and administration in the system of education. It is in this context that the factors that motivated the government to embark on this controversial educational measure of complete takeover of schools should be considered.

In discussing the factors it is important to look at both "stated and unstated", reasons for the takeover. These can be divided into two broad categories—the remote or indirect reasons, and the direct ones.

THE INDIRECT FACTOR(S) — THE IMPACT OF THE REPORTS OF 1961-1962

Three influencial reports were produced in 1961-62. These were: (i) The International Bank Economic Mission: Its prime purpose was to make comprehensive recommendations for economic development after independence. (ii) The Uganda Teachers' Salaries Commission. It set out the teachers' conditions and terms of service in an independent Uganda. (iii) The Munster Report. This was concerned with constitutional issues—the structure of government at independence.

The point at issue is the extent to which these important powerful reports influenced the government in formulating its policy of 'Responsibility and Control' in education in 1963. It seems that these reports had considerable impact in shaping the government line of thinking on the matter. What is most interesting is that all three reports presented the same view that the denominational system of education was wrong and ought to be abolished. It is important to note that this view was contrary to the recommendations of the Castle Report on which the overall new government education policy was based. It recommended the retention of voluntary management and supervision in schools and a certain amount of denominational system.[6] The line

the government followed was that recommended by the other three reports. Was this a coincidence or can it be assumed that the politicians in 1963, when they were considering the Castle Report and the government's position on the issue of control and administration of education, took a serious view of what these reports had expressed a few years earlier?

The International Bank Commission's comments and criticisms on the denominational system, as it operated, were stinging and inspiring. The report strongly criticised the unco-ordinated system and its uneconomic extravagance. It said:

> ... in some areas there are sometimes two or three schools serving a limited school population where one would suffice. Each of these schools is relatively small and has been established to meet the competitive requirements of different religious denominations. This duplication is unwise economically and socially. It involves multiple sets of buildings and grounds to maintain duplication of administration and supervision, the need for several headmasters, more unfilled places on the present staffing methods and a dissipation of staff strength. Furthermore, a social cleavage tends to be created.[7]

The Mission, therefore, proposed that large multi-denominational schools in which provision for separate instruction in the various religious faiths should be made, should be organised.[8]

The Uganda Teachers' Salaries Commission also bitterly attacked the system of education on the same grounds—that it was denominational, discriminative and wasteful. The report had this to say:

> The denominational nature of the schools, together with considerable insistence on separate education for sexes, has tended still further to prevent educational units of adequate size from developing. The result is that very many schools are too small to be fully effective as educational or economic units. Further, it is common for places in a school to be vacant, which may well be true also of a neighbouring school of a different denomination. Thus the system of small units for each denomination is wasteful both of money and of teachers. . . .[9]

The Munster Commission whose task it was to recommend the type of relationship between central and local governments in the event of independence, echoed the same message and expressed great concern about dangers inherent in a fragmented system of education encouraged by the voluntary agencies.[10]

Surely the impact of such comments on a government desirous to make economies in education and to unite the country, cannot be minimised. In short, the criticisms expressed by these reports in the period prior to independence were clear. It seems therefore that the political leaders were impressed by these criticisms and suggestions when they were deciding whether or not to abolish 'denominationalism' in the system of education in 1963/64.

THE DIRECT FACTORS

At this level there seems to be three major reasons why the government adopted the policy of total control of education: (a) national and political aspirations; (b) financial considerations; (c) administrative and educational considerations.

(a) *National and political aspirations*

The national and political aspirations of the government might have ranked as the key single reason that dictated the course of action the government took in adopting the policy of centralised state control of education. First and foremost, the attainment of independence, coupled with a fluid political situation that prevailed, made the government so anxious as to pursue policies that would promote rapid economic development and foster national harmony and 'heal divisions' in the country. The political role of education in this matter of national unity was to be crucial. Indeed, as Donald Rothchild and Michael Rogin have rightly observed:

> As in so many countries where education is the key to economic development, efficient administration, and personal advancement, educational policy has not remained insulated from politics in Uganda. Three problems have rceived attention particularly: the proper rate and nature of educational expansion, influence on the school system and academic content and standards.[11]

The important question to ask is: In what way did the government perceive education to make it foster the desired national consciousness, a thing that seemed politically sensitive? A. Nsibambi has, by implication, suggested that they wanted to do it by means of indoctrination. He writes:

> This struggle was, however, more important than controlling buildings *per se;* it entailed either acquiring or retaining a decisive role of controlling and conditioning the minds of students, their belief and styles of life during their formative period. . . .[12]

However, this proposition is questionable. It is doubtful that the government actually intended to use direct political doctrine in schools in order to cultivate the spirit of nationhood among the youth. David Evans' recent study into 'Teachers as agents of national development in Uganda' does not substantiate Nsibambi's assertion. He says:

> Attempts to study these forms of "manifest socialization" in East African school context are somewhat frustrating because of the almost total absence of civic classes or other obvious forms of content explicitly designed to teach citizenship roles. A study of thirty secondary schools in Uganda showed that such practices (i.e. symbols and ritual) were notable for their absence. For example, only 22 per cent of the schools displayed the national flag more than twice a term, and less than 10 per cent of the schools sang the national anthem more than several times a term.[13]

The government would have made deliberate effort to persuade or force the schools to teach 'citizenship' and make use of the symbols and rituals referred to by Evans, more widely if what they had in mind was pure political indoctrination. What the government had in mind, it seems, was more indirect but equally effective way of forgoing national unity among the youth and the people as a whole. One of these methods hinged on the firmly held belief that by teaching children of different religious faiths and ethnic backgrounds together, and if their teachers were themselves trained in inter-denominational colleges, it would be much easier to pave the way for nation building. A detailed discussion of whether or not a policy based on this kind of belief would succeed to bring about the desired goal of political socialization in the Uganda situation is beyond the scope of this article. Suffice it to say that Gould's study[14] in 1972 about 'planning the location of schools' in Uganda in general and Ankole in particular concludes that the policy of 'national intake' in secondary schools intended to create a feeling of patriotism among the students, has generally failed.[15]

A reference to the denominational schools in Uganda has already been made in connection with the three reports. It has been argued, with justification, that 'religion' in Uganda and indeed in many other countries is or has been in the past a divisive agent. I have already pointed out that voluntary agencies operated schools on denominational lines. The disadvantages of this system have already been highlighted. It is pertinent to recall two relevant historical events through which bitter rivalry between the Roman Catholic and Protestant missionaries and the Muslims was manifested in the country in general and the system of education in particular.

Firstly, there was the religious wars in Buganda in the last quarter of the 19th century, based on, first, the traditional differences between the Protestant and Roman Catholic churches in Europe,[16] and second, on the colonial power politics of the time. Those religious division elements were unfortunately carried into the education system. In Ankole, for instance, as in other parts of the country, it was a common practice for the missionaries to build primary schools close to each other with little regard for educational priorities such as the location of schools in relation to population for no reason other than competition and rivalry sentiments. J. Ssekamwa has summed up the point in his paper, *The Development of Education in Uganda 1939-1960,* thus:

> ... the history of setting up schools in Uganda had shown a keen competition between the Native Anglican Church and the Roman Catholic Church for denominational purposes. But it bred a lot of undesirable characteristics in the running of schools.... Catholic and Protestant pupils studying in these rival schools used to treat each other as enemies rather than friends and usually battles were fought on their way home. This spirit of rivalry was hard to live down even in adult life so that society was divided up on the basis of religion.[17]

The second event was the churches' tendency to get directly involved in the political campaigns of the late 1950s and early 1960s. What happened in Ankole, according to the writer's eye witness experience, is a case in point. (i) The selection of the members of the Legislative Council from Ankole District Council (it has now been divided in two districts—East Ankole and West Ankole) in 1959 was influenced by religious learnings—Protestants versus Roman Catholics. The Protestant Bairu* members in the District Council were prepared to ally with Protestant Bahima members to select a Muhima Protestant representative although the socio-political relationship between these two ethnic groups was always not cordial, rather than support their fellow Mwiru Roman Catholic candidate. (ii) Similarly, the Ankole District Council elections of 1961 and 1962 were fought on religious grounds —the Protestant Establishment on the one hand and the Roman Catholic population on the other. The Muslims took the middle course in these struggles for power with a view to allying with the winning faction. (iii) The national general elections in the district in 1961 and 1962 were also fought on religious lines. The religious leanings were manifested in the political parties. The Roman Catholics rallied behind the Democratic Party, and the Protestants projected their political activities through the Uganda People's Congress. The majority of Muslims learned towards Kabaka Yekka or 'Kabaka alone'

Looking at the politics on the national scene, it is again noticeable that a similar pattern prevailed. F. B. Welbourn gives a view of what happened. Firstly, he says that in 1962 general elections, the Democratic Party was known as 'Dini' ya Papa (the religion of the Pope) and the Uganda People's Congress was referred to as the United Protestant Church of Canterbury.[18] This view is reinforced by Leys Colins, when he argues that the Catholic missionaries were called the 'bafranza' (frenchmen) and the British ones were known as 'baingereza' (englishmen).[19]

Secondly, in reference to the attitude towards religion and politics, by the ordinary people, he makes this interesting observation:

> In 1962 the equation of the DP with Catholics, and the UPC with Protestants was still generally made throughout the country. More than one report—from both missionaries and anthropologists—was received of men in Ankole and Kigezi who, when asked 'what is your religion?' replied, UPC. In one instance the question was pressed: 'I meant', "Have you been baptised?"—and was answered, 'YES' 'WE'RE UPC'.[20]

One member of parliament advanced the same point when he remarked in parliament that:

> You will find that some missionaries are going out baptising . . . people and saying, Mr. Sejaryo you are a Christian and member of the Democratic Party.[21]

*There were (are) two ethnic groups of people in Ankole: the Bairu — cultivators, and the Bahima—pastoralists

It was in the light of these experiences that some people, especially politicians, regarded religion as an obstacle to unifying a fragmented society which had just attained independence.[22] Therefore the government philosophy right from the beginning was that, to use Donald Flatt's expression, 'Spiritual and ethical values would not be the major goal; they would be acceptable in so far, and only in so far, as they subserved and contributed to the secular aims'.[23]

The political nature of the denominational system became more apparent in the debate in parliament on the Sessional Paper No. 4 on education; and the subsequent measures that were adopted to consolidate and implement the policy. In his argument in defence of the government's proposed policy, the Minister of Education asserted that the introduction of an inter-denominational system and complete state control of schools was an inevitable phenomenon. He declared that:

> We are building a nation. A new nation of Uganda has to be forged from various tribal fragments which the system of indirect rule threw together at the eve of independence. The surest way of uniting our country is through a common education system.[24]

The fundamental point to grasp here is that if education was to be a spearhead of unity, its aims, structure and machinery of administration must, of necessity, be reshaped. This message obviously cut across the existing denominationally based institutions. It was in this spirit that the minister declared that:

> In the interests of our national building, the government would like to encourage the children of this nation to grow closer together, not as Protestants, or Muslims or Catholics or Bahais or Greek Orthodox, etc., but as one people belonging to one nation.[25]

The minister also advocated that people, after gaining independence, had the right to exercise control over areas of economic and social development. The birth of independence had brought with it a great demand for expansion of educational facilities. Naturally it was the central government that was duty bound to meet that demand. While the protectorate government was prepared to compromise with the voluntary agencies, in the matters of control and administration, the new government felt it had no obligation to do so. It had been directly elected; its success or failure would be judged by the people on its record of performance in providing the services the people needed.[26] So the minister declared in parliament:

> We must have our full share of Uhuru (independence) and be fully and really free at last. Otherwise I am afraid we will encourage neo-colonialism through the agency of the church.

The implication here was that although the church was basically locally controlled especially the Anglican Church as already said, Christian religion as well as Islam were looked at as foreign doctrines. The 'Mission groups'

were equated with the former colonial powers. It was therefore emphasised that the voluntary agencies could no longer be left to have the 'entire stake' in the system of education as the case used to be in the past.

Therefore in 1964 the entire operation of administering primary education was centred in the office of District Education Officers, thus removing the voluntary agencies from legal control, management and inspection of schools except the private ones. In 1965 a new common primary school syllabus was introduced in order to gear the school curriculum to the country's needs. In 1967 the ministry began to appoint assistant inspectors of schools specially for primary schools and posted them to the districts. Although this was a positive step aimed at improving the quality of education, it must be stressed that one inspector for a whole district was obviously inadequate. Moreover, it is doubtful whether the new inspectors were well qualified for the job. True, the appointments were competitive and based on merit—performance as teachers and length of service. However, none of them had been trained specially for the new posts. Furthermore, the DEOs and their assistants were employees of the ministry. They were merely seconded to the LEAS for duty. In all probability, therefore, they were bound to act as representatives of the ministry on the 'spot' rather than as civil servants of the LEAS. This was not a healthy thing since it tended to encourage problems of compliance and squabbles for authority and responsibilities between the DEOs on the one hand and the DECs on the other.[27]

The introduction of a republic constitution in 1967 by which the country was put under ONE government machinery which enabled the national Ministry of Education* to 'acquire greater formal capacity to speed up the process of controlling and centralising the administration of education',[28] the introduction of the District Administrations Act by which the District Commissioner—the central government official—was given more overriding powers in the district over the local government officials; the decision of the government to become the sole employer of teachers and not the voluntary agencies or the LEAS; the decision to introduce new Education Management Committee Rules in 1964 and to revise them in 1969, by which the voluntary agencies were phased out of education and central authority increased; the centralisation of purchase of school furniture and teaching materials and equipment in 1967, were all, to mention but a few, natural consequences of the government's desire to implement and consolidate the policy.

(b) *Financial considerations*

So far I have been talking about the political aspect of the matter and how it impinged on the government thinking when they were formulating the new policy of education. We now turn our attention to the financial arguments which the government advanced to justify its new measures. It

*The kingdom districts—Buganda, Ankole, Bunyoro, Toro had a Minister of Education each.

must be pointed out here that the financial considerations were closely linked with the political ones.

First of all it must be stressed that financing of education by the state and the state control or its attempts to control education is sometimes a source of serious confrontation between the government and the church and/or local authorities. The underlying cause of such friction is understandable. The logical tendency is that the more the state pays to finance education, the more is its corresponding desire to intervene and exercise more control to see that the money is well used. What President Nyerere, a strong exponent of the principle that education in poor countries should benefit all the masses who pay for it rather than the 'elite' exclusively, has said is directly relevant to the arguments of the Minister of Education in parliament in 1964. He says:

> It is now time that we looked again at the justification for a poor society like ours spending almost 20 per cent of its government revenues on providing education for its children and young people, and begin to consider what that education should be doing. For in our circumstances it is impossible to devote shillings 147,300,000 every year on education for some of our children (while others go without) unless its result has a proportionate relevance to the society we are trying to create.[29]

The implication of these remarks is twofold: firstly, that any national government is duty-bound to control the money voted from the public purse for education or other services. The government must ensure that the education offered is of satisfactory quality and quantity to justify heavy public expenditure on it. Secondly, it is implied that the government must control the entire educational operation to ensure that the system responds to the needs of the country. That is why the Uganda government became determined, whatever the voluntary agencies or other sections of the community felt, to streamline the whole system of financial machinery and educational management. This, of course, necessitated removing the voluntary agencies from any dealings in school financial transactions.

As already hinted the educational expenditure since 1962 had been increasing steadily while the voluntary contributions had become less significant. The Ministry of Education estimated recurrent expenditure alone on education for the financial year 1962/63 was £2.5 million, i.e. 14 per cent of the total national budget. At the end of the financial year 1967/68, education alone received about 16 per cent of the total government recurrent expenditure, the largest share of government's recurrent expenditure. This percentage had risen to about 25 per cent at the end of 1968/69 financial year.[30]

It was in tune with this heavy public expenditure on education that the government felt it must control not only the actual process of spending in order to economise, but also to exercise control over the curriculum, teacher

training and the employment of teachers. It was further argued that the existing mission machinery for checking the school accounts was inefficient. This is what the minister termed 'financial mismanagement'. He pointed out that the mission supervisors were 'wasting the taxpayers' hard earned money'. "Indeed", he said, "there was such inefficiency in financial supervision that the situation was truly frightening. At one supervisor's office, money was getting lost; a man committed suicide (for fear of arrest perhaps*). At others, people were out on trial. At yet others there had been at times of grumbling discontent about school financial control. Headmasters have been lending money to businessmen, with interest to themselves".[31]

According to the minister the situation in financial mismanagement in schools warranted drastic government intervention with the hope that things would improve. With effect from the beginning of 1964 the school financial affairs would be handled by the District Education Officers. The voluntary agencies, especially the Roman Catholic Church, resisted the move but the government persisted. The voluntary agencies eventually gave in.[32]

Another facet of the argument was that the school supervisors (about 54) and their assistants, plus Secretary-Generals (3 of them) and the Educational Secretaries (about 12) were all paid by the central government—salaries, travelling expenses and allowance incurred on duty. For example, the Protestant Educational Secretary-General's salary was in the range of lower super scale; i.e. 36,780 shillings per year; that of the School Supervisor was about 12,720 shillings per year; and the Educational Secretary was paid over 15,600 shillings p.a. The government felt, first, that the abolition of the supervisory posts would make 'some sizeable savings'.[33] However, whether or not the government would save money in this way is doubtful since there would be as many civil servants to pay, i.e. the Education Officers and their assistants and their supporting staff, e.g. Executive Officers, accountants, clerks, as the mission supervisors. Secondly, the government's view was that even if the abolition of the school supervisors did not result in financial savings, it should appoint its own staff on its own terms to replace the church officials. For one thing the government civil servants would be directly responsible to the central authority; for another, it was hoped they would manage the school finances more efficiently. But this is open to question, because the evidence seems to suggest that the embezzlement of school funds is still apparent. The situation in Ankole Education Office is a case to note. It is true that up to 1972 Ankole District was in constant debt with the Uganda Schools Supply Limited when in fact the school fees were paid regularly and the central and local government grants were paid in time. Why should this kind of state of affairs exist? Perhaps part of the answer lies in the number of officials who have been convicted for offences connected with embezzlement of school funds at the DEO's office since 1966. These

*Words in brackets are mine.

include two accountants, one clerk, one school furniture contractor and one Education Officer. G. Bennar's study on education in Sebei District indicates similar financial problems.[84]

What happened in practical terms is that with effect from the beginning of 1964 the headmasters, after collecting school money—school fees, building fund and money for meals—were required to pay it to the DEO's office. The money was then kept in a 'pool' on the same account of the school. Henceforth no money would be kept by the voluntary agencies. The DEO was solely responsible for regulating and controlling expenditure of each school. Theoretically, the Management Committee of each school was supposed to help him as it was responsible for the estimates of the school. Ideally also, the monies such as building fund contributed voluntarily by the parents belonged to a particular school; it would be used 'purely' for the purpose for which it was collected. Spending of such money would be carried out in accordance with the wishes of the parents concerned and the DEO.

Another financial matter over which the government intervened directly was the primary teachers' salaries. Prior to the new policy the teachers were paid by the government through the voluntary agencies who were their employers. After 1964 the government decided to become the sole employer of the teachers. This meant that the government would not only foot the salary bill but would also carry out the actual payment of the salaries itself. In consequence, the Ministries of Education and Regional Administration made available 'Block Grants' to the Local Governments for teachers' salaries. Then the treasurers of respective local governments allocated the money to the DEOs who in turn made the payments. In 1968 the Ministry of Education assumed total direct responsibility for paying the teachers' salaries. An accounting unit was set up at the ministry's headquarters in Kampala to handle the primary teachers' salaries. At the district level an accounting unit for the teachers' salaries was also set up separate from the school fees account. Consequently, the ministry sent the money for the salaries directly to that account and not to the District Administration Treasurer. This then finally cleared away the mist which had surrounded the question of employer of the primary teachers after the voluntary agencies had been phased out—the Local Government or the Central Government. The secondary school teachers were paid directly from the headquarters. Cheques for the teachers' salaries were sent to the headmasters who transacted payments.

(c) *Educational and administrative considerations*

There were two other matters on which the government focused its attention in formulating its policy of state control. One was the need to improve the educational standards which it believed were hampered by the poor administration and supervision provided by the voluntary agencies.

The Minister of Education complained in parliament that 'Voluntary Agencies had stopped being agents supervising' and had instead become 'masters'. He stated that missionary supervisors had to end in order to streamline the system and make it more efficient.

This line of thinking seemed to be in tune with Castle's recommendation for a strong coherent administrative machinery that would make the kind of educational development the report envisaged possible. Although the report supported the idea of retention of voluntary agencies in the ownership, management and supervision of primary education, they were equally clear in their proposal that the government's role in control, planning and directing the general development of education should be increased. To achieve that sort of administrative machinery would necessitate overhauling the old one.

Two things, however, should be noted. First, some of the former school supervisors were appointed either Education Officers or Assistant Education Officers. Obviously some (if not all) of those appointed were loyal to their former masters—the voluntary agencies. The letter below in which the writer, a former school supervisor, and later on Assistant Education Officer, pledged his support for the church in the struggle against the new educational policy, illustrates the point. He said:

> I and my staff... wish the church every educational success in the difficult years that lie ahead. We, on our part, will do all we can to fight for the Catholic Church even if it be from a different angle of the batterfield.[35]

Whether such people would willingly and enthusiastically implement the new government policy which was essentially anti-voluntary agencies is definitely qustionable.

Secondly, there was no refresher course(s) for the newly appointed officers in the new posts. So whether it would be possible to improve the standard of efficiency the minister talked about in the debate remained to be seen. The saying that you cannot teach an old dog new tricks is definitely relevant to the situation here. The administrative problems that were experienced in Sebei after the introduction of the new policy, as explained by G. Bennars in a study already referred to is a case to note. Such problems arose because of, among other things, inexperienced newly appointed officers. It should be noted that whenever an experienced education officer was posted to Sebei things improved.[36]

The most serious disadvantage of missionary supervision was the duplication of the inspection of schools to which a reference has already been made in regard to the criticisms contained in the 'reports' of 1961-62. It was a common practice for three primary schools, each belonging to a different denomination in the same geographical proximity, to be inspected by the three different denominational supervisors at the same time. Two disturbing

things are apparent. In the first place if one of the missions was poorly staffed it necessarily meant inadequate inspection of schools resulting in poor educational standards, and discontent among the parents. In the second place, if there was such disparity in inspection of schools and yet the government was paying heavily, as we have seen, to maintain these mission supervisors, obviously the principle on which to keep them in the administrative machinery was bound to be seriously questioned. Keeping them was likely to be increasingly viewed as wasteful of financial resources and encouragement of inefficiency and would jeopardize the educational standards.

The government then advanced another argument focused on the deployment of teachers. Apart from removing the mission supervisors from the administrative and supervisory machinery, the government became determined to rationalise the system of posting teachers which had been in the hands of the voluntary agencies hitherto. Its policy was stated thus:

> The government intends that teachers shall be employed by the Central Government, Ministry of Education—though not as Civil Servants—and seconded for duty with the Local Authorities.... In particular, the system whereby the voluntary agencies have previously controlled appointments... will cease and these duties will be carried out by the Area Education Officer of the Central Government.[37]

The establishment of the Teaching Service Commission in 1970, solely responsible for appointments of teachers, headmasters and principals of schools and teacher training colleges respectively, was a natural result of that policy.[38]

Similarly, the placement of primary teachers became the responsibility of the District Education Officer. The ministry at the headquarters became responsible for placing the secondary school teachers. By the 1970 Education Act, the Chief Education Officer was empowered to make a teacher retire, or post any teacher to any part of the country if he thought fit. This was in response to the need to distribute the teachers more equitably. Hence the Ministry of Education commented:

> Prior to the method, teachers could go to schools and districts of their own choices. This of course resulted in popular districts having all teachers with new techniques of teaching while the unpopular districts had practically none.[39]

Again whether the new method whereby the teachers were placed in schools by the District Education Officer improved the situation in as far as equitable distribution of teachers was (is) concerned, is questionable. Teachers, especially at secondary school level, are not only able to make 'choices' but to make personal contacts either with the training colleges, or the posting officer(s) in the ministry or both about where they would like to teach. It is not uncommon to have their 'requests' granted. In any case the headmasters more often than not make personal approaches at the Faculty

of Education in Makerere and the Ministry to request that such and such teachers be posted to their schools. Reasons vary; some are more genuine than others. But the point is that their requests are usually granted, a thing that defeats the purpose of the policy of central control of placement of teachers in schools.

Another important point the minister raised in the debate about his policy was an educational one. It was also closely linked with the political, financial and administrative arguments I have already discussed. One sharp criticism against the denominational system of education was that it tended to ignore the welfare of the pupils and instead subjected them to physical hardship. It was not uncommon (and it is still happening to a certain extent) for many pupils to walk as many as ten miles to and from school of their denomination because they could not attend nearby schools of different religious denominations. The minister put the case thus:

> The principle guiding factor in these new changes is the welfare of the children. We must minimise the agonies and inconveniences of travelling long distances in thunder, lightening or rain which make going to school like so much social fatigue. . . .[41]

This point was in line with the general charge that the main objective of the voluntary agencies in running schools was to spread their religious doctrines rather than impart secular education for its own sake. If the government was to achieve its objective of relieving the children of the agonies of having to walk 'long distances' in 'thunder and rain' to and from school, they had, *per se*, to integrate schools on non-denominational basis. But the question whether or not there has been any significant success in religious integration of the system of education thus eliminating denominationalism remains to be seen. Generally speaking it can be argued that theoretically religious rivalry in education has been checked. Primary and secondary schools which originally belonged to the voluntary agencies were taken over and are government institutions open to children of all denominations. Selection in second-level schools and colleges (except private ones) has been centralised so that intake is no longer based on religious affiliations but rather on merit. Teachers are trained and employed by the government. As already explained, church participation, in administration and management of 'government institutions' has been stopped. But it must be stressed that, in practice, religious affiliations in schools are quite evident.[42] Three areas in which this is manifested can be identified, namely: the private system in primary and secondary sector which operates on a denominational basis to a good extent and forms a sizeable portion of the total educational facilities in the country.[43] Second, the pattern of home/school movement which shows that some children prefer to bypass nearest schools if they do not belong to their religious denominations, in order to attend schools of their faith.[44] The third area concerns secondary school choice, i.e. choice of senior one—first

year of the secondary school. There is evidence to suggest that pupils' choices are influenced by religious adherence. That is to say that children tend to put their choices in schools of their religious faith.[45]

The reasons for phasing out the DECs from the operation of education

It would be incorrect to imagine that the plan to sweep away the District Education Committees was conceived as early as 1963 when the policy of centralisation was planned. It will be recalled that in his arguments during the debate in parliament, the minister repeatedly emphasised that the government's intention was not to diminish the role of the Local Education Authorities, but rather to enhance it. The policy was basically directed against the voluntary agencies' dominance in education. In any case the constitutional arrangements of 1962 which guaranteed the kingdom districts to be responsible for primary education* would have made the task of taking away such responsibilities a hard one. Constitutionally it would have been unwise to force constitutional changes at such an early stage of independence. Such attempts would have been met with bitter resentment and resistance, especially from Buganda region. So in all probability the government would try to avoid a course of action that most likely would precipitate a serious political row in the country at a time when unity and harmony were badly needed. But then what made the government move so swiftly against the LEAs?

The political and constitutional upheavals of 1966/67 were largely responsible for most of what happened. As a result of constitutional changes which followed the 1966 clashes between the central government and Buganda kingdom, the 'kingdoms' were abolished. A year later a republic constitution was introduced as already mentioned. Consequently those kingdoms lost their federal status and 'Ministries of Education'. Therefore the autonomy of the DECs which had been guaranteed in the 1962 constitution was considerably eroded. A reference has already been made to the 1967 District Administrations Act which weakened the authority of the local government and increased that of the District Commissioner, an official of the central government. The DECs were completely swept away in 1971 with the abolition of the District Councils. This left the DEOs virtually alone to run education in their respective districts.

There is a twin point which must be mentioned. That is that 'centralisation' by its nature is like 'dictatorship'. Once began it is bound to become more stringent than flexible. This is especially so in a developing country where uncertainties due to fluid political and socio-economic situations impinge on the central government attitude towards the local or regional authorities. It seems therefore that once the central government began to pull things together and to take an upper hand in education, the local

*Buganda was to be responsible for both primary and secondary institutions outside urban areas.

authorities' role in educational planning, control and development was bound to be undermined soon or later.

The main point to emphasise is that the absence of the District Education Committees has consolidated the position and authority of the Ministry of Education. Whether or not the government had originally planned this level of centralisation is beside the point. Although the DEO plans with some officials nominated from the local area, he is the one who convenes the meetings and he determines the agenda. This obviously emphasises the key position he holds now. This is not to say that he himself has a high degree of autonomy in what he does; certainly not because he has to work according to the directives of the officials at the headquarters in Kampala.

CONCLUSION

It is apparent therefore from this discussion that naturally the central government's strong intervention in the system of education after independence was inevitable. As we have seen the government had the obligation to shape the destiny of the nation. Unquestionably education is an important vehicle in influencing people's social, political and economic attitudes and tastes. The presence of voluntary agencies in controlling, administering and supervising the system of education was seen as some form of neo-colonialism. Hence efforts were bound to be made to dilute or abolish completely their key-role in education. That is what happened by the end of 1971.

Next was the local authorities. Although these were meant to serve the central government in as far as administering local services was concerned, they brought certain amount of sectionalism to bear on the national issues. Similarly, efforts were likely to be made soon or later to make the central government the only determinant of the educational policies and plans both at local and national levels. This is indeed what happened as we have seen in this article.

FOOTNOTES

1. Lews, J. L. and Loveridge, *Management of Education*, London: Pall Mall Press, 1965, ch. 3.
2. Bereday, G. Z. F. and Lauwerys, J. A. (ed.), *Church and State in Education: The World Year Book of Education*, 1966. London: Evans Brothers Limited, 1966, pp. 1-18.
3. Cown, L. G. and (others) (ed.), *Education and Nation-Building in Africa*, London: Pall Mall Press, 1965, pp. 178-179.
4. Smith Lester, W. O., *Government of Education*, London: Penguin Books, 1965, Chapters 1 and 4. Also see, Oldele Taiwo, *Agencies of Education*, Lagos: Macmillan and Co. (Nigeria) Ltd., 1966, ch. 8.
5. Castle, E. B., *Education in Uganda: The report of the Uganda Education Commission*. Entebbe: Government Printer, 1963, p. 1.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 54.

7. The Mission of International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, *The Economic Development of Uganda,* Baltimore: John Hopkins Press, 1962, p. 347.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 347.
9. Uganda Government, *The Report of the Uganda Teachers' Salaries Commission,* p. 1.
10. Uganda Government, *The Report of the Uganda Relationship Commission: The Munster Report,* Entebbe: Government Printer, 1961, p. 101.
11. Rothchild, D. and Rogin, M., *Uganda* in Carter, G. M. (ed.), *National Unity and Regionalism in Fight African States,* New York: Cornell University Press, 1966, pp. 423-424.
12. Nsibambi, A., *The Uganda Central Government attempts to acquire effective control in administering education, 1962-1970,* Kampala: Makerere University, Institute of Social Research, 1972, p. 11.
13. Evans, D., *Teachers as Agents of National Development: a case study of Uganda,* New York, Praeger Publishers, 1971, pp. 7-8.
14. The study was conducted by W. T. S. Gould under the auspices of UNESCO. The subject was: Planning the location of schools: Ankole District, Uganda. Uganda was one of a number of countries in the world where such case studies were carried out in 1972/73.
15. Gould, W. T. S., *Planning the Location of Schools: Ankole District, Uganda,* Paris: UNESCO, 1973, p. 74.
16. Kiwanuka, S. M., *Mutesa of Uganda: Uganda Famous Men,* Nairobi: East African Literature Bureau, 1967, pp. 42-43.
17. Ssekamwa, J. C., *The Development of Education in Uganda 1939-1960* (a history seminar paper), Kampala: History Department, Makerere University, 1969, pp. 16-17.
18. Welbourn, F. B., *Religion and Politics in Uganda 1952-1962,* Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1965, p. 1.
19. Leys, C., *Politicians and Policies: An essay on politics in Acholi (Uganda), 1962-65,* Nairobi: East African Publishing House, 1967, p. 5.
20. Welbourn, F. B., *op. cit.*, pp. 40-41.
21. Uganda Government, *Proceedings of the National Assembly,* Vol. 22, 1963, Entebbe Government Printer, p. 471.
22. The Political disunity in Uganda both before and after independence cannot be overstressed. The main problem hinged on 'Buganda Nationalism' and/or 'Sectionalism'.
23. Flatt, D., *Principles and guidelines for Churches and Missions in Africa in the light of Government attitudes and plans,* ch. ix, in Pierge, R. (ed.), *Christianity and African Education,* Michigan: William Berdamns Publishing Co., 1966. Also see: Nsibambi, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 5-9ff.
24. *Proceedings of Parliamentary debates, op. cit.*, p. 544.
25. *Uganda Argus* (now the *Voice of Uganda*), Kampala, dated 28.11.63.
26. Wood, A. W., *Educational Policy and social change in Uganda 1935-1964* (M. Phil. thesis), London: London University Institute of Education, 1967, p. 233.
27. Bennaars, G., *Primary Education in Sebei District: A Sociological Study,* an M.A. thesis, Kampala, Makerere University, 1973, pp. 198-208.
28. Nsibambi, A., *op. cit.*, p. 43.
29. Nyerere, J., *Education for self-reliance in Tanzania,* ed., I. Nairobi: Longmans, 1968, p. 48.
30. Uganda Government, *Financing of Education in Uganda,* Kampala: Ministry of Education, 1971, p. 4. Also see: Nsibambi, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 18-20.

31. *Proceedings of the Parliamentary debates, op. cit.*, p. 543.
32. Nsibambi, A., *op. cit.*, pp. 21-23.
33. *Parliamentary debates, op. cit.*
34. Bennaars, G., *op. cit.*, p. 102.
35. A letter written by one of the former supervisors of schools, Catholic Secretariat Archives; Nsambya, Kampala.
36. Bennaars, G., *op. cit.*, pp. 205-206.
37. Uganda Government, *The Memorandum on the Report of the Uganda Education Commission*, Sessional Paper No. 4 of 1963, Kampala: Ministry of Education.
38. The Uganda Teaching Service Commission has a sub-committee at each district according to the 1970 Education Act. This teaching service sub-committee supposedly handles the appointments of the primary teachers.
39. Uganda Government, *The Ministry of Education Annual Report for 1969*, p. 2.
40. Gould, W. T. S., *op. cit.*, p. 68.
41. *Preceedings of the Parliamentary debates*, p. 541.
42. Gould, W. T. S., *op. cit.*, pp. 67-68.
43. *Ibid.*, p. 23.
44. *Ibid.*, pp. 34-36.
45. *Ibid.*, p. 36.