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Nubians Are Baganda from Bombo: Unpacking the Luwalo Tax Protests and the Nubian Identity Crisis in Colonial Buganda (1891-1940)

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This study challenges the dominant narrative that the 1940 Luwalo tax protests in Buganda were solely a result of the Nubians' militant and uncompromising nature. Instead, it posits that these protests were deeply rooted in unresolved identity issues imposed on the Nubian community by British colonial authorities since their arrival in Uganda in the 1890s. By examining the 1940 protest and the subsequent arrest and imprisonment of Nubian protesters, the research raises critical questions about the politics of colonial identity construction and deconstruction. It investigates why some Nubians resisted the payment of native taxes while others complied, the minimal press coverage of the protests, and the role of colonial tax policies, such as the Luwalo tax, in reshaping Nubian identity. Additionally, the study highlights the often-overlooked role of Nubian women in these protests. A historical research methodology was employed, utilizing both primary and secondary sources, including government documents, colonial correspondences, and newspapers, to uncover the broader socio-political context of the protests. Oral histories, gathered through interviews with 5 surviving Nubian elders and 9 of their descendants, provided valuable insights into identity struggles and the impact of colonial policies. This combination of archival research and oral history offers an elaborate analysis of how colonial tax policies influenced Nubian identity, contributing to the broader narrative of resistance and identity preservation within the community.

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INTRODUCTION

The 1940 Luwalo tax protests in Buganda, Uganda, present a significant yet underexplored episode in the history of colonial resistance, marked by the active involvement of the Nubian community. This study challenges the prevailing narrative that attributes these protests to the Nubians' purportedly militant and unruly character. Instead, it argues that the protests were deeply rooted in the unresolved and complex identity of the Nubians, a community caught between their Sudanese heritage and the British colonial classification systems that marginalized them. By examining the role of colonial tax policies, particularly the imposition of native taxes like the Luwalo, the study sought to understand how these policies were used to reshape and often undermine Nubian identity, leading to tensions and resistance. The limited media coverage and the subsequent harsh response by colonial authorities further underscore the political significance of these protests, raising critical questions about the construction and deconstruction of identity under colonial rule.

Abdul Felder, a former commander of the National Resistance Movement/Army,¹ and Uganda's former minister without portfolio, while addressing Nubian returnees from Sudan and Kenya in 1987 at Bombo UMEA Primary School,

located twenty-three miles north of Uganda's capital Kampala noted thus:

*Nubians are Baganda from Bombo. The fact that they are speaking a language inherited from their fore fathers does not mean that they are foreigners. The Nubians are true Ugandans and indeed, they are Baganda from Bombo.*²

The Guide Newspaper confirmed this assertion with a fascinating headline; "Nubians are Baganda from Bombo." Naduli's words as a Muganda elder from Buganda,³ a senior citizen, and the NRM/A historical from Bulemezi⁴, resonated well with the words of the sub-county chief of Kyadondo Mutuba III. Haji Musa Musoke Ssemambo⁵ authoritatively in vernacular stated; "*Abaanubi Basajja Bakabaka era a Baganda abawedde emirimu era ne Mengo bakiika*"⁶ Translation: "Nubi are king's men and true Baganda who even pay allegiance to the king at Mengo." The ideas expressed in the two accounts reflect the perception that the Nubians in Buganda were seen as Baganda natives who lived and interacted with the Baganda. The only notable difference was that they spoke Kinubi, a creolized form of Arabic.

The 1940 *luwalo* tax protests by the Nubians, along with their subsequent arrests and imprisonment by colonial authorities, prompt critical questions regarding the politics of colonial identity construction and deconstruction among

¹ The National Resistance Movement (NRM) was Ugandan liberation political movement that waged a guerrilla war through its military wing the National Resistance Army that toppled Tito Okello Lutwa's government in 1986. According to the National Resistance Movement, the takeover of the military takeover was justifiable as a measure to restore political stability, security, law and order, return to constitutionalism and the rule of law to Uganda.

² Anonymous. "Nubians are Baganda from Bombo." *The Guide*, December 31 1987: 3

³ Bantu kingdom in Central Uganda, the largest traditional kingdom in the present day Republic of Uganda.

⁴ One of Buganda's counties with the highest population of the Nubians

⁵ Musa Musoke Ssemambo is the county chief of Mutuba III Makindye. He was installed to the chieftaincy in 2022 according to the will and wish of the king of Buganda Ronald Muwenda Mutebi II. His office is houses in the exact building in which some Nubians were tried in 1940.

⁶Musa Musoke Ssemambo, *Interview*, Makindye, Kampala, 28, October, 2022

Uganda's Nubians. For instance, why did the colonial government impose native taxes on the Nubians through native authorities? Why did some Nubians oppose paying these native taxes while others complied? Who were the key Nubian actors in the *luwalo* tax protests? How did the colonial tax policy shape Nubian identity in Uganda? Why did these protests receive minimal media coverage, being dismissed as 'less significant riots'? Additionally, what was the significance of women's roles in the Nubian protests? These questions are crucial for understanding how the colonial project in Africa influenced African identities through colonial classifications and appreciating the role of women in anti-colonial struggles. This study, for example, examines the courage and resilience of Nubian women who joined their husbands in demonstrating against the British at the District Commissioner's office.

The advent of colonialism in Africa in the late nineteenth century brought about colonial classifications, categorizing the indigenous people as natives and the non-indigenous as non-natives, creating two distinct societies. This classification aimed to facilitate the effective administration of the colonized people through a divide-and-rule policy. Mahmood Mamdani argues that non-natives were categorized as a race, while natives were divided into numerous tribes, laying the groundwork for colonial conflicts. However, it is essential to recognize that colonialism in Africa, unlike in India, found Africans already weakened by civil wars and diminished traditional kinship bonds and customs. Colonial classification between natives and non-natives was similar in British East Africa. In Uganda, the British and Asians were classified as a race, while natives were divided into different tribes with colonially drawn territorial boundaries for settlement. This division created tension among natives, such as those who considered themselves "early settlers" with land granted by colonialists and "late settlers" who either arrived

after the colonial boundaries were drawn or settled earlier but were not assigned land. The early settlers often viewed the late settlers or unassigned African communities as "intruders," "strangers," or "land grabbers." The Nubians, also known as the Nubi or "Sudanese mercenaries," found themselves in a dilemma due to colonial classification, remaining unclassified as either natives or non-natives despite their early settlement in the 1890s.

By 1926, when the colonial boundaries in Uganda were finalised, the Nubians remained unterritorialized, lacking a "homeland" within any part of the country. As Sudanese mercenaries from Sudan, the Nubians were more closely aligned with Sudanese natives than Ugandan natives. However, they did not qualify as a race like the Europeans and Asians. Despite this, the Nubians enjoyed minimal privileges as colonial auxiliaries, a status that provided them with some degree of protection and favour from the colonial administration and soldiers.⁷ This ambiguous position further complicated their identity and social standing within the colonial framework. Their role as colonial soldiers, originating from an African country, classified them as African foreigners rather than European or Asian foreigners. This sense of "foreignness" among the Nubians gave them a perceived sense of privilege over the other Ugandan tribes. In the late 1930s, the colonial office attempted to integrate the Nubians with other native communities and revoke the special privileges they had enjoyed as colonial soldiers. This integration effort angered some Nubians, who viewed it as a deliberate attempt by the British to erase their Sudanese identity or "foreignness" while simultaneously subjecting them to native authority and laws, such as the payment of native taxes. Some Nubians resented this move, interpreting it as a colonial strategy to marginalize and discriminate against them, thereby "destroying" their Nubian identity. To show their resentment, in 1940 both Nubian men and women in Buganda protested against the

⁷ Hansen Holger Bernt. "Pre-colonial immigrants and colonial servants. The Nubians in Uganda revisited." *African Affairs* no. 361 (1991): 568.

mandate to pay native taxes at the District Commissioner's office in Mengo. This act of defiance led to a swift and harsh response from the colonial authorities, resulting in the arrest and imprisonment of the protesters.

Despite the historical significance of the 1940 Luwalo tax protests and the role they played in shaping the Nubian identity in colonial Uganda, scholarly attention to these events has been minimal, often overshadowed by broader anti-colonial movements. Existing literature tends to overlook the complex relationship between colonial tax policies and the identity struggles of marginalized communities like the Nubians, as well as the critical role of Nubian women in these protests. This study addresses this gap by focusing specifically on the intersection of colonial identity construction, tax policy, and gender within the Nubian community, offering a detailed analysis of how these factors collectively contributed to the broader narrative of resistance and identity preservation under colonial rule.

Methodology

This study employed a historical research methodology, leveraging both primary and secondary sources to explore the complex dynamics surrounding the 1940 Luwalo tax protests by the Nubian community in Buganda, Uganda. Archival materials, including government documents, colonial correspondences, and newspapers, were thoroughly analysed to uncover the broader socio-political context of the protests. Oral histories were a crucial component of this research, involving interviews with 5 surviving Nubian elders and 9 of their descendants, who were purposively selected in Uganda. These oral testimonies provided critical insights into the lived experiences and perspectives of the Nubian community, particularly regarding their identity struggles and interactions with the colonial authorities. By combining archival research with oral history, the study aimed to construct a

comprehensive narrative that not only challenges the dominant discourse attributing the protests to the Nubians' militant nature but also highlights the underlying issues of identity construction and deconstruction fostered by colonial policies.

To analyse the role of colonial tax policies in reshaping Nubian identity, the study adopted a critical inquiry approach, questioning the motivations behind the imposition of native taxes on the Nubians and the differential responses within the community. A thematic analysis was conducted to identify patterns and themes related to colonial identity politics, including the significance of gender roles, particularly the involvement of Nubian women in the protests. The study also engaged in a comparative analysis of the limited media coverage of the protests, contrasting it with other contemporary anti-colonial movements in Uganda. This methodological framework allowed for a subtle understanding of how colonial interventions, such as the Luwalo tax, functioned as instruments of identity manipulation, ultimately leading to resistance from marginalized communities like the Nubians.

Colonialism and the Unresolved Nubian Identity

The Nubians in Uganda experienced changing perceptions of their identity regarding their status as either natives or non-natives throughout the colonial period, influenced by shifting historical and political contexts.⁸ One of the challenges faced by the colonial government was defining the Nubian identity and formally establishing their status in colonial Uganda. Even when they categorized the population into non-natives as a race and natives as tribes, the Nubian identity remained ambiguous.⁹ The British did not consider the Nubians as a race, as they did with the Asians, nor did they classify them as a native tribe. Races included all those officially categorized as non-indigenous to Africa, whether their foreignness was indisputably clear or

⁸Mahajubu, Abudul. "Shifting Identity: A Historical Evolution of the Nubi Indigenous Ethnic Community in Uganda." *MAWAZO* no.2 (2020): 21.

⁹Mamdani, Mahmood. *Define and rule: Native as political identity*. (USA: Harvard University Press, 2012): 47.

designated by foreign classification.¹⁰ Although the Nubians were African indigenes who might have been expected to qualify as a tribe, the British did not view them beyond their role as mercenaries. The colonial authorities defined the Nubians based on their military experience, categorizing them as Sudanese mercenaries. This classification was reinforced in 1891 when Frederick Lugard recruited Nubians into the British colonial army, perceiving them as skilled and disciplined African warriors. Lord Frederick Lugard utilized these Nubian mercenaries to maintain law and order in Uganda and across East Africa.¹¹ Throughout the 1900s, the colonial authority recognised the Nubians formally as African colonial soldiers *Askaris* just like some Baganda of central Uganda and the Swahilis from the coast of East Africa who served in the British army.

The lack of formal pronouncement from the colonial authority regarding whether the Nubians were classified as a race or a tribe left the Nubians with no choice but to begin aligning themselves with the British and the Asians, whose foreign status was officially acknowledged by the colonial government as a distinct race. The Nubians saw themselves as "civilized" African servicemen and members of the Uganda Rifles, and later the King's African Rifles. They associated their "civility" with their military prowess and their adoption of British customs, such as smoking cigarettes, wearing ties, and maintaining close relationships with the British. However, the British did not view the Nubians as civilized as they perceived themselves; rather, they saw them as indisciplined, violent, barbaric, and uncompromising compared to the more dynamic northerners. Consequently, they preferred the Acholi, one of the Luo-speaking ethnic groups

from northern Uganda.¹² By the 1940s, increasing pressure on the British to resolve the Nubian identity crisis and settlement issue became evident, as they sought to address these matters before the end of British colonial rule.

By the 1920s, the only individuals recognized as a privileged group with special entitlements and designated settlements known as *Mulkis* were the Nubian soldiers, ex-soldiers, their families, and immediate dependents.¹³ The conferring of special privileges upon the Nubians was rooted in their previous service as British colonial servicemen, which resulted in their isolation from other natives who perceived them as non-natives and former British mercenaries. Consequently, the rest of the Nubians were to live as natives and be governed by the Native Authority Ordinance, with the expectation that they would be integrated into the local population.¹⁴ Nevertheless, the colonialists never officially classified the Nubians as natives, nor did they formally declare the privileged Nubians as non-natives. Even by 1925, despite the Nubian community having achieved a formal status in the Protectorate for the first time and being granted certain privileges and rights, their official classification remained unresolved.¹⁵ Without officially categorizing the Nubians as either natives or non-natives, one might wonder what kind of formal status they actually received. It is clear, however, that by the 1930s, both the British and Africans predominantly identified the Nubians as Sudanese ex-servicemen or former British soldiers, also referred to as *Keya* (a name derived from K.A.R). This designation emerged because many of the Nubians had retired from active military service, as they were no longer deemed reliable by the British.¹⁶

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹ Mahajubu Abdul, "From mercenaries to citizens: how the Nubians gained acceptance in Uganda" *The Conversation*, January 12, 2022, <https://theconversation.com/from-mercenaries-to-citizens-how-the-nubians-gained-acceptance-in-uganda-167725> (Accessed September 12, 2023)

¹²Amone, Charles. "Reasons for the British choice of the Acholi as the martial race of Uganda, 1862 to 1962." *Asian Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, no.2 (2014): 72-77.

¹³Hansen Holger Bernt. "Pre-colonial immigrants and colonial servants. The Nubians in Uganda revisited." *African Affairs* no. 361 (1991): 568.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶ The District Officer, "A formal announcement to the Honourable the Chief Secretary", Entebbe on the Nubi matter on 2/2/1939 C.1923. V, National Records Centre, and Archive. Wandegaya, Kampala.

The classification of the Nubians into a privileged African group, which received monthly wage payments, tax exemptions, and free settlements, versus a non-privileged group with no military connections who were required to pay native taxes, send their children to secular schools, and engage in agriculture, led to internal division among the Nubians themselves. This created a split between those who viewed themselves as a “privileged group” and “non-natives” and those who saw themselves as an “unprivileged group” and ostensibly “natives.” The British, however, continued to reject the notion that the Nubians constituted a tribe within Uganda. Governor Mitchel was a key proponent of this view and thus opposed the idea of granting some Nubians special privileges or allowing them to settle in designated areas known as *Mulkis*.

Towards Nativism

Before the advent of European colonialism in Africa, nativism was more relevant to migrants and the settlement of people in various areas for economic, ecological, or political reasons. African natives placed less emphasis on territorial boundaries in their settlements, allowing for peaceful interactions with others despite cultural diversity. However, with the arrival of European colonialism in Africa during the late nineteenth century, nativism was redefined to further the colonial agenda of exploiting Africans through a divide-and-rule strategy. Nativism was, for example, associated with the early inhabitants of a specific settlement and later codified. This redefinition by the colonial authorities created two classes of Africans: the early settlers and the late migrants. The early settlers considered themselves the “original dwellers” and viewed the late settlers as “strangers,” a position that the Nubians found themselves in by the 1940s. For instance, in Rwanda and Congo, the Bahutu, who viewed themselves as natives, did not regard the Batutsi

as natives.¹⁷ The Batutsi, in response, sought to be recognized as a native group within Rwanda by leveraging Belgian social constructivism.¹⁸ In Congo, specifically in North Kivu, the Banyarutshuru considered the Banyamasisi to be non-natives. This distinction arose because the Banyarutshuru, whose presence in the region predated Belgian colonization, saw themselves as indigenous. In contrast, the Banyamasisi had only arrived in Congo after the colonial period, having come as migrant laborers, which led the Banyarutshuru to regard them as outsiders.¹⁹ The Banyarutshuru, therefore, did not consider the Banyamasi as Congolese natives but rather as migrant laborers.

In Uganda, nativism was linked to the settlement of early inhabitants of the area, which led to the establishment of both local and national citizenship based on the statutes of the colonial state.²⁰ Most migration waves within Uganda involved different people intermingling and forming complex relationships with others. This interaction led to the definition of various identities and the consolidation of these groups as natives.²¹ Although the arrival of the Nubians in Uganda in the 1890s as Sudanese mercenaries or migrants is not a matter of historical contestation, the native societies already established in Uganda were hesitant to consider the Nubians as natives. Despite having little in common with other Ugandan natives apart from a few serving as British colonial soldiers, the Nubians themselves were also reluctant to refer to themselves as Ugandan natives due to their late migration and Sudanic identity. The native communities present in Uganda before the Nubians' arrival perceived them as “Sudanese migrants.” Not even their colonial employers—the British—considered them as natives when they first crossed into Uganda in the 1890s, which later became a matter of contention in 1940.

¹⁷Mahmood Mamdani, “Political identity, Citizenship and Ethnicity in Post-Colonial Africa.” (Keynote Address presented at the World Bank Conference ‘New Frontiers of Social Policy, Arusha: Arusha Conference. December 12-15, 2005).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰ Tunanukye, Nicholas. “A history of migrancy, nativism, and citizenship in Uganda, 1894-1995: a case of South and Western Uganda.” (PhD diss., Makerere University, 2022), 162

²¹Ibid.

Colonial Integration Plan

The integration policy of the Nubians with other native societies marked the onset of nativism among the Nubians, which unfortunately led to an identity crisis, particularly among the privileged Nubians who had previously seen themselves as a distinct, privileged group of Africans. These Nubians viewed themselves as non-natives and were not subject to native or customary laws, such as paying native taxes, engaging in community labor, or participating in agriculture. The integration of the Nubians with other native communities in Uganda, such as Buganda, meant that these privileged Nubians, who often identified as “Sudanese” and former British colonial soldiers, were required to forfeit all their privileges. They had to start paying native taxes, participate in community labor known as *luwalo*, and engage in agriculture if they settled in Buganda. The challenge facing the colonial office was how to persuade the Nubians to accept integration with other native communities without resistance.

In a series of meetings with their leaders, the Nubians were asked for their opinion on the integration plan for the first time in 1936.²² The privileged Nubians viewed the policy as a deliberate attempt by the colonial office to strip them of their privileges, which they perceived as an act of betrayal and marginalization orchestrated by the British. They felt that the colonial government was ungrateful and unjustifiably discarded them, despite their belief that they still served as a reserve force from which the British colonial government could rely on for military support whenever needed.²³ Some Nubians believed that the colonial policy of integration was a ploy by the colonial government to eliminate the Nubians by erasing their ethnic and cultural identity.²⁴ At times, the Nubians felt that their Islamic identity and culture were

threatened by the colonial government, which openly favored Christians. Despite these uncertainties and concerns about integration, the colonial government under Governor Mitchell continued to advance with the planned policy.

Mitchell, on behalf of the colonial government, undertook the task of persuading the King of Buganda to permit the division of crown land around Bombo into small plots. These plots were intended to be allocated by the king, or Kabaka, to deserving Nubians.²⁵ On their part, the Nubians would become landowners under the Buganda government, pledge allegiance to the Kabaka, and be subject to the authority of the Buganda government in matters of taxation and the judiciary.²⁶ The colonial office's decision to negotiate with the Kabaka to accept the Nubians as his subjects reinforced the fears previously expressed by the Nubians regarding the British intention to erase their identity. It also highlighted the colonial office's effort to make the Nubians subjects of the dominant native group. The integration plan thus became a colonial policy aimed at assimilating the Nubians into other native societies without recognizing them as an independent native community.

This integration created two classifications: the Baganda indigenes and the integrated Sudanese migrants, referred to as *Abasudani Abagwira*. Regardless of how many generations the *Abasudani Abagwira* lived among the Baganda indigenes, they were consistently identified as non-natives or strangers.²⁷ In 1989, members of the constitution commission held a consultative meeting at Bombo Secondary School to collect public opinions on key issues that were to be debated in the Constituent Assembly for potential inclusion in the anticipated Uganda Constitution of 1995.²⁸ A woman participant in her 60s opposed the inclusion of the Nubians as one of Uganda's indigenous communities, arguing that

²² Hansen, “Pre-colonial immigrants and colonial servants”: 573.

²³ Ibid; 576.

²⁴ Mahajubu, Abdul. “Identity, indigeneity, and citizenship: the Nubi ethnic minority in Uganda.” (PhD diss., Makerere University, 2021), 81.

²⁵ Hansen, “Pre-colonial immigrants and colonial servants”: 572.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Mamdani. *Define and rule: Native as political identity*: 71

²⁸ Mahajubu, “Identity, indigeneity, and citizenship”: 41

they were *Abasudani Abagwira*. She contended that, as such, the Nubians should neither be considered one of Uganda's indigenous communities nor be recognized as Uganda citizens.²⁹ For decades, Ugandan Nubians were treated as foreigners or *Abagwira* and faced discrimination.³⁰ The classification of the Nubians by some Baganda as Sudanese migrants and thus non-natives contrasts with how other Baganda viewed the Nubians as both Baganda natives and "migrant subjects" of the king. In a series of meetings involving the British colonial authorities, the king's officials, and some Nubian leaders, the Nubians agreed to adopt a native status and be integrated with other native societies as the only way to secure their stay in Uganda. Consequently, Nubians, especially those in Buganda, were henceforth regarded as Baganda natives, regardless of their Sudanic origin.

Some Nubians, however, continued to see themselves as non-natives from Sudan, hence Sudanese. Nevertheless, they faced the choice of either identifying themselves as natives of their host country, Uganda, or returning to their former country of origin, Sudan.³¹ Accepting native status meant that the Nubians were required to fulfill all native obligations, similar to other native societies, which included losing all the privileges they had enjoyed as British ex-servicemen. The Nubians found themselves caught between "a rock and a hard place," as many had left their former country of origin many years ago and could not return. Their only option was to accept becoming natives, which entailed meeting all native obligations, such as paying native taxes. This attempt to redefine and categorize the Nubians as Ugandan natives aligns with Mamdani's argument that, through the hegemonic agency of those competing for positions of advantage in the modern state, colonial societies were ultimately constructed based on ethnic inclinations.³² The

Nubian case was rather different; instead of solving their non-native Sudanic identity, the colonial authority deconstructed it and redefined them as part of the native Bantu communities. The aim of the colonial state was not to resolve the Nubian identity and settlement issues but rather to exert control over the colonially conquered territories through policies such as the introduction of the native law system among certain African societies. This created a "new" classification between natives and non-natives, with the intention of establishing a stronger colonial state.

By the 1940s, the Nubians, whether active British servicemen or ex-servicemen, along with all their dependants, had been classified as African natives by the British and were thus required to pay native taxes.³³ From the onset, some Nubians who continued to see themselves as a privileged non-native group contested this attempt. They refused to pay native taxes to the native authorities as mandated by the British colonial authority. These Nubians identified themselves as Sudanese immigrants and believed they should not be subjected to any tribal obligations.³⁴ Accepting to pay the native administration tax would not only mean relinquishing their Sudanic identity but also losing their colonial privileges.³⁵ The Nubians wished to preserve their non-native status quo. However, the British under Governor Mitchell considered them as African natives, given that they had settled in Africa since pre-colonial times.

Luwalo in Colonial Uganda

The financial bankruptcy faced by the Imperial British East African Company (IBEAC) in administering Uganda by 1893 led Britain to directly take over from IBEAC and declare Uganda a British Protectorate in 1894. This declaration occurred at a time when Uganda was grappling with significant political and economic

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Mahajubu Abudul, "From mercenaries to citizens: how the Nubians gained acceptance in Uganda" *The Conversation*, January 12, 2022, <https://theconversation.com/from-mercenaries-to-citizens-how-the-nubians-gained-acceptance-in-uganda-167725> (Accessed September 12, 2023)

³¹ Abudul, "Shifting Identity: A Historical Evolution of the Nubi Indigenous Ethnic Community in Uganda." 28.

³² Mamdani, 2012

³³ Hansen, "Pre-colonial immigrants and colonial servants": 572

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Abudul, "Identity, indigeneity, and citizenship": 53

challenges. The economy, primarily subsistence-based, was further strained by broken infrastructure related to communication and transport. When the British assumed control, they inherited a subsistence economy in which most households relied on subsistence production to meet their everyday needs for food, clothing, and shelter.³⁶ The takeover of Uganda as a British colony necessitated a shift from a subsistence to a cash economy. This transition was to be achieved by establishing a colonial administration system that would maintain law and order throughout Uganda and facilitate the implementation of colonial policies. These policies included the introduction of cash crop cultivation, the construction and maintenance of a transport network to connect inland areas with urban centers, and the implementation of taxes. The taxation policies created a compelling need for money among the natives to pay taxes such as poll tax and hut tax. This demand for tax payments stimulated the cash economy through the cultivation of cash crops and the provision of labor.³⁷ Besides Poll and Hut taxes, other forms of taxes included; hawker licenses, cattle branding taxes, bicycle registration taxes, land taxes, produce tribute taxes, and others.

The colonial authorities devised strategies to advance their economic agenda. Through invented traditions, Europeans relied on African chiefs to introduce and enforce some of these "invented" colonial policies among fellow Africans, often with rigidity and harshness. During the colonial period in Africa, Europeans utilized invented traditions to both co-opt and ideologically solidify certain Africans, such as chiefs, into leadership roles, and to redefine the relationships between Europeans and Africans.³⁸ In a similar way, colonialism was responsible for

invented traditions.³⁹ Some of the invented traditions in Uganda involved the introduction and enforcement of various forms of taxes, requiring both native Africans and immigrants to pay the colonial government either in cash or through labor. Specifically, for the system of *luwalo* in Uganda, the British administration heavily relied on the "modified" traditions of the Kingdom of Buganda. This approach was employed to legitimize the legal authority of the colonial state, reinforce the legitimacy of a parasitical class of comprador chiefs, and establish a socio-economic framework for extraction and labor exploitation.⁴⁰ British authorities heavily relied on the services and cooperation of the chiefs in administering the Protectorate. Simultaneously, the chiefs were beneficiaries of the colonial state, profiting from the heavy obligations placed on peasants, who were required to pay taxes both to the British and to the chiefs themselves.⁴¹

According to the Native Authority Ordinance of 1919, every African male between the ages of eighteen and forty-five residing in Uganda, including immigrants who had lived in the area for at least one year, was required to perform *luwalo*. This obligation included being called upon for maintenance work on roads, bridges, building chief's camps, and other various projects such as cultivating forestry nurseries and transporting chiefs.⁴² Although unpaid *luwalo* gained prominence in Buganda, especially following the signing of the 1900 Buganda Agreement between the British government and Buganda, it was also introduced in other regions of Uganda, such as Lango, Bugisu, and Teso. This system served as a means of providing "free" coercive labor for maintaining infrastructure.⁴³ In a lengthy discussion with the sub-county chief of Kyadondo *Mutuba III* at his office, which also housed a

³⁶ Jamal, Vali. "Taxation and inequality in Uganda, 1900–1964." *The Journal of Economic History* 38, no. 2 (1978): 418.

³⁷ Jamal. "Taxation and inequality in Uganda, 1900–1964": 420.

³⁸ Okia, Opolot. "Virtual Abolition: The Economic Lattice of Luwalo Forced Labor in the Uganda Protectorate." *African Economic History* 45, no. 2 (2017): 61.

³⁹ Carola, Lentz. "Tribalism and ethnicity in Africa," cited in Thomas Spear, "Neo- traditionalism and the limits of

invention in British colonial Africa." *The Journal of African History*, no. 1 (2003): 19

⁴⁰ Opolot, "Virtual Abolition": 62.

⁴¹ Phares, Mutibwa, Mukasa. *A History of Uganda: The First 100 Years, 1894-1995*. (Kampala: Fountain Publishers, 2016): 70.

⁴² Opolot, "Virtual Abolition": 62.

⁴³ Ibid.

native court where the Nubian protesters were tried and sentenced, the chief narrated in Luganda (a native language spoken by the Baganda of central Uganda) that:

*Mu Buganda nemubitundu ebirala enfuga yamatwale weyabuuna, buli muntu yalina okukola oluwalo okusinzira ku kitundu ekimusalidwa omwami wa Kabaka. Mwalimu okulima engudo, ekuyonja enzizzi n'kwerula ebibira. Obatyanga okuswala, bapangisanga abavu okubakolera, ate abaami ebisera ebimu bawangayo bakyala babwe n'abaana abavubuse. Tewaliwo muntu kugaana nadala abbo abaganda oba abasenga mu Buganda. Era nga Oluwalo lwakolwanga mu bibinja era ekyokukola kinomu kya tangiwa nga. Abagana okukola oluwalo, balonkomwanga basajja bakabaka obomuluka olwo nebakwatibwa oluvanyuma ne batwalibwa ku gombolola mu kooti okuwoozesebwa. Abasingisibwa omusango omulamuzi yabasalira ebanga egere mu nkomyo mu komera, oba okuwa omutango ate abandi nebayisibwamu owembuya mulujjudde wadde nga waliwo nabob ajerezebwa.*⁴⁴

Translation:

In Buganda and in other parts of Uganda where colonialism was entrenched. Every person was supposed to carry out community obligations assigned to him by the chief. These included; clearing pathways, cleaning wells, and clearing forests. Those rich individuals that felt ashamed to work hired the poor to work for them while the husbands sometimes sent their wives and older children to do community labour. No one had a right to object to community labour especially among the Baganda or those who lived in Buganda. Community labour was performed in groups. Working individually was discouraged and prohibited. Those who refused to offer community labour were reported by the parish chiefs and were arrested and then taken to the sub-county native courts for a hearing. For those that

were found guilty, the presiding judge would sentence them to a maximum period in prison, and pay fines while others were publicly flogged. Those, however, that were found not guilty, were exonerated.

The narrative above demonstrates that regardless of whether one was a Muganda or not, anyone living in Buganda was required to contribute commutative labor. Wealthy individuals who felt their status was diminished often hired the poor to perform *luwalo* on their behalf. Conversely, husbands sent their wives and young children to work to avoid being reported by the parish chief (*Omwami w'omuluka*) to the sub-county chief (*Omwami w'gombolola*). *Luwalo* defaulters were arrested by the sub-county chief and brought before the sub-county court for prosecution in native courts, which were presided over by the chiefs themselves. Native courts adjudicated civil cases up to a certain monetary limit and criminal cases, except for those involving the death penalty.⁴⁵ The punishments for *luwalo* defaulters ranged from maximum imprisonment and payment of fines to public flogging. *Luwalo* was carried out communally in groups for a specified period determined by the sub-county chief. Depending on the location, *luwalo* workers might perform the labor all at once, within a thirty-day period, or in small increments throughout the year.⁴⁶ Abscondment from *luwalo* was particularly discouraged in Buganda, as it was perceived as a sign of disloyalty and disobedience to the king, or the *Kabaka*.⁴⁷ The obedience and loyalty to the king were demonstrated by the king's chiefs through the coercive enforcement of *luwalo*, and by the subjects of the king participating in it. With the British colonial authority's demand for forced labor, *luwalo* in Buganda became a model of native community coercive labor that was subsequently introduced into other colonial provinces in northern, eastern, and western Uganda.

The 1940 'Luwalo' Protests

⁴⁴ Musa Musoke, Ssemambo. *Interview*, Makindye, Kampala, 28, October, 2022

⁴⁵ Opolot. "Virtual Abolition: 61.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Musa Musoke, Ssemambo. *Interview*, Makindye, Kampala, 28, October, 2022

On January 26, 1939, John Wellesley Stell, the District Commissioner of Mengo, announced on behalf of the Protectorate government that all Nubians residing in Buganda were obligated to pay the Poll tax and *luwalo* (Commutation tax) to the Buganda government.⁴⁸ In 1940, the District Commissioner of Kampala called eight Nubians to his office to inform them of the colonial office's decision that they were required to pay *luwalo* and meet all tax obligations demanded by the Buganda Native Authority. The Nubian representatives opposed the payment of *luwalo*, arguing that it was an attempt to force them to show allegiance to the Buganda Native Authority. They contended that they were integral members of the British colonial government, and their contributions should not be overlooked.⁴⁹

In July, a sub-county chief, also known as 'Omwami w' Gombolola Mutuba Esatu' (Mut. III), who was the legally appointed tax collector of Poll tax and *luwalo*, arrested four Nubians who had refused to pay these taxes. The Nubians were tried and convicted by the 'Gombolola' court in Makindye, a sub-county in Uganda. Influenced by their leader, Fadimullah Effendi, a large group of Nubians gathered outside the police station in Kampala and attempted to prevent the four convicted Nubians from being taken to prison. As a result, forty-four Nubians were arrested, later convicted, and sentenced to one year of imprisonment with hard labor for rioting.⁵⁰ The arrest and imprisonment of the Nubians, along with their demonstration, were confirmed and reported in the Luganda newspaper *Matalisi* in July 1940. The headline story, "*Okwedima Kwa'aba-Nubi mu Kampala*," translates to "The Demonstration of the Nubi in Kampala" in English.⁵¹ According to *Matalisi*, the primary cause of the Nubian demonstration was the British government's directive that Nubians, like other

natives, were to be subjected to native laws and required to pay native taxes.

Specifically, Nubians residing in Buganda were instructed to pay taxes to the Buganda government. If they refused, they were expected to return to their countries of origin.⁵² Some of the Nubians objected to the tax policy, refusing to pay both the poll tax and contribute to the *luwalo*. They argued that they were not natives and thus did not qualify to pay native taxes. With their arrest by native authorities, other Nubians demonstrated to express their dissatisfaction against the colonial government and the Baganda native authorities. This resistance spread to areas like Kololo, an upscale neighborhood in Kampala, and the Eastern Province. In the Eastern Province, notable Nubians who refused to pay native taxes included Mohamad Bilal, a cultivator, along with Doka Abdallah, Ahamed Lako, and Juma Marazan, all tailors.⁵³ Like the eight Nubians who met with the District Commissioner and rejected the notion of tax payment, the Nubian demonstrators also claimed they were not natives and thus did not qualify to pay taxes. They viewed the payment of both poll taxes and *luwalo* as an act of "betrayal" by the British, who had recruited them as Imperial British soldiers after agreeing with Frederick Lugard in 1891 that the Nubian soldiers would be paid, clothed, and resettled together with their dependents.

On July 17, 1940, the office premises of the District Commissioner of Mengo were besieged by a large number of Nubian women. They openly demanded the immediate release of their husbands, who had been arrested by the colonial authorities for allegedly rioting against the payment of native taxes.⁵⁴ The Nubian women threatened and cursed the colonial authorities for unjustly imprisoning their husbands.⁵⁵ On the

⁴⁸John Wellesley Stell the District Commissioner Mengo, "Affidavit regarding Fadimulla Effendi, sworn before E.T James on 17th day of October 1940." C.1923/531/National Records Centre and Achieve, Wandegaya, Kampala.

⁴⁹ Anonymous. "Okwekalakasa Kwa Banubi." *Matalisi*, July 19, 1940: 10.

⁵⁰ John Wellesley Stell. C.1923/531/NRCA.

⁵¹ Anonymous. "Okwekalakasa Kwa Banubi." *Matalisi*, July 19, 1940: 10.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³ The District Commissioner's office Budama, Tororo, "Letter to the Provincial Commissioner eastern province 6th, November 1935." C. 11, National Records Centre and Achieve, Wandegaya, Kampala.

⁵⁴ Anonymous. "Nubian Riot In Kampala; Luwalo Tax Causes Trouble." *Uganda Herald*, July, 24, 1940

⁵⁵ Anonymous. "Fresh Nubian Demonstration at D.C's Office." *Uganda Herald*, July, 24, 1940

orders of the District Commissioner of Mengo, the protesting Nubian women were also arrested and imprisoned at Luzira Maximum Prison. During my doctoral study on the historical evolution of the Nubians as an ethnic minority in Uganda, it was revealed that on July 16, 1940, some fifty to sixty Nubians were remanded and imprisoned at Luzira Maximum Prison for refusing to pay the Commutation Tax, which was fixed at ten shillings in exchange for their communal labor.⁵⁶ The Nubians in Kololo, a suburb of Kampala, protested against what they saw as an unjust arrest by the colonial police. This demonstration was likely driven by frustration and a desire for justice, reflecting broader tensions and grievances within the community regarding colonial policies and practices.

The Nubians in Kololo near Kampala protested against the *Luwalo* tax by refusing to pay it. When some were arrested for defaulting, the situation escalated into a demonstration. The unrest was contained through careful management, leading to several arrests, including of Nubian women who supported the men. Despite the suppression of the disturbances, there was ongoing concern about potential future issues, particularly if opportunities for discussion arose. However, it was considered unlikely that the Nubians would abandon their current way of life to return to their ancestral lands.⁵⁷

Khaleel Marjan, a Nubian elder, recounted how his late father and other Nubians disrupted a courtroom in Makindye Kyadondo to obstruct the trial of their fellow Nubians. These individuals had been arrested by the sub-county chief of Kyadondo for refusing to pay the *Luwalo* tax. Marjan highlighted that this action was the start of the demonstration in Makindye, not in Mengo, as some reports had indicated. He stressed this point in the Nubi language, underscoring the significance of Makindye as the actual origin of the protest;

*Morohum Yaba tai ma nas Nubi tanin ruwa ladi fi koti ta Buganda fi Makindye. Sabab al sulmon kan ta amurugu akwana tomon Nubi fi jela. Kan amusuk umon fi sababu gal umon aba so kidima ta Kabaka[sic] ukaman umon aba lipa sente ta Luwalo [sic] shilingi kamstashar. Ana gikumbuka yomu Yaba aki nena gal nas Muganda ja kelem nomon gal umon fi nas Muganda ma Nubi isan umon gen fi tura ta Kabaka [sic], fi isan wede umon biso kila sokol al Kabaka bi hukumon kede omon so bila abba. Kan umon abba yala komon arija fi bele tomon ta Sudan kan mafi bi amusukumon yala wedi umon fi jela. De ya sabab abu kutu yaba tai ma Nubi tanin aba kalama te kidima ta Luwalo gal umon Nubi ma Muganda. Umon amsuku sika ladi fi koti ta Kabaka ta Makindye. Fi koti umon asadu sabab ta amsuku akwana tomon yala umon kan ma Muganda. Koti ja yegif lad akwana tomon Nubi sulumon fi jela ta Luzira. Nubi ta safa barau barau ruwa lad fi office te DC fi Mengo asaduwo kowa amurugu[sic] akwana tomon Nubi fi jela. Ya kalama wede ja abidu fi Makindye ma fi Mengo.*⁵⁸

Translation:

Nubians including my late father stormed the Buganda court in Makindye to rescue their colleagues who had been arrested by the Baganda chiefs for disobeying the Kabaka by refusing to work or pay *Luwalo* tax of 15 shillings to the Kabaka. I remember my father telling us that the Baganda forced them to be Baganda since they were occupants of Kabaka's land hence they had to do everything the Kabaka commanded them to do including working by force or go back to their country Sudan if not they would be arrested and jailed. It was for this reason that the Nubians refused to pay *Luwalo* including my late father arguing that they were Nubians and not Baganda. At the court, the session was suspended and the Nubian prisoners were rushed to prison at Luzira. Nubians from different areas stormed the DCs in

⁵⁶Abdul, "Identity, indigeneity, and citizenship": 42.

⁵⁷The Hon'ble, the chief sec. Entebbe, 7th/ August / 1947, C. 1923.V, National Records Centre and Achieve, Wandegaya, Kampala

⁵⁸ Khaleel Marjan, *Interview*, Wabigalo, Kampala, 13 October 2022

Mengo demanding the release of their colleagues from jail. The incident, therefore, began in Makindye and not in Mengo.

According to the narrative, the Nubians seemed unaware that the *Luwalo* tax was imposed on both natives and all emigrants who settled in Buganda, regardless of their origin. Those who were unable to provide the tax in kind were required to contribute ten shillings in monetary terms. Some Nubians resisted, arguing that the tax forced them to assimilate into Baganda customs and submit to the orders of the Kabaka. They accused the Kabaka's chiefs of coercion, arresting them and jailing them for non-compliance, and were frequently told to return to their home country, Sudan, if they could not follow the Kabaka's orders.

The Nubians also claimed that the colonial authorities colluded with the Buganda native government to enforce the *Luwalo* tax on them, despite their role in helping the British maintain law and order as colonial soldiers in East Africa. Musisi Fred, reflecting on Buganda's relations with the Nubians in the 1940s, pointed out that a few Nubians protested against the colonial and native authorities. At that time, protests were seen by many Africans as a primary method to express grievances to the colonial government. Musisi noted that the British and their loyalists in the 1940s were particularly responsive to protests. However, not all Nubians joined in the *Luwalo* protests; many complied with the king's labor orders, considering themselves subjects of the Kabaka, and engaged in the required community obligations. He emphasised;

The Banubi [sic] though not all, considered themselves as kings' men and the king of Buganda also considered the Banubi [sic] as the king's subjects. That explains why Kabaka Dawudi Chwa [sic] even appointed some Banubi [sic] as sub-county chiefs. For this reason [sic], they were considered as Baganda living in Buganda hence they were supposed to work together with the rest of

Baganda. This, however, never meant that the Banubi were forced to denounce their Sudanic identity. They were to remain with their Nubiness [sic] so long as they paid allegiance to the Kabaka of Buganda [sic]. A section of them vowed not to pay allegiance to the Kabaka by refusing to perform Luwalo. They were arrested by the chiefs and jailed. Their kinsmen then stormed the District Commissioners' office in Mengo and demanded the immediate release of their colleagues. They were, however, repulsed by the colonial police while some were arrested for causing unwarranted disturbances.⁵⁹

The participant's assertion indicates that the Buganda government did not intentionally seek to compel the Nubians to renounce their identity. Instead, the expectation was for the Nubians to pledge allegiance to the Kabaka of Buganda. While some Nubians viewed themselves as part of the native community and were regarded by the king as "his men," others resisted this view. They argued that they were not natives but rather a more civilized, urban expatriate community. This distinction highlighted a tension between their self-perception and the expectations imposed by the local authorities.⁶⁰ Some Nubians perceived the Buganda government's attempt, supported by the British colonial authorities, to make them contribute to the *Luwalo* tax as an effort to impose a native status on them. They believed this was part of a broader scheme by both Buganda and the British colonial government to economically exploit them through forced labor. This perception of exploitation fueled their resistance and highlighted the deep-seated tensions between their self-identity and the colonial and native authorities' demands.

The feeling of resentment among the Nubians was echoed through the words of a Nubian elder and an advisor on Nubi cultural matters Mustafah Khemis. He stated;

"Nas Muganda me akwana tomon British [sic] so kalama tomon ta ayinu Nubi kulu

⁵⁹ Musisi Fred, *Interview*, Kakeeka, Mengo, Kampala, 11 November 2022.

⁶⁰ Jamal, Vali. "Taxation and inequality in Uganda, 1900–1964: .420.

kekun Muganda ma fi niyaba al Kuwes, lakin kan umon aju historiya ta Nubi me kabila to ke woduru lakin Nubi ja abba”⁶¹

Translation. “The Baganda and their friends the British did everything in their means to make sure that the Nubians become Baganda. This was not well-intentioned but rather wanted the them to lose their history and culture which some Nubians objected.”

The protesting Nubians viewed the attempt to classify them as natives not as a gesture of goodwill by Buganda and the colonial government, but rather as an attempt to erase their identity and history. They believed that the *Luwalo* tax was not just a means of labor exploitation but a colonial policy aimed at undermining their status as a more civilized African community that had supported British colonialism in East Africa. To them, forcing the Nubians to perform *Luwalo* was perceived as an act of "betrayal" by the British, reflecting deep-seated resentment and a sense of being unfairly targeted.

Women and the Protests

The role of Nubian women in the 1940 *Luwalo* tax protests was crucial, yet their contributions have often been overlooked in discussions about their struggle for ethnic and cultural recognition in Uganda. Scholars such as Holger Bernt Hansen, Bari Wanji, Mahajubu Abudul, and Mark Leopold, who have explored Nubian history, have generally neglected the significance of Nubian women's roles in shaping this history, both in Uganda and East Africa. Despite this oversight, Nubian women actively participated in the protests and engaged in various activities alongside the men, demonstrating their central role in the community's resistance and historical narrative. In a conversation with a Nubian elder at his residence in Arua the West Nile region of Uganda he noted that

“If you tell the Nubian history and you don't include Nubian women, then, that would be distorted history and a de-service to the Nubian community.”

Another elder interviewed in *Entebbe-Kitubulu* village also known as the “Nubian village” remarked:

Who would buy tobacco and prepare it, ready to be enjoyed by men if it were not for Nubian women? Who composed war songs to morale-boost the Nubi men during war? Who protected homes when the men were away? Who knitted torn-out cotton uniforms of the Nubian men? The answer to all those questions I have posed to you was simple; it was we the Nubian women!

Despite the lack of detailed literature on Nubian women's roles in Nubian history, they were key figures in shaping the community's identity and history. In the 1890s, Nubian women played a vital role in agriculture, growing cotton for military uniforms and cultivating tobacco, a key item for smoking. They supplemented this with cassava and maize for flour. According to Yazeed Sebi, they also contributed to salt mining at Lake Katwe in western Uganda, where they traded salt for commodities like dried fish with the Bamba of Kasese. Their contributions were crucial to the economic and cultural life of the Nubian community.⁶² Throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Nubian women were deeply involved in brewing local ‘*war gin*’, known as ‘*waragi*,’ which was popular among Nubian soldiers. When their men were not on active military duty, they occasionally assisted the women in this endeavor.

Additionally, some Nubian women accompanied the men on military expeditions, taking on roles such as cooks, brewers, head porters, and morale boosters through singing and drumming. They also served as caretakers, highlighting their multifaceted contributions to both domestic life and military activities. With urbanization brought

⁶¹ Mustafah Khemis, *Interview*, Mpakawero, Bombo, Luwero District, 2, December, 2022

⁶² Yazeed Sebi, *Interview*, Fort Portal, Kabarole, 14, November, 2022

about by the construction of the Uganda Railway, Nubian women became active petty traders in the new towns that emerged, working alongside their men. In July 1940, after their husbands were arrested for refusing to perform the *Luwalo* tax, Nubian women took decisive action by marching to the District Commissioner's office in Mengo. They demanded the immediate release of their husbands, demonstrating their assertiveness and collective agency in addressing the injustices faced by their community.⁶³ Irritated by the commotion caused by the Nubian women, the District Commissioner ordered the colonial police to remove them from the premises. In response, the women took a drastic step by stripping to their waists, exposing their upper bodies in public. This act of defiance was perceived as "immoral" by the DC, who then ordered their immediate arrest, treating them in the same manner as their husbands. Consequently, the Nubian women were also imprisoned at Luzira Maximum Prison.⁶⁴

While the action by the Nubian women might have been labeled as "immoral" by colonial authorities, it also highlighted their courage and resolve. The women's protest was a powerful statement of their dissatisfaction with the colonial government, whom they accused of betraying their husbands, who had faithfully served the British colonial administration. The demonstration underscored their determination to defend their Nubian identity. The Nubian women believed that both the colonial and Buganda native governments were engaged in a scheme to assimilate them into Baganda society by forcing their husbands to pay the *Luwalo* tax and pledge allegiance to the king of Buganda. This resistance was not only a fight against specific policies but also a broader struggle to maintain their cultural and ethnic identity.

The Nubians' resistance to being categorized as a native group under the Buganda Native Authority exemplifies a broader pattern of African responses to colonial rule, highlighting a refusal to accept

imposed identities and administrative categorizations. This opposition reflects the agency of African societies in actively challenging colonial policies that sought to reconfigure their identities and control their lives. In the case of the Nubians, their resistance underscores the importance of recognizing African agency as a dynamic force in negotiating and contesting colonial authority. It illustrates how African communities, rather than passively accepting colonial impositions, engaged in deliberate and strategic actions to preserve their cultural identities and assert their autonomy.

Conclusion

The 1940 *Luwalo* tax protests by a section of the Nubian community in Buganda are emblematic of how British colonial policies in Uganda contributed to identity restructuring, leading to significant ethnic tension and uncertainties among marginalized communities. The Nubians who protested against the *Luwalo* tax demonstrated a strong desire to protect and preserve their 'Nubiness' rather than being compelled by both the colonial state and the collaborating native authorities, such as the Buganda government, to adopt native obligations through forced assimilation.

The refusal of some Nubians in 1940 to perform the *Luwalo* tax or pay a commutation fee of 10 shillings showed their willingness to endure hardships and even imprisonment to safeguard their Nubian identity. Despite the colonial media's attempts to downplay the protests as minor riots by a few 'rebellious' individuals, the actions of the Nubians revealed their deep commitment to maintaining their cultural identity. The imprisonment of the Nubians by the colonial state highlighted how colonial governments adapted or supported certain traditional laws to serve their own objectives. This manipulation led to the eruption of identity and gender-related tensions

⁶³ Abdul, "Identity, indigeneity, and citizenship": 23.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

among the marginalized Nubian community in the 1940s.

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This article is an expansive comprehensive historical analysis of the Nubian *luwalo* tax riots in Buganda in the 1940s. The Nubian tax riot was briefly mentioned in my Makerere University-Gerda Henkel funded Doctoral thesis on Identity, Indigeneity and Citizenship of the Nubi. A brief analysis of the *luwalo* riots formed a basis for my motivation into further research over the same tax protests. The article hence is a detailed Post-Doc output of the 1940 Nubian *luwalo* tax riot, fully funded by African Humanities Program (AHP) under the American Council of Learned Society.