

Empire, Religious Conflicts, and State intervention in Buha and Unyamwezi, Colonial Tanganyika, 1920s-1960

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Abstract

This article uses western Tanganyika (formerly, part of colonial Tanganyika) as a case study to examine issues of empire, religious conflicts, and state intervention. As missionaries spread the Christian faith, tensions became apparent between Catholics and Protestants in colonial Tanganyika. The British colonial authorities kept a close eye on the activities of missionaries to end religious conflicts. In some areas, Catholic and Protestant missionaries reached informal agreements to maintain 'religious spheres of influence.' The current article draws on archival and secondary records to examine the creation of religious spheres of evangelisation and their consequences. It also explores Catholic-Protestant rivalries and resulting government interventions to deal with the work of missionaries in western Tanganyika.

Keywords: Empire, religious conflicts, state intervention, Buha and Unyamwezi.

Introduction

This article examines imperial designs, religious conflicts and colonial state intervention in Buha and Unyamwezi within a specific historical period of colonisation, from the 1920s to 1960. I intend to show that as missionaries endeavoured to spread the Christian faith, and upon their exercise of authority within the British Empire in colonial Tanganyika, Catholic and Protestant rivalries triggered several problems amongst missionaries that called for state intervention. The British colonial state was keen to do so, and, in most instances, regulated missionaries' imperial ambitions with an eye to bring to end religious contention that had become apparent in the area. On the basis of archival and secondary sources, this article examines three issues. Firstly, it looks into the creation of mission fields and its consequences. Secondly, by looking into ideas about empire, religious conflicts, and state intervention, it considers the thorny question of land. Finally, the article explores how the colonial authorities responded to the activities of missionaries in this part of colonial Tanganyika.

Historians have approached the issue of religion and empire with varying viewpoints. Andrew Porter, Norman Etherington, John Stuart, and Jeffrey Cox are a few historians whose works have delved into these matters (Cox, 2002; Porter, 2003; Etherington, 2005). Nonetheless, religion and empire still present an ongoing formidable challenge in Tanzanian historical scholarship. There is seemingly a lack of interest in the matter among Tanzanian historians, due to the dominance of nationalist and materialist traditions which have dictated knowledge production for more than forty years. The two paradigms were concerned with the discovery of "African initiatives" in economies and politics and, consequently turned their backs on issues of religion. Such a trend still affects

the production of historical knowledge at Dar es Salaam as religion, with exception of a few studies, remains of marginal significance among Tanzanian historians (Kimambo & Ranger, 1972; Spear & Kimambo, 1999). As Norman Etherington contends, the neglect of religion in historical inquiries marginalised religious investigations because religion was considered to be inseparable from colonialism (Etherington, 1983:117-118; Sheriff, 2010: 24). This study brings issues of religion and empire into the historiography of religion in Tanzania as a topic that is worth investigating. By treating together Catholic and Protestant missionaries, the article seeks to show how the idea of empire constituted a contested and negotiated terrain between missionaries and the British officials in colonial Tanganyika.

I use the term 'Buha' in this article to mean a region in the present-day Kigoma administrative region. The majority inhabitants of Buha are the Ha ethnic group (Grant, 1925: 411). Buha consisted of six independent chiefdoms in both the pre-colonial and colonial periods. These were: Heru-Bushingo, Nkalinzi, Nkanda-Luguru, Buyungu and Muhambwe, Heru being the largest and most populous (Grant, 1925: 412; Scherer, 1959: 844; Mbwiliza, 1974: 5). I also use the term 'Unyamwezi' to refer to the territory that lies in the present Tabora administrative region where the dominant ethnic group is the Nyamwezi. Other ethnic groups include the Kimbu, Konongo and Sumbwa (Abrahams, 1967a: 12-13; 1967b: 1-8; Shorter, 1972: 2). Like Buha, Unyamwezi had by the nineteenth and twentieth centuries developed many chiefdoms; Unyanyembe was the largest and most populous chiefdom throughout the nineteenth century except in the 1860s and 1870s, when it was challenged by *Mtemi Mirambo* (Abrahams, 1967b: 28-36; Salaita, 1975: ii).

Missionaries, Empire, and Western Tanganyika in Historical Scholarship

Buha and Unyamwezi in colonial Tanganyika received missionary societies of diverse nationalities and religious backgrounds and orientations. In Buha, the first missionary group to venture into the region was the German Protestant Breklum Mission. However, after the First World War, that society left the region and another German Missionary Society, the Lutheran *Neurkirchen Mission*, took over its buildings (Scherer, 1959: 844). Other missionary societies in Buha included the Catholic White Fathers (Missionaries of Africa), White Sisters (Missionary Sisters of Our Lady of Africa), Church Missionary Society (CMS), and Swedish Free Mission (Nolan, 1978: 17; 2012; Kakete, et al., 1985: 14; Malishi, 1987: 127; Paulhus, 1994; van de Pas, 2010: 16). After the Second World War, the Medical Missionaries of Mary, and missionaries of the Seventh-Day Adventists began their work in Buha, making them the last missionary societies to extend their mission into the region during the colonial period (Scherer, 1959: 899). In Unyamwezi, the earliest religious institutions were the White Fathers (missionaries of Africa), missionaries of the Church Missionary Society, the Congregational London Missionary Society (LMS), and Moravian missionaries. The Swedish Free Mission and Salvation Army began their work in the region in the later decades of the twentieth century (Bennett, 1966: 52; Nolan, 1978: 17; Hamilton, 1983: 609; Musomba, 2005: 83; Merrit, 2006: 577).

One of the reasons behind the influx of religious institutions in Buha and Unyamwezi was the quest for religious spheres of evangelisation. For the White Fathers and the White Sisters, Cardinal Charles Lavigerie's initial motive for founding the two societies was to evangelise the heart of

Africa to make the interior a “specialised ministry.” (Nolan, 1978: 17; Malishi, 1987: 127; Ceillier, 2008: 224-225; 2011: 15). For the Moravians it was their desire to expand their influence in western Tanganyika to unite Unyamwezi with the Nyasa Province into one strong African Moravian Church. In so doing, they wanted to create the strongest mission field stretching from Lake Victoria to Lake Nyasa (Hamilton, 1983: 574). Missionaries of the London Missionary Society and Church Missionary Society established mission stations largely in response to David Livingstone’s letters and reports that, among other things, called for Christianisation, commerce, civilisation, and the abolition of slavery and slave trade in the interior of Africa (Hastings, 1996: 255).

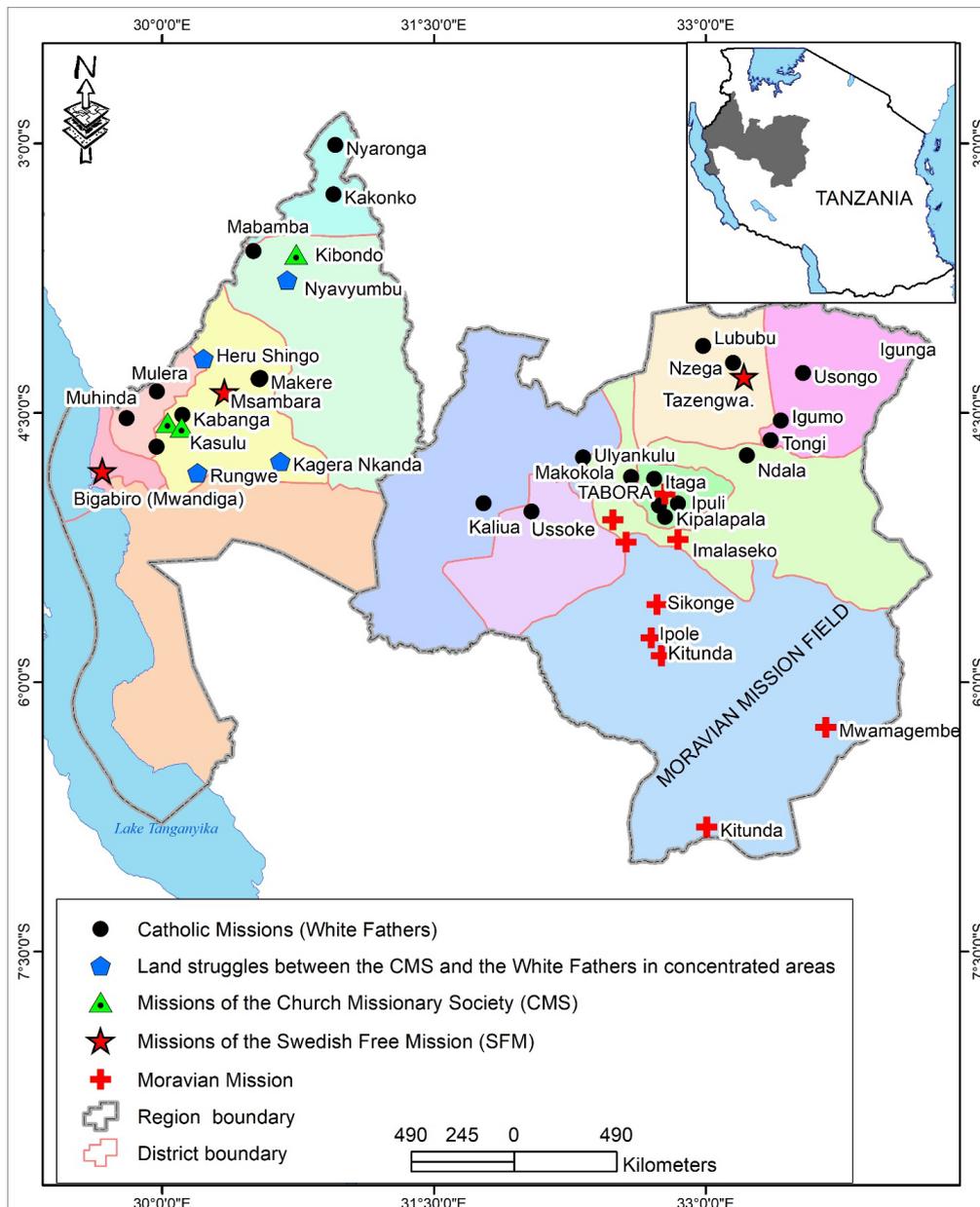
It is worth noting that ideas about Christianity, commerce and civilisation gained momentum in the nineteenth century during the heyday of Europeans’ territorial expansion. But this notion has now fallen out of favour in scholarship to demonstrate relations between Empire and Christianity. Andrew Porter’s work provides an example of the rise and fall of this nineteenth-century slogan that initially saw Christianity and commerce as inseparable entities in the sense that the spread of Christianity was associated with the economic motives of imperialism (Porter, 1985: 597). Incidentally, the expanding missionary movements of the nineteenth century were due to the influence of the debate about civilisation and improvement of the conditions of non-European peoples (Stanley, 2003: 599-600). Porter further contends that not all missionaries supported the relationship between Christianity and commerce. Drawing examples from India, he shows that there was no relationship between Christianity and commerce. Even the Evangelical missionaries, whose influence was felt among Indians, argued that commerce did nothing to improve India during the escapades of the East India Company (Porter, 1985: 601-604).

Porter’s analysis of the rise and fall of the slogan of Christianity and commerce reminds us that these two phenomena were not at all related, and not all missionaries supported the dichotomous links between Christianity and commerce. Apart from the mismatch in the terms and lack of support from all missionaries, we also learn that relations between the British Empire and Protestant missionaries were not static but dynamic, changing, as they did, in response to social contexts. While the two enjoyed friendly relations throughout the nineteenth century, the change was apparent during the nationalist struggles for independence in Africa and India. We learn from the work of John Stuart that there were changing relations between the British Empire and Protestant missionaries during the quest for independence in Africa, as missionaries became less relevant in comparison with the era of imperial penetration (Stuart, 2011: 24, 193, 130-169). Drawing on examples from India, Chandra Mallampalli shows how Indian nationalists defended Hinduism against the influence of British missionaries and against the “Christian nation” (Mallampalli, 2003: 159). While acknowledging the contributions made by Andrew Porter, John Stuart, and Chandra Mallampalli to studies of religion and empire, a lot more need to be said about religious spheres of influence, religious conflicts and state intervention. Resting on the shoulders of these works, this article treats religious conflicts from the standpoint of missionaries’ project of establishing their own areas of interest within the British Empire in colonial Tanganyika.

A central question that has dominated scholarship on religion and empire is whether missionaries were part of the colonial enterprise or operated independently from colonial imperatives. Upon

unmasking the question of imperialism and missionaries, Cox has argued that missionaries were simply imperialists. Even if they were seen differently, it is because they were either marginal or worse (Beidelman, 1982: 6; Comaroff, 1991: 1997; Said, 1994; Cox, 2002: 10-12). But Cox is cautious of the Saidian approach [of anti-imperialist unmasking of the neutral and universal western forms of scholarship] considering whether it is possible to address the relationship between western imperialism and religion without becoming entangled in binary constructions that have dominated scholarship in the past. By becoming scholars, John and Jean Comaroff assert, such a project would be part of the imperialist project. Apart from the imperialistic nature of missionaries, Cox also presents the two faces of missionaries - that many missionaries managed to be both racist and anti-racist simultaneously (Cox, 2002: 11-16, 95-99).

Map 1: Catholic and Protestant Missions in Buha and Unyamwezi, 1920s-1960



In God’s Empire: Missionaries, Land Conflicts, and State Intervention in Buha and Unyamwezi

White Fathers and Church Missionary Society in Buha

Acquisition of land was one of the key sectors in which missionaries could exert their imperial ambitions in western Tanganyika. Both the White Fathers and CMS missionaries endeavoured to create their own spheres of evangelisation by claiming large areas of land for spiritual, health, and education purposes. Land conflicts became noticeable in Buha when the CMS desired to establish missions in 1934. Before that, land conflicts had not taken their own course because the White Fathers had no rivals in Buha. The absence of rival missionary societies made the White Fathers enjoy favour from the British colonial state on matters of land. However, following the increasing desire of land for mission stations in Buha, British officials began to closely monitor the activities of missionaries. The Provincial Commissioner of Western Province, F. J. Bagshawe, was hesitant whether he should allow or reject missionaries' entry into Buha. He expressed his worries to the Chief Secretary of the Tanganyika territory, arguing that he could not solve the missionary problem alone, saying "... there remains to be settled the questions whether the Church Missionary Society is to be persuaded or prevented from entering Buha, and I have already informed you that for several reasons, I do not want to settle this myself." Bagshawe was determined to avoid overlapping missionary interests at the newly inhabited areas of Nyavyumbu, Kagera, Heru-Ushingo and Rungwe and in areas where the White Fathers had already established themselves (TNA 180/C32 Vol.1/No. 43/39/22, 3/1/1934).

In comparison to the CMS missionaries, the White Fathers had already established "bush" schools, religious schools, a few middle schools, and a few dispensaries and health centres in Buha. Besides school and hospital establishments, the White Fathers won a commendable reputation in mastering the language of the inhabitants—Kiha—and their customs. For instance, the second bishop of the apostolic of Tanganyika-Bishop Jan van Sambeek-stressed to his missionaries that they ought to be conversant in the Kiha language. He himself produced for his missionary books about beliefs and customs of the Baha, Kiha grammar, and a Kiha Catechism, to mention but a few materials (van Sambeek, 1949; 1954). Another reason for the widespread influence of the White Fathers was the fact that the chiefs of Buha, including *Mwami* Joseph Ndalichako Gwassa of the most populous chiefdom of Heru, had already been converted into Catholicism. These factors demonstrate an indubitable fact that the presence of the CMS in Buha challenged the White Fathers' sphere of influence in the region. The Acting Governor, Mr. Woodhouse, noted such as fear, and, accordingly, reported about the plans of Rev. Bakewell and other CMS missionaries to bring into Buha two brand new church army men from England to compete with the White Fathers (TNA 180/C 32 Vol 1/No. 43/39/22, 3/1/1934).

To avoid escalating tensions between the White Fathers and CMS missionaries in Buha, the Provincial Commissioner suggested three issues to consider in dealing with the two missionary societies. First, he did not allow Rev. Backewell to open mission stations in areas where the White Fathers had already set up mission stations, schools, and dispensaries/hospitals. Instead, the CMS were supposed to establish missions in areas where the influence of the White Fathers was almost negligible (TNA 180/C 32 Vol 1/No. 43/39/22, 3/1/1934). Second, the Provincial Commissioner ordered land officers to rely on the land law to deal with land cases to prevent mission rivalry in areas where chiefs and the people did not wish the appearance of an additional mission. Finally, he suggested that

land officers should give priority to the White Fathers' applications over the CMS when the two expressed interest in opening up missions in one area. The reason was that the White Fathers had already expressed their interests over many areas in Buha before the CMS showed up (TNA 180/C 32, Vol. 1/No. 43/39/29, 12/2/1934).

As far as the idea of "religious empire" is concerned, the White Fathers, in comparison to other missionaries of Buha, had by the 1930s already carved the area into their own "specialised ministry." In cognizance of the influence of the White Fathers in Kibondo, the British colonial officials attempted to maintain their interests over the CMS. However, in areas such as Kasulu, where the influence of the White Fathers was not so strong, and the colonial state gave priority to the CMS missionaries because they had already established themselves in the town. For example, in 1935, Fr. Pineau and Br. Emile wanted to open a mission station at Kimobwa near the District headquarters.

Nevertheless, the British colonial state did not honour the White Father's desire to establish a mission station at Kimobwa because the CMS missionaries had already established their mission station in the town. Following the government's refusal, the White Fathers relinquished their interest and opened their mission station at Kabanga about five miles away from the town (Leisner & Matanwa, 1979: 33). The White Fathers returned to Kasulu in 1959 after so many years of unrewarding attempts of starting their mission station in the town. A similar case occurred in Kibondo where it was not easy for Fr. Van den Dobbelen to secure a place in the town because the CMS missionaries had already become influential. It was not until 1959 that the colonial state made the town open to the influence of other missionaries, including the White Fathers (Leisner & Matanwa, 1979: 37).

White Fathers and Swedish Free Mission at Bigabiro (Mwandiga)

Bigabiro at Mwandiga is one of the areas in Buha which put, on several occasions, the White Fathers and Swedish Free Missionaries in conflict over which missionary society should exert its influence over the area. Initially set as a ritual space for chiefs of Nkalinzi chiefdom, this area, too, drew missionaries into tensions that needed state intervention. The White Fathers had already opened a school at Kiganza that posed a threat to the activities of the Swedish Free Missionaries at Mwandiga. In their course of fulfilling the work of evangelisation at Kiganza, the White Fathers were reported to have authority that transcended their missionary career. In his letter to the District Commissioner for Kigoma, Rev. Gustav Struble, of the Swedish Free Mission, complained that a Catholic missionary at Kiganza had power over the people. He said.

...During his last day at Kiganza he told the people that he owned a big piece of land around his school house. If the natives refused to receive his doctrine, refused to send the children to his school, he would drive them away from his ground and the men to be sent to Boma to be soldiers. He said that he had power to make them soldiers, and power to release them, he said. That White man at Mwandiga [by contrast] had no power at all, he said.... (TNA 180/C32, 9/2/1941).

This cited excerpt demonstrates two things. First, it shows the relationship between religion and empire. Rev. Stuble's exposition of the power of the Catholic missionary over the people provides

glimpses that help us to understand the debate that I singled out in the second section of this paper about the relations between missionaries and empires. A central question has been whether missionaries were part of the colonial enterprise, neutral, or anti-imperialists. The above exposition attests to the works of Thomas Beidelman, Jean and John Comaroff, and Jeffery Cox that regard missionaries as part of the colonial enterprise (Beidelman, 1982; Comaroff, 1991; 1997; Cox, 2002). Second, the above excerpt shows a seeming power struggle between Catholic and Swedish Free missionaries in western Tanganyika. The struggle led to tensions between the two as each was determined to win the favour of the inhabitants. Rev. Struble's complaints to the District officer imply that he, too, was determined to end the tension with the unnamed Catholic missionary who had told the villagers about missionaries of the Swedish Free mission at Mwandiga. He suggested that both Catholic and Swedish Free missionaries not interfere with each other. He said, "There are so many natives, so we do not need to fight about them. If now this 'Holy Father' stays at his place I will stay at mine; there will be no more trouble" (TNA 180/C32, 9/2/1941).

Besides Mwandiga, other tensions between the White Fathers and Swedish Free Mission were reported at the mission stations of Bitale and Bweru. Both the White Fathers and Swedish Free Mission applied for school plots that, incidentally, were close to each other (TNA 180/C32, 10/3/1941). Initially, the Provincial Commissioner for Western Province, issued a confidential letter No. 43/39 of December 17, 1934 stating that all rival missionaries could open schools as close as possible. But the proximity of missionaries increased tension between rival missionaries, making inevitable the need to implement a three-mile limit. The Provincial commissioner, A. Jeffrey, had already stated the limit in a circular which, among other things, instructed missions' schools to keep at a considerable distance from each other. District Commissioners were ordered to maintain the three-mile limit for all missionary schools (TNA 180/C 32, Vol. 1/No. 45/39/38, 17/12/1934). However, the three-mile limit did not last long. It soon proved impossible to enforce. Some mission sites were too close to impose the limit while others were under the control of more than one headman who could contravene the policy (TNA 180/C32, 10/3/1941).

The failure of the three-mile limit prompted the Provincial Commissioner, Bagshawe, to urge District Commissioners to keep an eye on missionaries' applications for land. He also warned missionaries to avoid causing direct confrontations with the people. For instance, he brought to the attention of the District Officer for Kigoma that Rev. Spiese had announced a Mission site in Uha with no formal approval from the District Officer and ordered the District Commissioner to delay Rev. Spiese's request until enough inquiries were made. "Nothing should be done to establish Mr. Spiese until full inquiries have been made as to his objects and views. In the present state of Uha generally we must be careful" (TNA 180/C32/ No. C/17, 20/1/1933). Furthermore, the Provincial Commissioner told the Land Officer for Kigoma district to deny Rev. Spiese's request for land, because he had no money. The District Commissioner also reminded the Land Officer to warn the missionary against taking loans from the people, "An eye must be kept on this mission...I cannot find out if he has money; please warn him against making debts among the natives" (TNA 180/C32/No. C/17, 24/6/1933).

White Fathers, Swedish Free Mission, and Moravians in Unyamwezi

Unlike Mwandiga, the White Fathers in Unyamwezi, particularly in Nzega District, were in good terms with the Swedish Free Mission. The cordial relations between the two religious institutions were reported in the District Commissioner's reports from 1941 to 1950. The District Commissioner reported the friendly relations that existed between the two missionary societies in the district (TNA 967.823.1, 1941; 1942; 1946). The District annual report indicates that the White Fathers were not at logger heads with the Swedish Free missionaries in the district in general. The report challenges the general assumption that would have been drawn on basis of the experience of the two missionaries at Mwandiga mission station. Examples from Nzega and Mwandiga attest to the argument raised earlier in this article on the multifaceted relations between missionaries. While in some areas of western Tanganyika the White Fathers were not in good terms with Protestant missionaries. In other areas of the same region, they co-existed with no noticeable tensions.

The tensions between missionaries in Unyamwezi, like Buha, emanated largely from land issues. The British colonial state, as was the case in Buha, was keen to solving land conflicts between missionaries. For instance, in 1941, the White Fathers applied for a site at Kitangiri, about four miles from Nzega town, but the colonial state restricted the White Fathers from opening a new mission station (TNA 967.823, 1941). One of the reasons behind the colonial state's denial of the White Fathers' mission plots at Kitangiri was the fact that missionaries of the Swedish Free Mission had already set up their first mission station at Tazengwa, a few miles from Nzega town. Thus, by denying the White Fathers' access to land at Kitangiri, the colonial state could prevent overlapping missionary interests in the area. Apart from Kitangiri, the White Fathers made several other attempts in 1943 to be granted land for the establishment of large mission centres in the district but the District Commissioner rejected.

The District official (land officer) informed the White Fathers that it was impossible for the Administrative Officer to inspect mission centres due to the eruption of the Second World War, to which the colonial officers had directed their attention. While the District Commissioner turned down the White Fathers' applications, it granted the Moravian missionaries rights of occupancy over two plots of land that were applied for in the same year (TNA 967.823, 1943). After the war, the land officer continued to discourage missionaries' applications for land in the district. Even the White Fathers' applications for new mission stations at Puge, Mwisi and Kitangiri remained unattended to up until 1948, when they acquired rights of occupancy over fifteen plots of Mwisi and Kitangiri (TNA 967.823, 1946).

In Southern Unyamwezi, the Moravian Missionaries ventured into the area between 1898 and 1908. A German missionary, Rudolf Stern (1898-1908), adopted the Society's plan of establishing a chain of mission stations pushing southwards to join the two Provinces (Unyamwezi and the Nyasa Province). Thus, Ukimbu in Southern Unyamwezi became an important link in creating a strong Moravian field in the region (Shorter/WFA 11-03). To meet the central objective of the Society, Rev. Stern's efforts culminated in the establishment of Kitunda mission station in 1901. In 1902, the Unity of Brethren began their work at Sikonge in the territory of Ngulu. The station was eventually set up

as a centre for Moravian missionaries in Ukimbu. It was followed by Ipole in 1903, and in 1904 another mission station was founded at Kipembawe, south of Kitunda. This latter station served as an important link between Unyamwezi and the Nyasa Province. However, the Moravians closed their mission station of Kipembawe in 1909 due to inadequate personnel to run the missions and the outbreak of sleeping sickness, which had forced the people to abandon their villages (Shorter/WFA 11-03; Hamilton, 1983: 611; Kisanji, 1980: 37; Musomba, 2005: 85).

The influence of the Moravian missionaries in southern Unyamwezi implied two things. For the Moravians, the establishment of mission stations in Ukimbu enabled them to meet their desire to create a mission field from Lake Victoria to the Nyasa Province. Likewise, the presence of the Moravian missionaries in the region presented a more formidable challenge to the White Fathers' efforts to bring the area under the influence of Catholicism. For instance, Fr. Theophile Dromaux, one of the members of the first group of White Fathers who penetrated into the heart of Unyamwezi, attempted to open a mission station at Kiwele in 1900 but found that the Moravian missionaries had already arrived there three days before him. Following the presence of the Moravians, Fr. Dromaux proceeded to Usangu and founded a mission station at Lwiba which was, nonetheless, abandoned in 1902 (Shorter/ WFA 11-03). Thus, the southern part of Unyamwezi remained under Moravian influence and it was left unattended by other missionary societies, especially the White Fathers, until the beginning of the First World War in 1914.

The First World War began in Unyamwezi on September 19, 1916, when Belgian troops marched into Tabora, advancing from Rwanda and Burundi. The Germans destroyed the town and its surrounding villages, and appropriated of the White Fathers' bishop's house, located a few miles from the military post (*boma*), for the Governor (WFA 01. 43 Ndala Diary, 22, 25/9/1916; 11/10/1916; Nolan, 1977: 298-300; Brown, 2001: 89). The German troops interned several missionaries in the town. The Belgian troops released the missionaries in September 1916 when they defeated the Germans and took possession of the *boma* in the town (G3 A6/O, 19/9/1916). While fighting against the German army (*Schutztruppe*), the Belgians destroyed houses, enslaved women, and took men and boys as porters. They arrested some White Fathers in Tabora and Itaga, destroyed houses in the town and its vicinity, and killed men and women as they attacked the town. Many people deserted their homesteads and fled to the Catholic missions of Tabora and Itaga, and others ran to the bush to save their lives (Nolan, 1977: 300; WFA 01.43, Ndala Diary, 2/10/1916).

As to the Moravians, the Belgium troops attacked the missions of Tabora, Usoke, Urambo, and Ipole mission stations and confiscated all the properties of the missionaries (Hamilton, 1983: 615). The Moravian bishop, Nis Gaarde, Friedrich Spellings, and other missionaries (of German origin), who administered the above mission stations, were also detained at Tabora. A majority of the missionaries were deported to southern France, while two missionaries (Nis Gaarde and Friedrich Spellings) remained in Unyamwezi and British forces ordered them to confine themselves to the boundaries of Tabora town (Hamilton, 1983: 615). The British troops attacked the Kitunda mission station, and, accordingly, its missionaries, Karl Buether and Alfred Oberlein, were arrested and exiled to Congo. As the war came to an end in 1918, and before the fate of the two missionaries at Tabora could be determined, Friedrich Spelling returned to Germany while Nis Gaarde remained in Unyamwezi and

carried on with the mission (Kisanji, 1980: 110).

Following the impacts of the First World War on missionaries, the White Fathers and Moravian missionaries took several measures to revive their work in Unyamwezi and western Tanganyika at large. One of the attempts made in response to Ukimbu, was to define what I call the “terms of missionary spheres of influence.” Notwithstanding the effects of the war, the region remained an important link in the Moravian missionary sphere. To prevent conflicts of interest between the White Fathers and the Moravians over southern Unyamwezi, it had been suggested even before the war that the region remain under the Moravians. Such an agreement gained momentum in the 1920s when Monsignor Henri Léonard of the vicariate apostolic of Unyamwezi reached an informal agreement with the Moravian Bishop, Nis Gaarde, over the spheres of evangelisation in Unyamwezi. The two bishops agreed that the Moravians should continue operating in the Southern part of Unyamwezi while the White Fathers had to operate in the rest of Unyamwezi. Nonetheless, no sooner had such an informal agreement been reached than it became impractical to maintain these mission fields, due to the frequent movement of both Christians and non-Christians across Unyamwezi (Nolan, 1977: 325). The unworkable agreement between the two bishops encouraged the White Fathers to extend their influence on Ukimbu. By the 1930s they had already founded Catholic mission stations in the area.

Conclusion

The period between 1878 and 1930 saw the influx of Catholic and Protestant missionaries in western Tanganyika, each determined to spread the Christian faith. In due course, missionaries endeavoured to create their own areas of evangelisation, leading to tensions that called for state intervention. Thus, religious conflicts and state intervention in Buha and Unyamwezi are indicative of the fact that the British colonial state was not a silent watcher of missionary activities in its empire (in colonial Tanganyika). It was active in checking the activities of religious institutions, and in most cases, intervened in the religious conflicts. One of the attempts made was to deny or accept missionaries’ application for land depending on the nature of the area and the nature of the missionary organisations. To avoid the impending danger of conflicts, the British colonial administrators worked on the application of the missionary society which became the first to express its desire for plots of land over an area of contention.

In addition to government intervention, missionaries reached informal agreements to maintain ‘religious spheres of influence’ in western Tanganyika. The agreements recognised an area of the region as falling under the influence of one missionary society. The agreement reached in the 1920s between the Catholic White Fathers bishop Henri Léonard and Moravian bishop, Nis Gaarde, over southern Unyamwezi as a Moravian mission field offers glimpses of the informal agreements which missionaries reached to avoid tensions between two missionary societies desiring areas for evangelisation. As we have seen, however, these areas of religious influence became impractical to maintain, due to the frequent movement of both Christians and non-Christians in Unyamwezi (Nolan, 1977: 325).

The experiences from western Tanganyika of religious conflicts, spheres of evangelisation, and state

intervention prompt the following remarks.

The conspicuous creation of the fields of evangelisation put religious institutions in conflict with one other, as each missionary society was determined to acquire more land so as to exert more influence on communities. British administrators were keen to watch missionaries' imperial ambitions and attempted to regulate missionary-desired 'spheres of influence' in the region. Very often, District Officers, and Provincial Commissioners were involved in addressing the conflicts between religious institutions. State intervention on missionaries' quest for areas of evangelisation in Buha and Unyamwezi is a prerequisite factor to make a claim, like what other scholars have argued, that in some instances, some missionaries were part of the colonial enterprise and, thus, had to abide by the orders of the colonial state.

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