



Peer Reviewed

Title:

Strategies and Tactics of Inauguration of African Underdevelopment: The Case of Christian Missionization Violence in East Africa

Journal Issue:

[Ufahamu: A Journal of African Studies, 9\(3\)](#)

Author:

[Omoka, Wanakayi K.](#)

Publication Date:

1980

Permalink:

<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/4jh3481p>

Local Identifier:

international_asc_ufahamu_17312

Abstract:

No abstract

Copyright Information:

All rights reserved unless otherwise indicated. Contact the author or original publisher for any necessary permissions. eScholarship is not the copyright owner for deposited works. Learn more at http://www.escholarship.org/help_copyright.html#reuse



STRATEGIES AND TACTICS OF INAUGURATION OF
AFRICAN UNDERDEVELOPMENT: THE CASE OF
CHRISTIAN MISSIONIZATION VIOLENCE IN EAST AFRICA

By

Wanakayi K. Omoka

Introduction: The Ruling Approach to the Missionaries' Role

An examination of the literature on social change in East Africa in the light of slavery, colonization, and post-colonization shows general agreement among writers that the activities of Christian missionaries have had an overall positive effect on African society. This effect is the allegedly higher association of these activities, more than those of any other European group, with the emergence in African society of certain personality attributes, interpersonal relationships, and dimensions of institutional sectors which are used as indices of modernization.¹

The early expansion of monopoly capitalism into East Africa, to which Christian missionization was instrumentally linked, involved three main groups - Africans, Arabs, and Europeans - with fundamentally irreconcilable interests. One abiding theme historical and social-scientific literature tends to take, as a criterion for evaluating each group's involvement, is the extent to which its activities served missionization interests. Violence was a central feature of the involvement, but the conventionalized mode of treating it is unmistakably lopsided in that the violence of Arab slave raiders against Africans and of Africans defending their freedom and independence against external (Arab and European) aggression is at once categorically condemned and invoked as a major reason for imposing colonial-imperialism on Africans, whereas the violence of Europeans - and particularly that of missionaries with which this paper is concerned - against Africans is methodically eschewed or glossed over. Hitherto this has been the ruling approach to the missionaries' role in social change in African society. It is an approach which at once forecloses consideration of violent tactics of missionization and fosters analyses whose conclusions readily lend themselves to being entered on the credit side of the balance sheet of missionaries' activities in African society. Typically, historical and social-scientific writing about missionaries' activities in East Africa obfuscates coercive and violent tactics of missionization by reconstructing and interpreting missionaries' behavior towards Africans in unduly positive terms. The literature on Christian missionization is replete with both factual and mythical effects of missionaries'

activities on African society, but the role of violence in producing these real and imagined positive effects is traditionally treated as a sacred-cow which it would be at once an act of sacrilege and obscenity to analyze.

The first part of this paper constitutes an attempt to desecrate the sacred-cow, i.e., a depiction of the role of violence as an instrument of Christian missionization. Basic to this treatment of violence are two assumptions. First, the violence was an expression of conquest and colonial domination. Second, the violence was rational and normal. (Missionaries' acts of violence against Africans were rational in a dual sense: first, the acts were consonant with missionaries' individual as well as group interests, not alien interests; second, the acts were consistent with their actor's own objective, in which the emotional wellsprings of acting violently did not short-circuit the objective into affective discharges but the emotional wellsprings themselves became the driving force of a systematically planned strategy consonant with individual and group interests.) The first assumption renders inadmissible here any attribution of missionaries' violent activities to human nature. The second assumption precludes as not valid non-goal oriented and chance explanation of missionaries' violence. Central to the analysis is violence as an efficient structural means of missionization and not as a psychopathological or moral problem in the behavior of missionaries. Hence, naturalistic, psychiatric, adventitious, and moralizing explanations of missionaries' violent activities are rejected. More specifically, not only are the dynamics of missionaries' violence explicated but exception is taken to what amounts to an illogically exonerative view that missionaries' use of violence for proselytization was so rare as to be considered nonexistent, that they used violence or coercion only as a last resort under extremely unusual circumstances, and that the way they acted in such circumstances did not fit into their normal pattern of behavior towards Africans. It was through anthropologists, initially relying partly upon missionaries' amateuristic anthropological descriptions of African communities, that African society was brought into the world of academia. Moreover, because of their early start and domination of the study of African culture and society, anthropologists tremendously influenced the perspectives of sociologists, political scientists, and economists with respect to their study of Africans. It is therefore primarily to anthropologists that one has to turn for explanation and understanding of why retrospect it has been an academic virtue to eschew missionaries' violence. The second part of the paper focuses attention upon why anthropologists conventionally brushed aside colonizer-on-colonized (European-on-African) violence of which missionaries' violence was part and parcel. The objective of the paper as a whole is to shed light on the role of Christian missionary violence in integrating East Africa, at

the periphery, into the world capitalist system.

Dynamics of Christian Proselytization Violence

Activities of building mission stations were carried out in the face of considerable African opposition. They included long marches by different contingents composed of dozens of Africans and one to three missionaries. The opposition, organized by political and religious leaders, consisted of preventing the contingents in either passing through their country or building stations therein.² Each contingent was not only aggressively prepared to confront such opposition but for most of its African members it was an organization into which they were coercively drafted. Being aware that these coerced draftees would not hesitate to reject the role of porter imposed upon them, by deserting whenever they found a chance to do so, missionaries frequently used violence to forestall acts of attempted desertion.

The movement of large caravans over long distances in the interior drove [European] men to desperate measures. No less a man than Mackay, the evangelist to Buganda, was capable of shooting and wounding four porters... on grounds that his action had been a legitimate way of dealing with mutiny... For many situations... the absence of public opinion and established standard of morals led [European] men to do deeds less than Christian and sometimes less than civilized.³

Obviously, shooting Africans was the single most effective tactic of conquering and imposing colonial rule over them. The important point to recognize in this connection is not that by virtue of their position in "the scale of animals"⁴ African "natives were merely made to be conquered and ruled,"⁵ although this view was certainly not uncommon among the European intelligentsia; rather, it is that the Europeans' possession and use of firearms in their encounter with Africans constituted the quantifying factor which transformed quality (violence) into quantity (thousands of African victims of the firearms), and by that very fact facilitated building stations and off-stations units by weakening African opposition to European power.

In the course of their Christianization activities - especially in the early period - missionaries tried to adopt the method by which Northern and Western Europe were Christianized.⁶ According to that method,

the conversion of a king or chieftain was

*normally the decisive point in the conversion of a country. The king's decision entailed the decision of nobles and eventually that of the people as a whole.*⁷

When missionaries realized that the pattern of conversion in Europe could not be repeated in East Africa, they switched to securing both safety and permission from kings⁸ to proselytize without pestering them personally with conversion. Where permission was granted the king was apprehensive that, since he had rejected conversion, missionaries might undermine his power and have him replaced by a Christian convert. Consequently, he saw to it that the central mission station was located in the vicinity of his residence in order for missionaries' activities to receive necessary supervision.⁹ On their part missionaries welcomed such location, because they were thereby protected from attacks by groups that were disadvantaged politically or religiously on account of missionaries' activities; but they disliked the limitation on their activities entailed by the location. Thus the interaction between African political leaders and missionaries in the early period was characterized by (a) distrust of missionaries and their followers by the leaders, and (b) missionaries' resentment and covert hostility towards the leaders on grounds that their power thwarted proselytization. Sooner or later the hostility was translated into overt behavior designed to weaken the power of the leaders. Among other things, missionaries supplied their converts and allies with firearms, and then they either had them go to terrorize villagers into becoming Christians or missionaries themselves assumed the role of commander if they suspected that the expedition of converts and allies might falter under villagers' opposition.¹⁰ In such encounters what the ensuing battles multiplied was not additional converts but the gunned down opponents of missionization, whose agony and death in effect considerably slowed down effective opposition to proselytization as well as colonial conquest.

In the course of catechesis, Africans were struck if they questioned this or that aspect of missionaries' dogma; converts and catechumens were flogged if they missed attending church service; youngsters whom missionaries took into mission stations to be trained as local evangelists were physically punished if they attempted to leave station premises and return to their families.¹¹ It was by virtue of the totalitarian underpinning of their world assumptions that leaders of the Church through centuries relied, among other things, upon methods of greedy organization and hegemonic control to spread Christianity. Since these methods in practice amounted to a species of fascism, it follows that violence - an inherent structural feature of fascism - against catechumens, catechists, and potential evangelists at mission stations was a rational

expression of the "fascistic power structure of the Church"¹² which the expansion of Christianity required. The violence was proper and functionally compatible with the Church's goal of world-wide expansion. Yet Oliver¹³ and Kieran distort the rationality of this violence, which was imperatively coordinated as an instrument of capitalist-imperialist accumulation, by infusing it with hackneyed moralism. Kieran, for example, decidedly asserts that

*missionaries had behaved brutally and had lacked a sense of elementary justice. These incidents were the fault of human nature rather than of policy, caused by bad temper and intolerance of [African] human frailties.*¹⁴

The attribution of missionaries' violence to human nature is simplistic mystification, and the view that their brutality was not a reflection of proselytization policy is in terms of the logic of this paper preposterous. The argument that missionaries had lacked a sense of elementary justice is untenable, not because they were individual men and women without any sense of justice, but because the notion of justice is a central presupposition of the traditional practice of philanthropizing and meliorizing missionaries' intrusion into African society, thereby making its degree of modernization a virtuous duty of colonial-imperialism of which the intrusion was at once a means and an expression. In view of African opposition to missionaries as conquerors, what was technically relevant to them, in the light of large-scale proselytization as their major goal, was not considerations of justice but effective coordination of violence as an instrument of attaining the goal. Indeed, rejection of the notion of justice with respect to proselytism is in order here. In line with the assumption of this paper that missionization was conquest, it is submitted that since there is not, and never was, any code of ethics for both conquering and being conquered, there is no moral standard for evaluating either the justice or the injustice of a given act of conquest that is valid for both the conquered and their conquerors. Hence, it is ludicrous to argue that missionaries (conquerors) lacked a sense of justice in their behavior towards Africans (conquered). The view that missionaries' brutality was due to human nature is inane. Human nature is a supernaturalistic notion which at its most conventional has no heuristic use in the context of social behavior, although its ideological value is considerable. The notion can be and is usually invoked either in the absence of knowledge of causal factors or to cloak the factors, if their being known to all parties on whom they have effect might be detrimental to particular powerful vested interests.

Missionaries had an abiding preoccupation with the

"immorality" of Africans. The payoffs of this preoccupation in terms of activities of proselytism climaxed in the years between the two World Wars because during this period sermons, among other things, became institutionalized derisive harangues of African culture and vilifying exhortations of Africans to abandon their "immoral" and "sinful" ways by embracing Christianity. The extent to which this virulent campaign against African culture and society served proselytization rested largely on physical violence and coercion. During the same period Bertrand Russell argued, among other things, in connection with Christian moral values as follows:

The purpose of moralists is to improve men's behaviour. This is a laudable ambition, since their behaviour is for the most part deplorable. But I cannot praise the moralist either for his particular improvements he desires or for the methods he adopts for achieving them....In the ordinary man or woman there is a certain amount of active malevolence....It is customary to cover this with fine phrases; about half conventional morality is a cloak for this....It is shown in the thousands of ways, great and small:...in the unbelievable barbarity with which all white races treat Negroes.¹⁵

For Russell, among others, a liberal whom one might not have taken for an unexceptional critic of moral values in bourgeois society, the physical violence of missionaries against Africans was largely sadistic acts emanating from passion, not reason.¹⁶ Theoretically one might not want to deny the existence of a sense in which there was a sadistic element in some of the missionaries' brutalities. Nevertheless, to resort to sadism to explain missionaries' violent behavior towards Africans has two serious flaws. First, it implies that the behavior was deviant and, therefore, neither consistent with missionaries' role expectations nor in conformity with the social values and norms that undergirded missionization. In this way violence is rendered atypical of missionaries' behavior, thereby foreclosing treatment of it (violence) as a systemic structural means of proselytism. To put the matter differently, the attribution of missionaries' violence to sadism implies denial of a theory of missionary violence applicable to all missionaries. Second, to the extent that sadism is a pathology (a form of mental illness), and to the extent that mentally ill persons are incompetent (deranged), they are not accountable for their acts of violence against Africans. That is to say, according to the theoretical thrust of this analysis the sadistic view of missionaries' violence is a justification of it.

It is a considered view of this writer that the brutalities of missionaries were normal because they constituted a structuring component of the process of colonial-imperialist accumulation which was essential for metropolitan material comfort as well as leisure and fun of the bourgeoisie.¹⁷ Hence, the attribution of these brutalities to passion has the ahistorical and absurd implication that the process of accumulation was irrational. Missionaries' violence was a rational objectification of colonial-imperialism as an instrument of capitalist industrialization. Max Weber, the intellectual progenitor of Western "experts" on social and cultural barriers to modernization of African society,¹⁸ regarded reason as bourgeois reason and capitalism as the highest form of socioeconomic rationality.¹⁹ Accordingly, capitalist accumulation was rational, and it was rational because it was operated by rational methods which included missionaries' violence, not passion or irrationality. Europeans' conquest and colonization of Africans was a qualitative-transformative-developmental process of capital in action by virtue of which the order and organization of imperialist oligopolies epitomized bourgeois reason. By virtue of its inherently coercive social relations of production as well as its glaringly uneven distribution of the products of social labor, capitalism--particularly in the African stream of its colonial-imperialist stage--made violence an imperative structuring feature of its dynamics; and because colonial-imperialism was a means of capitalism and missionization was a component of colonial-imperialism missionaries had to behave violently towards Africans. Indeed, Thomas Carlyle, a publicist champion of European--and especially British--intrusion into African society, whose views not only resonated Europeans' prevailing climate of opinion about Africans but influenced missionaries' behavior towards them, captured the attitudinal essence of bourgeois reason which gave order and organization to conquest and domination of Africans when he jingoistically said:

I never thought the "rights of negroes" worth . . . discussing, . . . in any form; the grant point, as I once said, is the mights of men,--what portion of their "rights" they have a chance of getting sorted out, and realized . . . in this . . . world.²⁰

Both accepting and practicing the Carlylian view by missionaries, among others, were not aberrations; they were requirements of bourgeois reason which objectified itself, among other things, as Christian missionization and without which capitalist peripheralization of Africa by Euro-America would not have occurred.

If colonial conquest was necessary to secure safety of

missionaries, it was certainly not sufficient for extensive proselytization. Great distances and slow communication militated against extensive Christianization, thereby facilitating effective opposition to it. The basis for overcoming this opposition was constituted by railways; and missionaries were foremost in advocating the building of railways to render more efficient the violent containment of African opposition to Christianization and capitalist engulfment. Consider, in this respect, the following exhortation of H. M. Stanley, whose role was secular, by A. M. Mackay, whose formal role was religious:

I see in you the only hope for this region, in your getting Sir William Mackinnon to see that . . . they [Imperial British East Africa Company capitalists] join the lake [Victoria] with the coast by a line, let it at first be so rough. When they have got that, they will have broken the backbone of native [African] cantankerousness.²¹

Although I am not concerned with linguistic violence here, it is clear that the above words bespoke inevitable physical violence against Africans. Mackay, a missionary who shot at least four Africans, saw violence as the means by which to create the sort of social order he desired in East Africa, and that is what he repeatedly communicated to Stanley and other agents of the Imperial British East African Company. As to physical violence, the relevant point is not that the initiative to construct railways belonged to the imperialist bourgeoisie rather than missionaries; rather, it is that missionaries' exhortations and pro-conquest propaganda constituted a harbinger of cruelties which were committed against villagers as forced labor for railway construction was exacted from them.

Railways technically improved the operation of imperialist counter-insurgent activities which were no more valuable to colonial administrators than missionaries. Not only did deploying troops to suppress insurgence against arbitrariness of colonial rule and terroristic proselytization become faster, but missionaries and some of their converts followed in the wake of the suppressions and carried out massive depoliticization, the essence of which consisted in preaching nonresistance and enjoining Africans to become Christians. If missionaries disapproved of injuries and killings of such suppressions, it was not because they thought the suppressions to be unethical; it was because the injuries and killings in effect discouraged rather than encouraged Africans to become Christians.

The core of depoliticization was schooling, for it was through schools that social norms and values congenial to

Christianization were systematically inculcated in pupils and students with such dogmatism and authoritarianism that it became exceedingly difficult for them not only to distinguish fact from fiction or unadulterated ethnocentric bias from detached factual truth, but to develop a sophisticated understanding of their social reality as a dominated people whose society and culture were being disoriented. Indeed, the essence of schools as totalitarian and physically coercive organizations is reflected in the following words of Bishop Steere, an early architect of missionization tactics in East Africa: One way of mission work is to take natives into tutelage, to make them live by order and work when and as they are bidden.²² In certain communities Christian mission schooling was instantly recognized as undermining the network of social relationships which gave order and organization to community life. In such communities--which were at once unencumbered by ambivalence towards Europeans' value system and determined to halt the advance of the cultural disorientating effects of schools onto their members--the most defensive response to missionaries was to deny schools access to youngsters. And that meant absolute refusal to send them to school. When, therefore, warrant chiefs (appointed African extensions of colonial rule at the local level) encountered opposition in their attempt--by order of missionary and colonial masters--to have youngsters go to school, they and other African adjuncts of mission-colonial power resorted to coercion and physical violence as a means of getting parents to allow children to go to school; and youngsters who were reluctant to go were lashed and forced to do so.²³

From the very beginning of missionization and colonialism there were continuous acts of individual or group refusal to comply with orders of missionaries and colonial administrators. These acts--insofar as they reflected recognition of both missions and colonialism as hegemonic totalitarianism which must be done away with--served the course of missionization to the degree to which they contributed to hastening the adoption of tactics of domination that increased the frequency of mission-colonial coercion and brutalities, by making Africans' self-preservation tantamount, in a sense, to renouncement of organized collective violence against the interests that at once constituted and ruled status quo. The most effective of these tactics--where it was applied--was constituted by so-called native reserves. By virtue of the expedient element in missionization plus the totalitarian underpinning of missionaries' disposition towards Africans, missionaries actively supported the settlerist policy of herding Africans into "native reserves."²⁴ Not only was this herding a violent process during which Africans, defending their land rights, were massively gunned down, but it was also a methodical dispossession by virtue of which hundreds of thousands of them were decapitalized.

Missionaries' support of herding Africans into "native reserves" was plainly a conscious course of action rationally pursued for the specific purpose of facilitating proselytization in two ways. First, missionaries desired and preferred concentrating most of their activities in densely populated areas, because it was easy to have access to a lot of people and thus increase the number of converts rapidly. The "native reserves," by virtue of being crowded, met this ideal situation. Second, in pre-colonial times if a ruler became overweening, groups could emigrate or communities could secede. Colonialism in general and "native reserves" in particular put an end to this political right to emigrate or secede, and, thus, deprived people of one very effective weapon against coercive and violent missionization.

Christian proselytization started long after Islam was established in certain areas of East Africa. In such areas the major target of Christianization was constituted by adherence of indigenous African religious practices, whose number far exceeded that of Moslems. The affairs of Moslems were thus seemingly free from missionaries' religious and secular intrusion, which was motivated by, among other things, a demand to meet conscripted labor needs of the imperialist bourgeoisie who used their wealth to promote missionaries' activities, and missionaries' activities, reciprocally, to promote their wealth. When the pressure of these activities in terms of their religious and extra-religious functions was intensified, some families or whole groups adhering to indigenous religious practices turned to Islamic ones. But this switch to Islam tended to exacerbate rather than halt violence as a means of missionizing and procuring labor. In situations where chiefs (irrespective of religious affiliation) were allied with missionaries, the latter's political influence mediated by local congregations and Church elders shielded Christian converts (while their number was small) from the infamous colonial forced labor, because, if and when the chiefs were under pressure to turn out men to work on government projects or private capitalist schemes, it was non-Christians who were conscripted.²⁵ Forced labor was naturally and universally hated; the requirement that chiefs turn out men to work on the said projects and schemes "could only be fulfilled through violence and physical coercion."²⁶ This practice of exempting Christian converts from conscripted labor had the effect of compelling many adherents of indigenous African religion or Islam to switch to Christianity in order to avoid forced labor; but when Christian converts became numerous, switching to Christianity did not offer protection from forced labor any more than switching to Islam or sticking to indigenous African religion offered such protection. Clearly, missionaries made no attempt to protect their converts from forced labor as they had done when converts were still small in number. That was by no stretch of imagination a nefarious act of connivance by

missionaries. In thus consenting to violence (forced labor) against Christian converts missionaries were behaving rationally: slave trade had put tremendous wealth in the possession of the imperialist bourgeoisie, who used part of it to finance missionaries' activities as instruments of furthering accumulation of more wealth. Hence, missionaries could not rationally be opposed to the labor which produced and was producing the very wealth that supported their activities.

Because theirs was an institution (church) which was organized for material combat, missionaries logically held that "to some it belongs to teach and govern; to others, to be subject to obey."²⁷ This master belief was a fundamental ingredient of the disposition of missionaries towards their converts. The totalitarian nature of the disposition made unquestioning obedience on the part of converts a basic requirement of the relationship between them and missionaries. Typically the obedience was not voluntarily forthcoming; it was exacted by intimidation or coercion and physical violence. This violence sustained itself through its failure to turn forced obedience into willing obedience. Sustained violence by a ruling group is not only an index of its regime's weakness or illegitimacy, but it also testifies to the costliness of maintaining the regime. Consistent with the line of reasoning followed in this paper, the imperialist bourgeoisie neither thought nor believed the colonial regime to be illegitimate. The relevant issue for them was, therefore, not illegitimacy of their power but the economic consequences of heavy reliance on coercion and physical violence to perpetuate their regime--especially much more so, in their case, since colonies had to be run at a profit. Accordingly, the imperialist bourgeoisie soon recognized that stringent law and order as the negation of Africans' rebelliousness and restiveness could be rendered at once cheap and effective not by continuous escalation of the regime's violence but by supplementing it with sophisticated (not easily recognized by the dominated African masses) and apparently non-violent tactics of control. The architects and performers of those tactics were practitioners of anthropology--a social science discipline whose emergence is inextricably linked with the obsolescence of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade and the birth of colonial-imperialism.

Obliterating Missionization Brutalities

Every movement of a group that is aggressively organized to change dimensions of the social reality of nonmembers has spokesmen who justify its goals and defend the means by which to attain them. The role of the spokesmen is partisan in the sense that it largely consists in describing and interpreting only those aspects of the movement's activities that cast the

group in positive or neutral light. Such was the role of anthropologists with respect to colonialism as a manifestation of external bourgeois aggression, of which missionization was part and parcel. It was so much the better for the political economy of colonial-imperialism that some early missionaries as missionary-anthropologists, the precursors of latter-day academic socio-cultural anthropology, produced descriptive accounts of certain aspects of the social life and culture of African communities in which they proselytized, that were valuable to colonialist containment. Missionary-anthropologists and their successors (functional anthropologists), during and after institutionalization of anthropology as the sociology of colonized Africans, among others, were tied together by a common thread of partisanship: namely, methodical exclusion of African-European relations from their writings about Africans, although the structure of these relations was central to explanation and understanding of most aspects of the social behavior of Africans. It was no irony that these "experts" on African society brushed aside the relations which were undergirded by European-on-African violence: since the colonial-imperialist universe of discourse, whose order and organization determined the academic orientation and political outlook of anthropologists, was ideologically²⁸ mobilized to combat modes of investigation and analysis that could not be validated within its context, one could not with impunity require of anthropologists, as major parties to the definition and coordination of this universe of discourse, that they be against the context. That is to say, anthropologists, by virtue of their being colonizing in-group members, were behaving rationally when they systematically blotted out from their studies violence as means by which their in-group's rights and privileges were exacted from their out-group.

Anthropologists, like other members of the colonizing group, were grimly concerned with the problem of law and order among the colonized Africans. They had a dual interest in colonialism. The first interest, which was political, was served by passing strategic information about the Africans they studied to high ranking colonial government officials, who then used it to strengthen control over Africans by perfecting the efficiency of the instruments for breaking the Africans' back of resistance against conquest and domination. Such information was kept secret within the top echelon of the colonialist bureaucracy.²⁹ The second was the career interest, and it was served by publishing largely trifling accounts of aspects of the social and cultural life of African communities under domination.³⁰ That is how anthropologists, as spokesmen --in the sense specified above--of colonialism, obliterated the violent realities of mission-colonial domination. It is partly in connection with this rational practice of anthropologists not to pay attention to phenomena that really mattered from the stand-point of Africans and other colonized peoples that

Gouldner recently made the following observation:

Functional anthropology usually paid little attention to the relations between the colonial power and the native society, and, when it did, it was commonly viewed as a form of "culture contact".... Its basic posture toward both European and native societies was . . . essentially compatible with the maintenance of European domination and with the inhibition of the political autonomy and industrialization of colonial areas. And this was compatible with the basic policies of colonialism. While some functional anthropologists conceived it their basic societal task to educate colonial administrators, none thought it their duty to tutor native revolutionaries.³¹

Specifically, obliteration consisted in anthropologists' pedantic preoccupation with the functional point of view, by virtue of which they ceaselessly tried to discover functions where no functions could be discovered; their ahistorical standpoint, by virtue of which they misconstrued behavior patterns sublimating decolonization as expressing African culture; their systematic eschewing of fascistic exploitation (the social relations of production under monopoly capitalism in a colonial-imperialist setting), by virtue of which their academic activities largely became ritualistic rehashing of trivia; their unrelenting search for real or imagined "undiscovered" communities, by virtue of which they were unable to develop a theory of society under colonial conquest and domination;³² their isolating the community, on which they obtained data for their descriptive accounts, from the coercive and violent political-economic context which not only made the data but also determined the functional value of the accounts for the on-going process of capitalist accumulation. But what in terms of violence constituted the reality of this situation--as experienced by Africans who unlike their European colonializers had no spokesmen to write and publish on their behalf about the existing colonial system which was organized against them--in which the parading of academic banalities as expert knowledge of African society plus theoretical naiveté became institutionalized obfuscators of terroristic proselytization, fascistic exploitation, and totalitarian domination? The reality was constituted by colonialist wars, raids, massacres, tortures, mutilations, sustained whippings, and collective liquidations: the Maji Maji blitzkrieg in which the scores of thousands of annihilated Africans broke the morale to rebuff colonial conquest, and, thus, paved the way for missionization; the repression of Dini ya Musambwa in which the shooting to death of scores of Africans on account of their opposing Christianiza-

tion easier and faster, et cetera.

The central role of violence in initiating and undergirding extra-continental decapitalization of African society remains obfuscated today as it was before political decolonization began, because the structure of creating social scientific knowledge about the society is still geared to serving the decapitalization. In this connection it is not surprising that, despite political decolonization of most African society, the methodological and theoretical orientations of European and North American "experts" on Africa are in no small measure still wedded to the imperialist apologia for decapitalization that characterized the anthropological enterprise during the heyday of colonial-imperialism. Indeed, in a manner of speaking, much effort in African studies which sprouted in Euro-American universities and colleges in recent years has gone into trying to show that anthropologists, unlike other groups of extra-continental political intruders into African society, were a liberal force committed to protecting Africans from the cultural arrogance of missionaries, the intransigence of colonial government administrators, and the unfeeling exploitation by settlers (farmers) and businessmen. Such is the view of, for example, Goldschmidt:

The egalitarianism of anthropological culture . . . was . . . expressed in our . . . casual and abundant use of native costume and jewelry We got . . . in direct confrontation with that other professional species that shares our exotic environment--the missionaries. Missionaries . . . wanted to abolish lobola as degrading to the human spirit; we leapt to its defense; arguing that it was a customary procedure which reinforced social ties among affinals. We, therefore, insisted . . . terms for the payments (e.g., dowry) . . . were tokens of esteem-prestations. The evidence from East Africa is clear that . . . the payment is a standard prestation Anthropology has no reason to be guilty for its deeds. Surely the anthropologist, like everybody in the middle class, has prospered. There is no reason to doubt that this Euro-American prosperity was made possible through colonialism and neocolonialism. But I find no evidence that their actions have served to strengthen the colonial hold or to exacerbate colonial rule If we have guilt--other than the generalized guilt of the prosperous to the very existence of the poor--it is for sins of omission. These sins of omission are the

*failure to build upon the crude beginnings of the uses of anthropology to illuminate problems that exist in the real and everyday world.*³³

To my mind, the omission that Goldschmidt talks about was in no sense an act of sin: omission is a major procedural tactic of spokesmen (ideologists) of a movement or course. Omission of European-on-African violence was an effective tactic by which anthropologists as ideologists justified the violence which colonialism required. Hence to say that omitting to cast light upon problems (e.g., violence) of the real and everyday world (colonialist domination) was sin has the untenable implication that the end (colonialism) which the violence served and, thus, made possible the prosperity of Euro-America, was morally reprehensible. The overall implication of Goldschmidt's defensive image of the anthropological enterprise is that what was central to the research activities of anthropologists was not the interests of the colonial regime's beneficiaries but those of its victims.

Contrary to Goldschmidt, I resolutely maintain that anthropology--regardless of whether its practitioners were committed to standards of academic professionalism or were mere dilettantes--served the ruling interests of the colonial regime. The service was not a contingent fact of violent realization of the interests but an imperatively coordinated instrumental requirement of their totalitarian realization; and in no sense should the service be construed as occasioned by an unusual set of circumstances by virtue of which anthropologists unwittingly succumbed to siding with the interests of colonial domination. For ever since anthropology was born of capitalist colonial-imperialism during the last quarter of the nineteenth century the political attitudes of anthropologists towards the colonized Africans all along consistently fitted into the pattern of this domination. Violence rationally used against the Africans was at once a means of sustaining colonial domination with which missionaries linked the fate of terroristic proselytization and an expression of African-European relations. That anthropologists eschewed the inclusion of these relations in their studies of Africans amounted to nothing less than their support of the maintenance of the relations. And that was rational precisely because they could not be both in active support of maintaining the relations and opposed to the means (violence) that the maintenance required. Anthropologists' field studies which were funded by the powers and interests that ruled the status quo usually culminated in advising, approving and legitimizing the use of violence to keep colonialist law and order among Africans. By doing this anthropologists were not only rendering an invaluable service to terroristic proselytization which linked its fate with the fate of violent

colonial domination, but they were neither breaking any kind of law nor violating any code of ethics. By serving as architects of colonialist policy and consultants to colonial administration which was replete with coercion and physical violence that served both secular and ecclesiastical goals, the anthropologists were not only compatibly displaying an exemplary loyalty to their in-group, but they were also demonstrating the instrumentality of their discipline to violent domination which facilitated Christian missionization.

Conclusion

This analysis was conceived in the light of the fact that since the emergence of mercantile capitalism African society has never been free from the violence originally generated by mercantilism, yet this violence has been ignored as a subject of study by social scientists. I focused on missionization violence, not because of the allegedly great impact which missionaries' activities have had on African society, but because the form and content of these activities have been extravagantly idealized and mythicized at the expense of fundamental knowledge and clear understanding of the forces which account for the origin of dependency and peripheralization of contemporary African society. I find violence to be the single most continuous and resilient structural component of African underdevelopment. I have attempted to depict violence which not only was used to achieve ecclesiastical and secular goals but has methodically been denied entry in the balance sheet of missionaries' activities in East Africa. In doing so, I have neither argued that missionaries were individuals without moral sense nor implied or suggested that they were illiberal persons; rather, I have argued for the rationality and normality (non-deviation) of their violence as an instrument of proselytization, and viewed considerations of ethics, morality, and liberality as irrelevant to the means of missionization except insofar as such considerations coincided with occasions in which the use of violence was perceived to be counterproductive to Christianization. I have neither justified missionaries' use of violence to achieve their goals nor condemned violence in and of itself. For to do so would have been to deny a priori real humanity to those groups of people who live under violent subjugation and for whom freedom necessarily means the triumph of liberatory violence over sustained status quo violence.

I have conceded that Africanists in anthropology produced social theories but denied that they produced a theory of society. What is it that a theory of society does or should do that social theories such as those of Africanists in question cannot do? A theory of society should enable its user to analyze existing institutions in the light of the manifest

uppermost goals of the society of which they are functional components in order not only to understand how it operates as a whole but to determine and assess, under given conditions, the potential likelihood of its dominant current trends to be maintained, reversed, or terminated. By these criteria there is no theory of African society. In retrospect I am led to register the point that, if and when such a theory becomes available I doubt that it will be a result of efforts on the part of Africanists (Western scholars), not because they are not capable but because their role as social scientists is inextricable connected with certain external (i.e., extra-scientific) political objectives and interests the pursuit and realization of which are at variance with developing a valid, reliable, and relevant body of knowledge about African society. The fact that these extra-continental scholars dominate writing about African society and culture does not refute this point, for it is precisely this domination which is a basic impediment to the development of a continental African intellectual tradition with a perspective whereby the analysis of the objectives and interests appears not as their mystification but as a demystification of the capitalist horrors which have sustained and still sustain their realization.

Footnotes

*I thank professor Ann A. Graves for reading the manuscript and offering valuable comments.

1. see, for example, Michael Armer and Robert Youtz, "Formal Education and Individual Modernity in an African Society," *American Journal of Sociology*, 76 (1971); J. L. M. Dawson, "Traditional versus Western Attitudes in Africa: The Validation and Application of a Measuring Device," *British Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 6 (1967); Leonard Doob, "Scales for Assaying Psychological Modernization in Africa," *Public Opinion Quarterly*, 31 (Fall 1967); Alan Peshkin, "Education and Modernism in Bornu," *Comparative Education Review*, 14 (October 1970); Alex Inkeles and David Smith, *Becoming Modern* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974); Raymond F. Hopkins, "Christianity and Sociopolitical Change in Sub-Saharan Africa," in Marion E. Doro and Newell M. Stultz, eds., *Governing in Black Africa* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1970); L. H. Gann and Peter Duignan, *Burden of Empire: An Appraisal of Western Colonialism in Africa South of the Sahara* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1967).
2. see: Robin Hallet, "The European Approach to the Interior of Africa in the Eighteenth Century," *Journal of African*

- History*, (February 1963), p. 194; T. O. Ranger, *The African Churches of Tanzania* (Published for the Historical Association of Tanzania by East African Publishing House, Nairobi, n.d.), p. 5.
3. Roland A. Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa* (London: Longmans, 1965), pp. 83-84.
 4. see: Sir William Petty, *The Papers*, vol. II (Some unpublished writings of Sir William Petty), edited from the Bowood Papers by the Marquis of Lonsdowne (London: Chiswick Press, 1927), p. 31; and Arthur O. Lovejoy, *The Great Chain of Being* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1966).
 5. see: William L. Langer, *The Diplomacy of Imperialism* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1968), p. 83.
 6. Elizabeth W. Latimer, *Europe in Africa in the Nineteenth Century* (Chicago: McClung Company, 1895), pp. 220-221.
 7. Charles W. Forman, *Christianity in the Non-Western World* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 42.
 8. Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, pp. 7-8, 67.
 9. Latimer, *Europe in Africa in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 218; Gideon Were and Derek Wilson, *East Africa Through a Thousand Years* (New York: Africana Publishing Company, 1970), p. 172.
 10. see, for example, Latimer, *Europe in Africa in the Nineteenth Century*, p. 207; Marcia Wright, *German Missionaries in Tanganyika, 1891-1941* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), p. 130.
 11. see: John A. Kieran, "Some Roman Catholic Missionary Attitudes towards Africans in Nineteenth Century East Africa," *Race*, X (January 1969), p. 355.
 12. Roland L. Warren, "Fascism and the Church," *American Sociological Review*, 6 (February 1941), p. 47.
 13. Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, p. 84.
 14. Kieran, "Some Roman Catholic Missionary Attitudes towards Africans in Nineteenth Century East Africa," *Race*, p. 355.
 15. Bertrand Russell, *Why I am Not a Christian*, (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1957), pp. 76-78.

16. Ibid., pp. 27, 29-30, 60, 149-150.
17. see: DuBois, W. E. B., *The World and Africa* (New York: International Publishers, 1972), Chapters 2 and 3; *Black Reconstruction in America 1860-1880* (New York: World Publishing Company, 1962), p. 728.
18. There are three types of perspectives used in the sociological study of modernization of societies. First, the *social psychological* which stresses personality determinants of development by concentrating attention upon changes in motivations and values of individuals as basic forces of societal development. Second, the *social structural* which focuses emphasis upon organizational and institutional determinants of development and which, whether taking functionalist or Marxian (conflict) positions, explains increasing differentiation, complexity, and industrialization in terms of changes in the social structures and processes within societies as particular macro-social units. Third, the *capitalist world-system* which emphasizes international structures and processes in explaining development as well as underdevelopment of societies. The first two, which bear the influence of Weber and dominate studies of modernization of African society, are ontogenetic in that they locate impediments to development of a given society in the structures and processes internal to the society itself and its individual members. The third is phylogenetic in the sense that it views development and underdevelopment as simultaneously occurring phenomena whereby the development of certain societies was and is the condition for the underdevelopment of other societies, thus making development and underdevelopment to be consequences of structures and processes which are external to individual societies and their members.
19. Max Weber, *The Theory of Social and Economic Organization* (New York: Free Press, 1964), pp. 81, 186; Julian Freund, *The Sociology of Max Weber* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), p. 204; Herbert Marcuse, "Industrialization and Capitalism," in Otto Stammer, ed., *Max Weber and Sociology Today* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1972), p. 138.
20. Thomas Carlyle, *English and Other Critical Essays*, Everyman's Library Edition (London: J. M. Dent and Sons, 1967), p. 324.
21. Alexander M. Mackay to Henry M. Stanley in Alexander M. Mackay, *Alexander M. Mackay: Pioneer Missionary in Uganda* (Prepared from Mackay's correspondence by his sister)

(London: Frank Cass and Company, 1970), p. 340.

22. see: Oliver, *The Missionary Factor in East Africa*, p. 63; also Wright, *German Missionaries in Tanganyika*, pp. 13, 17-18.
23. see: Robert L. Tignor, "Colonial Chiefs in Chiefless Societies," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 9 (October 1971), pp. 346-348, 353, 359; Ranger, *The African Churches of Tanzania*, p. 9; G. H. Mungean, *British Rule in Kenya* (London: Clarendon Press, 1966), p. 243.
24. see: A. G. Russell, *Colour, Race, and Empire* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1944); Stephen Neill, *Colonialism and Christian Missions* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966), pp. 300-337, 386-411.
25. John M. Lonsdale, "Political Association in Western Kenya," in Robert Rotberg and Ali Mazrui, eds., *Protest and Power in Black Africa* (New York: Harper and Row, 1970), p. 585; "European Attitudes and African Pressures: Mission and Government in Kenya Between the Wars," *Race*, X (October 1968), p. 144; Ranger, *The African Churches of Tanzania*, p. 7; Tignor, "Colonial Chiefs in Chiefless Societies," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, pp. 354-355; F. B. Welbourn and B. A. Ogot, *A Place to Feel at Home* (London: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 130.
26. Tignor, "Colonial Chiefs in Chiefless Societies," *Journal of Modern African Studies*, p. 363.
27. Warren, "Fascism and the Church," *American Sociological Review*, p. 45.
28. The term ideologically is used here in the sense of ideology as an ostensibly logical justification for particular vested interests and not as ideas that are distorted by a historical and social setting.
29. This and related strategic information constituted such a secret property of colonial rulers that just before they formally handed back political power to Africans they destroyed it by fire. See Oginga, *Not Yet Uhuru* (New York: Hill and Wand, 1967).
30. In this interest laid anthropologists' multifarious support of confining Africans to *native reserves*, for the *native reserves* were naively held by anthropologists to keep Africans in their *primeval* state, and, thus, to render them uniquely appropriate for anthropological study.

31. Alvin W. Goudner, *The Coming Crisis of Western Sociology* (New York: Avon Books, 1971), pp. 131-132.
32. There is, of course, a difference between a theory of society and a social theory. Anthropologists are entitled to claiming that they produced social theories, but that is a moot point.
33. Walter Goldschmidt, "Anthropology and the Coming Crisis: An Autoethnographic Appraisal," (Presidential Address delivered at the 75th Anniversary Meeting of the American Anthropological Association, Washington, D.C., 17 November 1976) *American Anthropologist*, 79 (June 1977), pp. 296, 299.

