Indirect Rule in Tropical Africa: Up Close and Personal

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My distinguished former colleague, Ali Mazrui, published often and at length using his own experience as a frame of reference for analyzing a wide range of biographical and policy issues.\(^1\) In the past, I have used the same device to comment on curriculum issues in higher education.\(^2\) I have taken a similar approach here in reviewing two books where, for very different reasons, I felt “up close and personal” to some of the key actors.

Two recently published books on African colonial history have very different focal lengths. One is C. Bradley Faught’s relatively brief biography of the leading British commentator on African colonial policy of her era, perhaps the first commentator to reach a wide public. Born in 1885, Margery Perham continuously engaged with African colonial policies and administration between 1921 and 1976. The second book, by Edmund M. Hogan, deals with a particular set of events in an obscure tribal area on the southern fringe of the colonial province of Northern Nigeria between 1920 and 1925. Taken together, through these two books it is possible to look again at the

The personalities of Perham and Lugard dominate the first book; three otherwise obscure personalities dominate the second—an Italian Catholic missionary, an English local administrator, and an African tribal leader. These three lesser mortals provide the lived experience of Indirect Rule as it was practised at the high point of its implementation.

During her long life—identified as “imperial” in Faught’s title where others might have used “colonial”—Perham epitomised many of the policy dilemmas which confronted policy makers in dealing with the distribution of power in African societies, particularly the power of traditional leaders. Indirect Rule involved minimising direct British involvement and maximizing, then manipulating, the power of pre-existing traditional authorities. This policy approach was seen to have wide application, and Sir Frederick Lugard—later Lord Lugard—became the leading proponent of this approach.³ Perham’s magnum opus was the two-volume biography of Lugard and the four associated volumes of his letters and papers that she edited.⁴ Her other publications listed by Faught were relatively slight by contemporary standards, with her twenty-plus books predominantly autobiographical or commentaries rather than original research, and even including a couple of romantic novels at the start.

Faught notes that Perham “had a predilection to be rather star-struck by members of the Colonial Service or its equivalent” and her contemporary critics took exception to the effect this had on her analysis. Her first encounter with an archetypal bush administrator was with her sister’s husband who was working in Somaliland; he was elevated in her eyes to heroic status and features that way in her fiction.⁵ Later on, she met the Resident Commissioner of Basutoland, a Crown colony being governed by its own version of Indirect Rule, and Faught notes that she accorded him a kind of saintliness.⁶ But Lugard was the star in her firmament, even though she belatedly came to see the deficiencies in his central philosophy. Faught identi-
fies Ian Nicolson as one of the fiercest among the several critics of Lugard he names, a more potent critic because he had significant Nigerian experience to draw upon himself. Nicolson is dismissively identified by Faught as someone who “saw Lugard as nothing more than a shameless self-promoter.”

These sorts of criticisms mainly came after World War II but in the meantime Lugard remained the dominant authority and a major influence on Perham as well as on those training future colonial administrators. Faught identifies the impact on wider public and official opinion of Perham’s commentaries, often provided originally as contributions to *The Times* (London), which made her the pre-eminent authority on British colonial administration in Africa. Her reputation helped shape the evolution of this administration through its impact on the curriculum of training courses for future administrators being offered from 1926, and her views molded public opinion for half a century. “The Colonial Reckoning,” a 1962 publication of the BBC Reith Lectures of the previous year, marked a high point in this regard.

I happened to be studying in Oxford when these lectures were being delivered and published by the BBC, and I took particular note of her changing opinion on Lugard’s key contribution which had elevated Indirect Rule to a dogma, applicable in all circumstances as the basis for Britain’s relationship with African colonial subjects. By 1962, she had tempered the hero worship manifest in her earlier work in the light of the self-evident problems his doctrine had created for the progress of African nations to political independence, especially Nigeria.

Faught spends a full chapter on Lugard and provides a well-balanced account of the way in which Indirect Rule moved from empirical observation based on the special circumstances of well-established traditional authorities, reinforced by affiliation with Islam in Northern Nigeria, to the establishment of a set of procedural rules applicable in all circumstances to guide the progress of native populations towards the presumed benefits of security, trade, and improved living standards. As will be seen in the second book under
review, this had important implications: for the presence of Christian missions; for wider educational objectives; and for the preservation of the political status quo.

Faught captures evocatively the halcyon atmosphere of Oxford in the early 1960s for students of Africa. I joined the university’s African Society, slogged through courses on comparative government and political philosophy and, in the third term, luxuriated in the course (originally designed by Dame Margery) on “the politics of new states – Africa.” My tutor was East African historian George Bennett, and I took many classes at the Institute of Commonwealth Studies (ICS) in Queen Elizabeth House, mainly social anthropology plus some development economics with Arthur Hazlewood.

Alongside the regular undergraduates at the ICS were the administrative cadets, enrolled in the so-called Devonshire course devised with help from Perham and dating back to the 1940s. By this time, the group included several from recently independent states of the West Indies alongside Britons destined for the remaining colonies in southern Africa and the Pacific. Signalling the new relationship, the social facility for students, just up the street from the iconic Rhodes House, had been re-named the Commonwealth Services Club. I was offered a warm welcome there, particularly as I strengthened the top of the multi-racial batting order in their cricket team, which played in a local village cricket competition.

However, the scholarly highlight for me was Perham’s Nuffield seminar series and the excitement generated among the cadre of young men and women graduate students who met there, often to hear very distinguished African political leaders and non-African colonial administrators. One of the most influential of the visitors in 1963 was Sir Ralph Furse, director of recruitment for the Colonial Service since 1931, who had worked closely with Perham in setting up the Devonshire courses. Faught reports on a book by a young American academic on recruitment and training in the colonial service, ultimately published as “Yesterday’s Rulers”, which amounted to Furse’s unauthorised biography. Perham wrote an en-
thusiastic foreword but Furse took exception to the implied criticism in the book about lack of political foresight: “Of course we made mistakes: who wouldn’t? And did not see through the mists of time—but they were pretty thick.” Nicholson characteristically offered a scathing revisionist view about the limited influence of Furse’s own contribution—pointing out that the service’s most distinguished leaders mainly joined via internal promotion, competitive examination or transfer from other services.

In an early chapter in his book, Faught describes Perham’s first exposure to the romantic and wild aspects of Africa during a trip to visit her sister in Somaliland. At the end of my first year at Oxford, I had my own “Somaliland” moment. I had decided to do my B.Phil dissertation on an African topic and sought out a cheap air trip to do some “field work” on any topic I could find. The very low-cost charter planes provided to students by the South African government to encourage expanded white settlement happened to refuel at Entebbe, Uganda, and breaking the journey was permitted. I never did get to South Africa (then or later) but found stimulation, friendship, and a dissertation topic at Makerere College in Kampala.

This was my own experience “on becoming an Africanist,” another of Faught’s chapter headings. The Rhodes Trust and the Warden treated me with the same generosity as they had Dame Margery years before, allowing me to first transfer my enrolment from a coursework masters to a doctorate, then giving me leave to postpone the third year of my scholarship until I had finished writing my dissertation at Makerere. My other benefactor was the Rockefeller Foundation, persuaded by Colin Leys and Jim Coleman to give me a three-year teaching fellowship held jointly between the political science department and the East African Institute of Social Research. (Rockefeller had also funded a major study tour by Perham in the 1930s.)

So, in my second year as a Rhodes Scholar I was located as a full-blown Africanist in the ICS, even though there was a desperate shortage of supervisors with any expertise relating to my topic—labour administration and the development of trade unions. Dame
Margery was a constant presence in that period, offering me encouragement and also facilitating a later contact with Tom Mboya when I was back at Makerere between 1963 and 1965. I realised after reading the Faught book how lucky I was to have known her in her prime. I wish I could have known then much of what I have read here. Given Margery’s natural modesty, I relied instead for my sketchy understanding on the friendships I made with her research assistants, particularly Stephanie Grant, and latterly Mary Bull when our paths crossed back in Canberra. Faught tells a comprehensive story and reaches an evaluation which strikes a delicate balance between admiration and a subtle appreciation of Perham’s prejudices, anguish, and romanticism.

My other connection with Perham, which I scarcely appreciated at the time, flowed from my affiliation with Ann Gowers, personal assistant to Norman Chester, Warden of Nuffield and my designated coursework supervisor. We became increasingly friendly through my second Oxford year as a Nuffield-based Africanist, although I saw more of Perham, Colin Newbury, and Freddy Madden than Chester. Ultimately, Ann joined me in Kampala. During our travels we found a “Gowers Park” spoon in a Hoima rest house and I was pleased to have tangible proof that I had an affinity with a clan which included a colonial governor, Sir William Frederick Gowers (1875-1954).

I knew little about Gowers, the former governor of Uganda, until my wife wrote a biography of his brother Ernest, and then more recently a biography of their father, William Richard, an eminent neurologist of the late Victorian era. On those projects I served as a sorcerer’s apprentice, working on the Rhodes House papers which revealed much about both William Frederick and William Richard, including an unexpected connection between the neurology teacher and one of his flightier students, Leander Starr Jameson. Ann remembers William Frederick well, as she was a teenager when he died, and the archives supported in full the risqué reputation he had within the family, where he was affectionately known as “Wicked
Willie.” The official archive (which includes letters from Lugard to the Foreign Secretary) suggested that the sobriquet “Naughty Willie” was more common in Ugandan society.⁵

Margery Perham features in this correspondence, as Gowers does in her own writings, and in several of them she acknowledges extensive use of his diaries, destroyed after his death by his second wife. Perham reported her surprise that Donald Cameron, Governor of Tanganyika, was most disapproving of her having spent time alone with Gowers at Entebbe Government House. Here is an instance of Perham’s naivety in dealing with members of the opposite sex, to which Faught refers on occasions.⁶

At every point in the historical narrative about Perham, Faught’s tone rings true for me. Apart from tiny slips, there is little to complain about, and I have only four reservations. In discussing the motivation for decolonisation, Faught points to the impetus generated by the Americans, without noting that there was an element of Cold War competitiveness in which Russia sought to establish stronger anti-colonial credentials and win support from the newly emergent non-aligned states. The second point flows from the first: my research on unions (in which I sought to explain why Ugandan unions were not integrated into a nationalist movement like those of Kenya and Tanganyika) also uncovered this same competitiveness between international labour organisations of different ideological persuasions. Russian and American education providers were similarly competitive. The third point is that Faught understates the role of Flora Shaw in facilitating Dame Margery’s access to the columns of The Times, since Flora Shaw was the paper’s highly visible Colonial Editor before she became Lugard’s second wife. (Shaw is also credited with coining the name “Nigeria.”) The final objection flows from this. Perham very much took Lugard on his own terms and reinforced the public image he and Flora Shaw fashioned for him through multitudinous publications, lectures, and newspaper columns. It was this celebrity status which may have won him appointment to various high-profile offices. Nicolson, by contrast, mined other official records which show the extent to which this status was vigorously con-
tested by Lugard’s own superiors at the Colonial Office and by those who worked with or after him in Nigeria: “The Lugards’ unwearying propaganda had so confused the issue that it was never generally realized how narrow and yet so disingenuous his actual practice had been, with talk of ‘progress’ disguising the reality of action designed to prevent it.”  

Despite these limitations, Faught’s book is a signal contribution to historical scholarship as well as a fitting memorial to a great woman. The second book is also a memorial of a kind, but more significantly is an illustration of the contemporary operation of Indirect Rule and its later implications for the processes of political modernisation.

Faught quotes Perham’s own insight into the doctrine in practice when she first encountered it and identified it as

a constitutional trick that we have learned in England. ... The Emir retains all his power in theory while in practice, behind the curtain, he is checked and propelled, not by a ministry, still less by a democracy, but by an unobtrusive, kindly middle-aged Englishman who derives his authority from the military power and wealth of Great Britain.

Even in 1931, Perham was wondering whether this system could be sustained indefinitely as Britain grew weaker and was lessening its control over places like India: “what would happen if they called our bluff?”

Hogan’s book deals with events which occurred in Northern Nigeria a few years earlier, around the time when Lugard himself was articulating his notion of a “dual mandate” in tropical Africa. Gowers was a convinced disciple and former colleague of Lugard, later serving as Lieutenant Governor of the Northern Province when most of the events described by Hogan were occurring in the Igbirra District on the southern fringes of the Province. He played a minor but supervisory role in the drama before his elevation to govern Uganda with its own variant of non-Islamic indirect rule.
Hogan’s main protagonists are Reverend Father Berengario Cermenati, Captain Frederick Felix Weichs Byng-Hall, and Ibrahima, Atta of the Igbirra. Cermenati was an Italian Catholic missionary who studied at a French seminary and then founded a mission in a remote village in the Igbirra district; Byng-Hall was the Resident Officer in the same general location; Ibrahima held the traditional office of Atta from 1917 until his removal from office in 1954.

Hogan’s book consists of long entries from the comprehensive private diaries compiled by Cermenati with linking commentary and evaluation using triangulation derived from Byng-Hall’s more formal diary and a range of official documentation. As Hogan notes, the third point in the triangle (Ibrahima) did not leave us documentation where he could speak for himself, but the evolution of his office and of his attitudes and conduct can be visualised through the eyes and report-writing of others.

Hogan’s subtitle, “a study in colonial, missionary and local politics, 1897-1925,” is well chosen. The book reaches well beyond the local to mirror the tensions in both colonial and missionary politics. The local issue—an outbreak of violence which destroyed property intended to ultimately function as a school—served to underline the major conflicts of interest typified by the three protagonists.

Cermenati believed that his calling required the conversion and education of all Africans and that he was entitled to do this under colonial auspices. He felt he was being blocked and undermined by a conspiracy between Byng-Hall and Ibrahima and believed that the episodes of violence had been provoked by Ibrahima and his supporters. Cermenati also saw the colonial administrators as favouring the non-Catholic missions such as the Church Missionary Society (CMS), except when he was fortunate enough to find an active Roman Catholic among their number. When Ibrahima was brought to trial, having fomented the violence by mobilising both pagans and CMS converts, Cermenati believed the outcome was rigged. When there was counter-violence in response, internal tribal dissidents and possible outside agitators were blamed, but Cermenati was also suspected of involvement and he was effectively deported.
Byng-Hall may seem an archetypal example of Perham’s “middle-aged Englishman,” apart from forebears on his grandmother’s side who were aristocratic Germans, signalled by his original hyphenated surname “Weichs.” At all levels of British society, the desire to avoid inflaming anti-German prejudice during the Great War led to the adoption of new place names and new surnames, like Windsor and Mountbatten. In Hall’s case, a distant connection with an illustrious admiral was relied on to substitute Byng for Weichs, but Hogan surmises that this German connection may explain Byng-Hall’s failure to acquire any level of the imperial honours normally conferred on senior colonial servants.  

Perhaps this shaky genealogy made Byng-Hall even more forthright in demonstrating his English credentials as a fervent follower of Lugard, but his assertive behaviour was also in keeping with directions from his supervisor, Gowers; prevailing Colonial Office directives; and those written by Lugard. The Colonial Office and Lugard did not always speak with one voice. Lugard issued his own directives, often without prior consultation, and even concealed their existence from the home government. He published privately, and circulated confidentially, his 1906 directives and later issued an expurgated version for public consumption. This version is available digitally as “Political memoranda: revision of instructions to political officers on subjects chiefly political and administrative 1913-1918.”

Byng-Hall had shown back in 1920 that he was willing to uphold the presumed moral code required of traditional rulers when he participated in the deposition of the Emir of Zaria on charges of corruption which had been actively promoted by a Protestant missionary. While the Lieutenant Governor agreed with this action, Governor Clifford felt constrained by Lugard’s diktat that missionaries should stay out of the affairs of the Islamic emirs, and the emir was reinstated. Byng-Hall may have drawn lessons for the future when he was censured over this incident for undermining the status of the emirate. When Ibrahima was tried on similar charges, Byng-Hall was commissioned by Gowers to conduct an official investigation and, on
his recommendation, the Atta was reinstated despite the shaky nature of some of the evidence used to clear him.

Ibrahima is portrayed by Hogan as “a bright young man on the make.” The nature of his pagan title—the Attaship—was clouded in uncertainty and not at all comparable to the Emirs who were the Lugardian power brokers in the Province. But Ibrahima worked hard to strengthen the presumed powers of the office and eliminate or alienate his internal rivals, and the office was legitimated in 1922 as a basis for indirect rule. One way of emulating the Emirs was for Ibrahima to convert to Islam and demonstrate his diligence by the prescribed visits to Mecca. In the end, this never washed with the Emirs as a claim for parity, and he was equally unconvincing as a local leader when it came time to make the transition towards independence. Nevertheless, he was a nimble enough negotiator to hold office for nearly forty years.

Hogan weaves a skilful narrative from his material, predominantly chronological, showing the elements of harmony and discord in Igbirra society. There are four major set-piece chapters: “the Oka Palaver” (a traditional form of reconciliation convened by Gowers to try to work out a solution to the local tensions); “Ibrahima in the Dock”; “Cermenati in the Dock”; and “the Bangedi Uprising” (against Ibrahima). In this last chapter, mysterious “bit-players” add to the drama, particularly the court interpreter who is revealed as pursuing his own agenda in the way he misrepresented significant evidence rendered in the local dialect and then later joined in the uprising.23

Framing the context for events, there is an informative discussion of the political and ecclesiastical setting at the start of the book and a valuable epilogue and afterword. In these general sections, there are signposts for identifying the wider issues in play and a sensitive portrayal of the administrative context of the wider missionary bureaucracy which operated in counterpoise to the colonial administration. It is clear from the official records that Cermenati would have been a considerable nuisance to both parties.
Cermenati’s story and those of the other protagonists give colour and substance to the discussions of indirect rule in Perham. The Catholics and missionaries in general are seen by Perham in her earlier writings as marginal, despite her own muscular Christianity. Neither Lugard nor Gowers had much time for missionaries because of their perceived deleterious effect on the authority of traditional rulers. However, using Roland Oliver’s categorisation that there are two versions of Perham separated in time, the second Perham who emerged after 1942 became aware of the value of modern education for the emerging political elite and thus the key role to be played by mission schools in the absence of state-provided schooling.

Disputes over education are at the heart of Hogan’s story, just as they are for the whole history of political modernisation in Nigeria.

Cermenati’s distrust of British colonialism derived in part from his accurate perception that British policy in all of Northern Nigeria favoured Islam over Christianity. He had no objection in principle to colonisation: “Pacification, the construction of roads, the regulation of trade, the imposition of the rule of law, were all measures that facilitated missionary activity.” The particular issue at stake was the acquisition of land to erect Catholic schools which would be accessible to pagans and attract them into religious observance as a necessary price for entry. One of the provocative gestures of Ibrahima was, after his own conversion to Islam, to promise privileged access to imams and Islamic schooling. This allowed him to align himself with the Lugardian precept and promulgated guidelines that allowed Christian missions to operate in pagan areas but required the avoidance at all costs of any competition or challenge to Islam.

Contrast Cermenati’s views with those of Byng-Hall. Hogan quotes Byng-Hall writing in his official Annual Report of 1922 that these (mission) schools are reported to be a cause of great discontent among the natives who leave them. The education they received has unsettled them for ordinary farm work which their parents wish them to do. Yet it is of such a very
low type that it does not fit them for employment by government, the Native Administration or the Trading Firms, and they wander from town to town seeking employment.  

In the following year, Byng-Hall repeats the point, noting by way of contrast that the ninety-six Islamic schools in the province had caused little disruption and did not raise the same lofty aspirations. He suggests that development of the (secular) rural school model should be given priority, “with its healthy emphasis on technical subjects.” The Atta was reported as enthusiastically supportive of this project, allocating land at Okene for the project, and including the necessary farmland for vocational training. Cermenati visited Okene shortly afterwards, complaining to the Atta that one-third of Catholic mission students had left. He was told that this was because the village heads were unwilling to let their boys continue at the mission school. (Okene later became the flashpoint of violence in which Cermenati was suspected of being involved, although Hogan does not exclude the possibility that the violence was the product of scheming by Ibrahima.)

A few years later, facing deportation, Cermenati gave vent to his frustrations in a passage which conveys his emotional approach to his work and his sense of personal paranoia:

I was so content in Okene, making plans for the future, and I did not in the least suspect that the Resident and his friend, who with smiling countenances promised they would roof the school house before the rains, were about to stab me in the back. So much for so-called British Gentlemen! And so much for the much-vaunted “British Justice! ... Yet, despite it all, despite their attempts to reduce the Igbirra to slavery, God will have the last word and will save the Igbirra. We are in this country to save souls through Christian civilisation; the Government of Nigeria wants to have an Islamic civilisation. In time, they will reap what they have sown. In the meantime, I am to be their scapegoat.”

In his Epilogue, Hogan goes on to describe the reaping, particularly as it applied to Ibrahima. Ibrahima was ignominiously de-
posed, as post-war opinion shifted among both the Igbirra and the colonial administrators, and he became as big an embarrassment to the authorities as Cermenati had before him. This change was also accompanied by a transformation regarding education policy, an awareness of the need for the preparation of future leaders and self-governing citizens, a need that was inevitably met in the short term by the expansion of mission schools.

Hogan also records the downward slide in the fortunes of Cermenati. After a brief respite working in Togo, he returned to an unsatisfactory existence in Italy; his exertions had wounded him mentally as well as physically, and he died in 1942 still angry at the way he had been treated.

The outcome for the third protagonist was altogether more positive and Byng-Hall retired with full official recognition that his actions had been endorsed by those he most admired. Like so many of his confreres—Gowers and Lugard included—he suffered from a failed first marriage, but, also like Gowers and Lugard, he found solace in a second marriage—in this case after his retirement to Canada. Hogan records that the son of the first marriage, John Felix, had first been sent to be brought up in New Zealand by a cousin and then moved as a young man to work on the land in Kenya. Father and son spent time together in Kenya after John Felix chose to marry and settle there. His wife was a Gowers relative and John Felix Byng-Hall escorted the bride down the aisle when I married another Gowers in Namirembe Cathedral in Kampala in 1963.

In summary, the two books have a special personal appeal but also deserve a wider readership than sentimental geriatrics. Taken together, they provide the feel for what Indirect Rule actually meant in practice, particularly when it was practised in somewhat similar but not identical locations to those for which it was devised. Over the course of a long career, Perham came to appreciate that those working with the best intentions—however “unobtrusive and kindly”—might still be creating problems for future generations. Cermenati
came to learn this the hard way, up close and personal, and suffered for his God.
Notes

3. Recent technological improvements allow digital readers to see contemporary documents. See, for example, “Administration of tropical colonies” (1905) which offers a digital copy of a Colonial Office file containing letters from Sir Frederick Lugard and Sir Charles Bruce and responses from Alfred Lyttelton, Secretary of State for the Colonies, and a newspaper article (by E D Morel), concerning administrative reforms in the West African colonies and the role of the High Commissioner and Governor. Colonial Office, “Empire On-Line: Administration of tropical colonies,” (Adam Matthew Digital, 1905).
7. Ian F Nicolson, *The administration of Nigeria, 1900-1960: men, methods and myths* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1969), 125. “Lugard had succeeded in a propaganda campaign directed to the creation and manipulation of his own fame as an administrator, and of the myth of the superiority of his territory, and his methods, over all others. The achievements of sword, pen, and tongue wrecked the plan for ordered peaceful development in the new ‘undeveloped estate.’”
9. The courses were named after the Duke of Devonshire, a junior Minister in the Colonial Office, who chaired a Colonial Office curriculum committee dominated by Perham.
10. I was frequently in Nuffield but not of Nuffield: Rhodes Scholarship rules forbade enrolment in postgraduate colleges at that time, just as they forbade matrimony for the first two years of the scholarship. Among my fellow students similarly placed was Joe Nye, who was a colleague in Uganda before going on
to a stellar career in the teaching and practice of international relations in the United States. Enabling students to make these contacts had been going on for a long time at Oxford. Doug Munro reports on the links which aided the early career development of Professor Jim Davidson, a distinguished foundation professor at the Australian National University School of Pacific Studies. Davidson worked briefly on a project with Margery Perham in her earliest wartime years at Nuffield. See Doug Munro, *The ivory tower and beyond: participant historians of the Pacific* (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009).


16 Gowers facilitated the work, not only of Perham, but also of a young social anthropologist from the London School of Economics, Lucy Mair, who had been urged to undertake her fieldwork in Uganda by her supervisor, Bronislaw Malinowski. Mair’s mother wrote to Gowers on the basis of her husband (Lord Beveridge) knowing Gowers’ brother Ernest. Mair was another to benefit from a Rockefeller grant, studying the sociological context of indirect rule in Uganda which led to her book on primitive government. Gowers assured Lucy’s anxious mother that her daughter, unless motivated to hunt elephants, would face fewer dangers than she would living in London. Lucy went on to a professorship and a distinguished academic career. Faught notes that Perham was also motivated by her earliest travels to study briefly under Malinowski before other commitments intervened. (p.88)

17 Nicolson, 239. Jeremy White, in his 1981 book, argues that Nicolson’s book is “marred by a bias against Lugard which exceeds Perham’s bias in favour of

See Chapter 5, “Some problems of unification 1914-1948, education and the Christian missions,” White, *Central administration in Nigeria*, 100-31. Jeremy White’s study of Nigerian administration devotes a full chapter to education, explaining officialdom’s hostility to mission education in general and desire to control its availability. Lugard’s own directions concerning education had specified that missions should stay out of Muslim areas but should have free rein among pagans. His successors ignored his caveats, the Colonial Office maintained a studious ambiguity amounting to inactivity, and in practice missions were discouraged from creating instability in the whole of the North, pagans included. White suggests that “the net result of these developments was the growth of a tradition that western education needed to be treated somewhat like a hothouse plant, as something to be handled with such care that few people were fitted either to administer it or to receive it.”

Faught, 76.


Another possible explanation for his lack of honours was the fact that his career was conducted in what amounted to a backwater, whereas the domains of the emirs were considered the mainstream. The “pagan” provinces within the North were considered marginal in career terms. See John Ballard, “‘Pagan administration’ and political developments in Northern Nigeria,” *Savanna* 1, no. 1 (1972), cited in White, *Central administration in Nigeria*, 97.

The memoranda are included in Governor-General Lugard’s 1919 “Report on Nigeria”, in a Colonial Office file: Colonial Office, “Empire On-line: Governor-General Lugard’s 1919 Report on Nigeria,” (Adam Matthew Digital, 1919). Lugard’s obituary in the journal *African Affairs* comments that “This period (1907-1919) saw the culmination of the ideas of government he had been building up in his famous ‘Political Memoranda’, which were adapted from Northern to Southern Nigeria, to become the basis of the whole theory of Indirect Rule”. H R Tate, John Eaglesome, and Selwyn Grier, “Lugard,” *African Affairs* 44, no. 176 (1945), 102.

This is a potent example of the reign of the intermediaries. See Benjamin Lawrance, Emily Osborn, and Richard Roberts, eds., *Intermediaries, interpreters and clerks: African employees in the making of colonial Africa* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 2006). Roberts quotes an observer describing the scene in French Africa of interpreters “keeping the commandant
turning in a narrow circle of intrigues out of which he had no escape because he was dependent upon them for information, for translation, for mediation, and often also for the basic necessities of daily life, such as food, labour and sexual services.” Richard Roberts, “Africa and empire: the unintended consequences,” in *Africa, Empire and Globalisation*, ed. Toyin Falola and Emily Browness (Durham: Carolina Academic Press, 2011), 407.

24 Gowers did however receive a gracious thank-you note on leaving Uganda from a Catholic missionary implicitly dissociating himself from the more puritanical views of the CMS.

25 Roland Oliver, “Prologue - the two Miss Perhams,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 19, no. 3 (1991). Cited in Faught, 95;159-161. Oliver’s article is part of a special issue of the journal on “Margery Perham and British Rule in Africa.” A taste of the pre-1942 Perham can be gleaned from her commentary on an anthology of exploration. She writes admiringly of the orderly bureaucracy which was operated by the Bugandan kabakaship of Speke’s time, noting with regret that the price paid for this order was the divine right to do wrong, that it was only the arrival of Europeans and rival missionaries which caused the system to collapse. She further comments that even the first British Commissioner who implemented a form of Indirect Rule reckoned the Baganda experienced lives of ideal happiness under the old regime. Margery Perham and J Simmons, eds., “The purpose and character of the anthology,” *African Discovery: an anthology of exploration* (London: Faber and Faber, 1942), 19.

26 White confirms that this was a wholly reasonable presumption, pointing to an exchange between Lugard and a 1918 gathering of Northern Province resident officers where objections were raised about the aggressive proselytizing of the CMS (the Protestant mission organization). The northerners’ views as summarized in a memorandum from Lieutenant Governor Goldsmith suggested that the system of native courts “was based to a very large extent on the maintenance and recognition of the Mohammedan religion.” (The emphasis was added by White, who continued that such a statement of policy meant that “far from trying to maintain an understandably neutral position in matters of religion the Northern Administration had actually committed itself to supporting a religion completely alien to it.” White, *Central administration in Nigeria*, 107.

27 Hogan, *Berengario Cermenati*, 41.

28 Ibid, 88-89.

29 Ibid, 183-84.
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ROGER SCOTT, Emeritus Professor, was appointed as an Honorary Professor in the School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics at the University of Queensland in January 2010. He had previously held senior appointments within several Australian universities, including the inaugural Vice-Chancellorship of the University of Canberra, and he served as Director-General of Education in the Queensland Government in the 1990s. Before joining History to work on an oral history project, he held fractional and then honorary appointments in the School of Political Science and International Studies.

He has published extensively across a range of disciplines, including public administration, public policy, education and development administration. The topics of his publications include the Queensland public service in the 1990s, African colonial and post-colonial development, Northern Ireland in the 1970s, education and politics in Queensland in the 1980s, and the changing role of universities.