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Author

Isabirye, Stephen B.

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Kumar Rupesinghe, ed. *Conflict Resolution in Uganda*. London/Athens, Ohio: James Currey/Ohio University Press, 1989, viii + 308 pp.

This book is a compilation of some of the essays delivered at a Makerere University seminar in September 1987. It is the second international thinkpiece put out by Makerere Academia since 1986. (The last one being *Beyond Crisis: Development Issues in Uganda, 1987*, edited by Paul D. Wiebe and Cole P. Dodge).

The main issues covered in the book pertain to the nature of the various forms of conflict in Uganda. Following the introduction, the book deals in its second and third parts with the historical roots of the conflicts in the country, and with political institutions and ideology. Part Four examines economic problems and the conflicts it generates and the fifth part covers the international dimensions to the conflicts in Uganda.

In his introduction, Kumar Rupesinghe looks at the role of the state in the fermentation of conflict in Third World countries. He examines the problem of democratization in a militarized situation such as Uganda. He also analyzes the problems of economic transformation in Uganda whereby, as in other African and Third World countries, the state has instituted its own form of terror as a means of perpetuating its rule. My main query with Rupesinghe's analysis at this point is his attempt to minimize the role of international involvement in propping up state terrorism in Third World countries such as Uganda. Though terror often occurs when a regime runs out of support in its civilian polity, evidence suggests that such regimes are supported from the outside, in the form of grants, loans, military hardware and even torture devices. Therefore, the modern authoritarian regime in the Third World is also a product of international sponsorship.

Lwanga-Lunyiigo and Ginywera-Pinywera examine the salient root causes of the conflicts prevalent in the country. Lwanga-Lunyiigo concludes that replicating exotic political models alien to the realities in the country will be an exercise in futility. He suggests that the country's destiny lies in its own abilities to create viable political, social and economic institutions that could withstand the conflicts it has generated. Ginywera-Pinywera looks at the historical evolution of the "Northern Problem" and cautions that the North may follow the same separatist tendencies of Southern Sudan

if the socio-historical problems in the region are not addressed positively. He should have pointed out the Lakwena Uprising as a consequence of not resolving these problems in the region.

Yoram Barongo, Abraham Kiapi, Dan Mudoola, Khiddu-Makubuya, Ijuka Kabumba and Ruth Mukama examine the political institutions and ideology in the country. Barongo makes an analytical examination of concepts such as "Cultural" and "Ethnic" Pluralism. He argues that Cultural Pluralism has little relevance in understanding the violent conflicts in the country. However, I feel that his differentiation between Cultural and Ethnic Pluralism is rather blurry because ethnic entities have also cultures. Therefore, the author should have amalgamated the two Pluralisms (i.e. an Ethno-Cultural paradigm) to make sense of what he wanted to convey rather than trying to separate the two concepts. Barongo and Kiapi share the same view that the country must have a unitary form of government. However, Barongo believes that a strong unitary government can exist side by side with strong local governments. The two authors, especially Kiapi, discuss what mode of constitution the country should have. Kiapi maintains that the multi-party system in Uganda should be maintained. He cites other forms of constitutions, including those of the United States, France, Switzerland and the Soviet Union. The two authors, like other circles seem to suggest that the root cause of violent conflict in the country lies in the dysfunctional constitution framework the country has had for a long time. This argument does not hold, for, it is the political, social and economic institutions that determine the workability or unworkability of a constitution. Closer to home, they cite Nigeria's form of Federalism as a constitutional alternative, and yet by the mere fact that the country's two elected governments have both been overthrown leaves much to be desired as to whether that form of government could work in Uganda.

Mudoola's paper gives us a historical and political analysis of the conflicts within the military. However, his essay does not deal with the problem of having the military in the first place. First of all, the military serves various interests in power. Second, having a large military (in Uganda, estimated at 60,000 strong) puts a drain on the country's resources. It is therefore of little surprise that the military in Uganda and most other Third World countries has proven to be a parasite that drains valuable resources earmarked for "development" in addition to being an instrument

that perpetuates instability in the country. Even if no one group has an exclusive monopoly on the military as the Ugandan situation suggests, the regime's ability to discipline the army becomes a big problem, resulting in more social disorder and eventual atrophy of the incumbent regime as past instances suggest. Khiddu-Makubuya gives us a chronological formation of various paramilitary organizations such as the General Service Unit under the First Obote regime, the State Research Bureau under the Amin regime and various Post-Amin secret police organizations. As the author suggests, it remains to be seen whether the Security Organizations Statute of 1987 will curb the extra-legal abuses these organizations are known to have committed.

Kabumba and Mukama deal with ethnic conflicts within the public service sector and the national language question respectively. If Kabumba put into perspective, the class dimension of the so-called ethnic conflicts within the public service, we should have got a better scenario behind the dynamics of such contentions. However, he does so, in a latent manner, when he suggests that ethnic conflicts are often more evident at the top echelons of the civil service. Mukama's analysis suggests that the country's quest for a national language is far from being resolved.

Firimooni Banugire and Apolo Nsibambi examine the status of the economy with an emphasis on land distribution. Banugire looks at the deterioration of social and economic institutions and the increasing marginalization of the low income workers and peasants in an economy that continues to falter. He advocates social changes in the political and economic arenas as a means of arresting the deteriorating economic situation. While Banugire approaches the economic situation from a bottom-up approach (looking at the plight of low income workers and peasants), Nsibambi's approach is that of a top-bottom approach whereby he cites land disputes among the upper class elites such as Mulondo, Semakula, Kaggwa, Kulubya, Binaisa, etc. Unlike Banugire who advocates social change, Nsibambi seems to support the status-quo in the country's socio-economic relations.

There are several contradictions in Nsibambi's analysis. First, he argues that the land problem is not a very big issue in the country and yet he indicates in the Mbale vs. Bugisu Co-operative Union (B.C.U.) Ltd. case, that peasants are discontented with the legacies of Kakungulu, a British agent who grabbed a lot of land as he conquered that area on behalf of British Imperialism. From Nsibambi's analysis, it

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seems the current land dispossessions by the B.C.U. is also backed by its protege The World Bank. He does a good job of describing corruption in high circles without analyzing the root cause of that corruption. This corruption is the result of the country's weak economic standing in the world economy and the social conflicts this predicament tends to generate. He also advances an often misconceived notion that the majority of Ugandans are capitalists. In order for one to qualify being a capitalist one needs a substantial amount of capital to invest and run a business venture. Even in the most advanced capitalist nations, real capitalists constitute a minority of the population. It may be true that as a result of the political socialization emanating from British Colonialism, a substantial number of people have "pro-capitalist" sympathies. In that case we need to differentiate between being a "pro-capitalist" and being a real "capitalist."

Akiiki Mujaju and Oliver Furley examine conflict in its internal and external context. However, the economic dimension of this conflict within these authors' analyses does not come out clearly, maybe with the exception of Furley who argues that Britain would like to keep Uganda in its sphere of influence should something happen to Kenya as the August 1, 1982 coup attempt in that country suggests.

On the whole, the book contains lively essays that depict the realities of contemporary Uganda. One objection to the essays as a whole, with the exception of Banugire's, is that Makerere Academia should outgrow the use of outmoded Oxbridge models that are increasingly incapable of explaining the country's political and economic problems.

Stephen B. Isabirye
Northern Arizona University