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REVIEW ARTICLE

Revisiting Rwanda

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After Genocide: transitional justice, post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation in Rwanda and beyond edited by PHIL CLARK and ZACHARY D. KAUFMAN
London: Hurst and Company, 2008. Pp. 399, $31.84 (pbk).

Defeat is the Only Bad News: Rwanda under Musinga, 1896–1931 by ALISON LIEBHAFSKY DES FORGES
Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011. Pp. 306, $26.95 (pbk).

Remaking Rwanda: state building and human rights after mass violence edited by SCOTT STRAUS and LARS WALDORF
Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2011. Pp. 382, $26.95 (pbk).

Resilience of a Nation: a history of the military in Rwanda by F.K. RUSAGARA
Kigali: Fountain Publishers Rwanda, 2009. Pp. 221, $31.75 (pbk).

Kigali is immaculate. Smooth roads lined with flowering gardens connect its sectors. From Nyarugenge to Kicukiro the city brims with modern cafés and shops, towering buildings and sidewalks. It is difficult to imagine Rwanda twenty-two years ago, ravaged by a rebel incursion, and even harder to imagine it eighteen years ago, during the genocide that first brought Rwanda to international attention. In subsequent years, this attention was, and in many cases continues to be, coloured by guilt over the international community's inaction while approximately 800,000 people were slaughtered. But in recent years academics' and practitioners' praise for Paul Kagame's accomplishments in socio-economic development and reconstruction have turned to criticism

over the government's increasingly authoritarian slant. Few, however, considered Rwanda's past beyond Juvénal Habyarimana's genocidal regime, and many continue to uncritically accept the Rwandan Patriotic Front's (RPF's) official historical narrative.

Then, as now, Alison Des Forges' work stood out. Even in the 1960s, she was among the first in the region to question the official, mostly conventional, narratives. She consulted oral and written sources to write *Defeat is the Only Bad News*, documenting Rwanda's rule under Musinga between 1896 and 1931. The book, which began as her PhD thesis, was edited by David Newbury and published following her death in 2009.

Frank K. Rusagara follows Des Forges' commitment to analytically documenting Rwanda's past. In *Resilience of a Nation*, he traces the formation of the Rwandan state from the twelfth century through to the present day, focusing on the military institution and its historical role in providing security and promoting national unity through socio-political reconstruction. Although both authors address distinct institutions within Rwanda's past, Rusagara adopts the *longue durée* approach to his study, permitting him to analyse continuity and change over the long term, drawing attention to the resonance of the past in the present structure and function of the RPF. Des Forges, alternately, focuses on a particular reign, a specific moment in the past, allowing her to explore more contextual factors in greater depth to highlight the complexities and intricacies of acquiring power – and retaining it – in Rwanda. Arguably, such difficulties characterise the current regime as much as they did Musinga's rule.

By contrast, *Remaking Rwanda*, edited by Scott Straus and Lars Waldorf, is dedicated to Alison Des Forges' memory, and based on conferences held in her honour. Similarly, *After Genocide*, edited by Phil Clark and Zachary D. Kaufman, grew from three conferences dedicated to the Rwandan genocide – the society torn apart by it and efforts to mend its rent fabric. Des Forges' *Defeat is the Only Bad News* focuses our attention to the historical build-up to genocide, while *Remaking Rwanda* and *After Genocide* explore the reconstruction that followed in its wake. Both books critically assess developments in governance and justice, while considering the impact of the politicisation of the country's history on the formation of national identity and broader reconciliation processes. The authors also examine the greater regional, international and historical contexts in which these changes unfolded. *Remaking Rwanda* additionally explores the politics of land, but *After Genocide* encompasses a much wider range of voices and opinions in its

discussions, which focus predominantly on Rwanda's contemporary judicial mechanisms. Contributors to both volumes remained true to Des Forges' legacy: their analyses are grounded in meticulous fieldwork and raise questions the RPF is not accustomed to hearing. Rusagara's *Resilience of a Nation*, for its part, bridges the past and the present examined in the other books. These books reveal historical continuity through their commitment to rigorous research. Most importantly, they offer analyses of modern Rwanda rooted as much in a critical appreciation of its history as its future.

The past of the present

Defeat is the Only Bad News is an historical narrative of a specific reign, that of Musinga, and tells of a young king's struggle to gain autonomy in his own court, waged against the queen mother Kanjogera, her kin, and networks of notables' shifting allegiances. This struggle is set in the context of alliances and realignments not just of the colonising powers, but of the Catholic Church and later the Protestant and Seventh Day Adventist ones as well. Des Forges documents the internal dynamics of the kingdom's royal court at the dawn and break of colonisation, tracing the intrigues of ambition and agency between these actors and the Germans, Belgians and British. Her scrupulous attention to these competing political factions and their interplay portrays ethnicity, identity and power as inherently complex and shifting concepts, challenging accepted dichotomies of Tutsi and Hutu and the notion that their politicisation was born of Belgian rule.

Des Forges describes a central court vastly different from its surrounding regions, distinct in culture and administration, and composed primarily of Tutsi who preferred to marry between themselves. Some Hutu were notables, and many in the central kingdom were of mixed heritage. Musinga's reign is portrayed as a period of turbulent alliances and counter-alliances, some of which were repercussions of his father's rule. Rwabugiri, for example, reconfigured administrative posts to reward his loyalists at court and punish dissidents and indigenous opposition to his rule. These former leaders sought alliances with the Germans, much as the Hutu later sought alliances with the Catholic Church, to counter Musinga's court. The court, for its part, allied with the colonial powers or the church when it needed their resources to suppress uprisings, or to counter the growing politico-economic ambitions of one or the other – only to reverse its position when circumstances changed.

This endless rebalancing of power through shifting alliances between these actors was a complex chess game of tactical manipulation, one that Musinga struggled to win and was destined to lose. The White Fathers of the Catholic Church quickly adopted the ways of the court, appropriating land, utilising forced labour, engaging in cattle clientship, adjudicating legal cases, and engaging in taxation. Christian converts were first chastised as *inyangarwanda* (haters of Rwanda) (Des Forges 2011: 66). As the church's power grew, the *inyangarwanda* were given cattle and used by the court as intermediaries between it and the missionaries.

The Germans, likewise, intervened in what was traditionally the domain of the court: executions, taxation, and pillaging areas that resisted their control. While Musinga resented their power, he also manipulated it against rebellious locals and the church. The Belgians assumed the role left by the Germans, going as far as changing the kingdom's administrative structure, replacing local leaders with their own notables, and eliminating the court as the intermediary between them. The Belgians also insisted that all court appointees had a European education, and only admitted Tutsi into their schools, reifying the already extant divide between the two groups. While the Germans 'forced the Tutsi notables to lower themselves to the level of the Hutu agrarians by cultivating crops' in order to punish the court (*ibid.*: 54, 93), the Belgians even jailed Musinga and banned court rituals. Throughout this period, the court's power and authority was not only challenged but also usurped by the church and colonial forces, leading to the delegitimisation of Musinga's kingdom, which Rusagara portrayed as Rwandans' reconfiguration of their views of the monarchy as an institution which served the colonialists. To his credit, the king managed to balance and even counter these powers on numerous occasions, but his opponents were equally skilled at manipulating them against Musinga and one another. Thus the church and the Belgians were not the unified power depicted by Rusagara.

In his treatment of this period, Rusagara views Musinga's rule as contemporaneous with 'the demise of the traditional Rwandan military', emphasising the role of the merciless Belgian *Force Publique* under King Leopold II and the context of World War I (2009: 71). In *Resilience of a Nation*, accounts of the intrigues and oscillating alliances traced by Des Forges are postulated as 'the Belgo-Roman Catholic Church conspiracy' to promote 'the ascent of the Tutsi caste', whose realisation necessitated 'a colonial breakdown of the cultural core that held the Rwandan society together' (*ibid.*: 89). While both authors convey the usurpation of the kingdom's authority by foreign powers, as well as the pre-colonial

vocational and social differences between Tutsi and Hutu, Des Forges' narrative contradicts commonly postulated notions of a cohesive, unified pre-colonial Rwandan society and an equally unified, impregnable state, which Rusagara's account perpetuates. Des Forges recounts how armed resistance to the Court's authority in the north continued through the 1920s, even after the Belgians' arrival, and Bushiru practised self-rule until 1924. Some areas of the south and south-west also retained their independence until the 1920s, when the court conquered them only with Belgian support. David Newbury, in his introduction, describes the ruthless conquest of these areas under Musinga's father, and Rusagara visualises it through an impressive mapping of Rwanda's historical expansion. The kingdom may have included Ijwi island in the middle of Lake Kivu, and stretched to Bushi and Masisi (now in the DRC) and Ankole (Uganda), but, according to Des Forges, the court's actual power and administrative presence did not reach these areas.

This expansion from the centre and subsequent integration of adjacent territories occurred through what Des Forges (2011: 6, 12) terms 'social armies' and embodied '*ku-aanda*' and what Rusagara (2009: 5, 43) explains as the ideological foundation (and physical administrative structure) of the Rwandan state. Rusagara traces this ideology and its implementation through the history of the Rwandan military, and state, in *Resilience of a Nation*. Rusagara, a military historian with the Rwandan Defence Forces, Brigadier General and Defence Attaché at the Rwanda High Commission in London, cites Des Forges, but presents these conquered lands as very much integrated into the kingdom – socially, culturally and administratively – through the military structure and *ku-aanda*, whose practice supposedly fostered and solidified Rwandan nationalism. Des Forges' narrative, however, negates such conceptualisations of internal harmony, social cohesion, and ubiquitous administrative authority throughout Rwanda's pre-colonial domain. Rusagara's narrative is as historically nuanced as that of Des Forges, but its analysis, presumably partly due to the political past and affiliations of its author, evokes the conventional, state-endorsed understanding of the unity of Rwanda's pre-colonial society and the strength of its state.

The present and the future

Today's Rwanda is a combination of the ideal described by Rusagara – a state inseparable from its military institution, which demarcates

administrative structures and dominates socio-economic development through a government born of an army – and the reality portrayed by Des Forges, namely a state struggling to unify its people amidst shifting alliances and struggles, both within its ruling elites and between them and the international community. The Rwanda that emerges from these dynamics is a state whose independence in policy formation and implementation belies its dependence on foreign aid, which accounts for more than 50% of the national budget (Strauss & Waldorf 2011: 12). To explain this paradox, Eugenia Zorbas' chapter in *Remaking Rwanda* refers to donors' guilt over international inaction during the genocide, while Hayman, Strauss and Waldorf cite the RPF's usage of 'donor-friendly language and positioning' and defiant stance against 'western neo-colonialism' and for 'Rwandan self-reliance' (*ibid.*: 15). Complicating the contemporary chess game of Rwandan politics is the donors' shift in emphasis from state–citizen accountability to 'good governance', which is notoriously difficult to define and measure. While many years have passed since Musinga's rule, the state remains embroiled in a game of tactical manipulation, this time played by the RPF, and within it, and by international donors. While the participants have changed, the intrigues and conflicts that marked their interactions in the past continue to characterise them in the present. Similarly, the interactions of the local population with such politics are as complex today as they were during the periods described by Des Forges and Rusagara.

This is the Rwanda with which academics and practitioners grapple in the books *Remaking Rwanda* and *After Genocide*. The authors of *Remaking Rwanda* were all influenced and inspired by Des Forges' work. The picture they paint of Rwanda, so many years after Des Forges portrayed the country under Musinga, is an ominous one, raising concern over the 'donor darling's' policies of socio-economic reconstruction and development, and their potentially disastrous consequences of paradoxically repeating the past they are instituted to prevent. Focusing on the relationship between civil society and the state, the contributors explore Rwanda's decentralisation, land consolidation, approaches to justice, and efforts to promote national unity. The authors of *After Genocide* also address justice and reconciliation, but the image they convey of the post-genocide state is a much more complex one. The contributors include Rwanda's President Paul Kagame (as author of the book's preface) as well as *persona non grata* René Lemarchand, who alleges that the genocide would not have occurred had Kagame's forces not invaded in 1990. The volume also features genocide survivor Jean Baptiste

Kayigamba, and Helen Hintjens, who accuses Kayigamba of perpetuating the racist logic of the genocide by self-identifying as a Tutsi. The authors' voices offer convincing, conflicting and contradictory views of a country that is simultaneously pursuing the intertwined and at times discordant goals of justice, truth, reconciliation and peace. Their analyses convey apprehension as well as hope, reflecting the complexity of the Rwandan reality, and the bipolarity of the academic analyses that seek to understand it.

What makes *Remaking Rwanda* unique is its attention to land politics, which garner less academic attention than topics like justice and national unity, despite being equally salient to state and social reconstruction. Bert Ingelaere discusses the RPF's decentralisation policy and its implications for accountability and representation. Even though the policy was adopted in 2000, it took six years to redraw and relabel the map. The new structure, however, has disproportionately empowered executive secretaries, appointed by central authorities in Kigali, originating from outside the sectors they are to govern, and predominantly of Tutsi ethnicity. Before decentralisation, local Hutu occupied these positions. The author notes the similarities between this administrative structure and that of the preceding Hutu republics, which enabled the effective administration of violence. Arguably, the highly controlled and centralised state structure is an historical one, rooted in the principles on which Rwanda was founded and organised. In pre-colonial times, however, the kingdom was not powerful enough to fulfil these aspirations; today, the state is.

In the greater context of development and post-genocide reconstruction, decentralisation has coincided with changes to the agricultural and penal sectors. Granted, the land tenure system the RPF inherited was nearly incomprehensible: customary and colonial, written and unwritten, regionally distinct, according to the chapter by Paul Gready. The land reform process seeks to provide security of tenure through registration and official titles, facilitating transactions and taxation, while contributing to the vision of a privatised, modernised agricultural sector by commercialising production and encouraging regional crop specialisation. However, according to Catharine Newbury's chapter, non-compliance is met with coercion and harsh penalties. An Ansoms stresses the unproven efficacy of mono-cropping and regional specialisation in ameliorating poverty and improving economic growth, especially since mixed cropping allows for risk-diversification in Rwanda's varied climatic conditions and soil types.

The professionalisation and commercialisation of the agricultural sector were tied to the consolidation of small farms into larger units. The government-sponsored villagisation programme aims to redress land disputes and shortages resulting from the return of refugees, and increase security and access to healthcare and sanitation. Newbury criticises the programme for failing to assist residents in constructing new homes, not compensating them for buildings destroyed in the process, and increasing their commute between homes and fields. Most alarming, according to Newbury, is that the policy reified social tensions around land, often along ethnic lines. Previous housing patterns were ethnically diverse, while new villages are mostly occupied by a single ethnic group. In ethnically mixed villages, more resources are available to Tutsi than to Hutu. Chris Huggins stresses that this inequality is exacerbated by local authorities who accept bribes or award land to their close relatives.

The repercussions of such policies, as the authors stress, are extremely important because 80–90% of the population depends on land for their very subsistence, and Rwanda remains one of the most densely populated countries in Africa. Decentralisation and land redistribution, they further argue, have been synonymous with the extension of state control, reflecting a continuity with Rwanda's past. Moreover, land has historically been a nexus of violence. Fears of losing land to the invading RPF forces or future Tutsi repatriates were manipulated by the genocidal regime to garner supporters, who were later rewarded with land. Even earlier, missionaries, like notables and later colonists, granted their supporters land as well, and punished dissidence by revoking it. Considering this history, the authors' apprehensiveness towards decentralisation and land redistribution is more than vindicated.

While the RPF's reforms in the agricultural sector were meant to simplify administration, increase coherence and promote development, changes in the penal sector have rendered it more complex. In the wake of the genocide, the government vowed that perpetrators would face justice – in a country whose infrastructure and institutions had been decimated by nearly half a decade of war. In 1998, the prison population swelled to 130,000 people. They were ordinary men and women, from government officials and intellectuals to impoverished farmers. Many had no previous infractions, and had never before experienced incarceration; now, some found themselves in jail for more than a decade, without charges being brought against them and without trial. Carina Tertsakian poses two interpretations of this situation: the

government's lack of capacity to address the juridical consequences of the genocide, and the RPF's pursuit of vengeance against the Hutu. She posits that the international silence vis-à-vis the situation stems from the horror of the genocide and the international community's inaction, which 'created a blind spot in our collective and individual response to human suffering and has obscured objective realities. This blind spot is perhaps the greatest challenge to genuine reconstruction and democratization in post-genocide Rwanda' (Straus & Waldorf 2011: 211).

Tertsakian makes a very valid point, illustrating what other academics and practitioners like Filip Reyntjens (2004) have called the RPF's 'genocide credit'. Victor Peskin argues in his chapter that as a result of the very same guilt, the ICTR (International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda) has not indicted a single RPF suspect implicated in massacres of Hutu in 1994 (Straus & Waldorf 2011: 173). Jason Stearns, Frederico Borello and Filip Reyntjens stress that the RPF has similarly evaded accountability for crimes committed in the DRC. For its part, the RPF has likened calls for such prosecutions to genocidal ideology and negationism, particularly because the regime's legitimacy is wedded to its role in stopping the genocide and rescuing its victims. Should the international community ever forget, this interpretation is immortalised in Tutsi Genocide memorials and sites of remembrance throughout the country, as Jens Meierhenrich notes in his chapter.

Justice, already complicated by the sheer numbers of perpetrators and the RPF's *de facto* impunity, is further problematised by the four-tier evolution of the penal system and the difficulty of discerning the truth of criminal allegations relating to the genocide. Some Rwandan communities have experienced international trials at the UN-sponsored ICTR in Arusha, transnational trials in European countries, military and civilian trials in the state's domestic courts, and local ones in community-implemented courts called *gacaca*, as recounted by Max Rettig in *Remaking Rwanda* and Jallow and Clark in *After Genocide*. The ICTR, despite Chief Prosecutor Hassan Bubacar Jallow's vehement endorsements, is far removed from the lived reality of most Rwandans, who feel their traumatic experiences are compromised by the lack of witness support and reparations for genocide survivors, as well as the corruption of the court, as Martin Ngoga, Prosecutor-General of the Republic of Rwanda, rightly argues. Notably, both prosecutors' contrasting analyses of these systems appear in *After Genocide*.

The goals of this complex judicial network are to promote truth, justice and reconciliation. As Max Rettig, Don Webster, Victor Peskin and Carina Tertsakian assert in *Remaking Rwanda*, the efficacy of

the system in achieving its goals is questionable, at best. At worst, it has exacerbated social tensions and convoluted the truth it was meant to ascertain. From his work in southern Rwanda, Rettig concludes that most residents are intimately familiar only with community trials, whose verdicts they perceive as riddled with half-truths, lies and efforts to settle old scores. *Gacaca* was even viewed as having increased conflicts over land and housing, which, along with disputes over infidelity, contributed to false accusations. According to Webster, community trials also complicated fact-finding at the ICTR. Witness testimony at ICTR feeds back into *gacaca*, generating new cases and more documentation that then re-enters litigation at the tribunal. *Gacaca* requires prisoners to give full confessions and identify co-conspirators, breeding more confessions, accusations and counter-accusations. Notwithstanding these problems, *gacaca*'s central objective is reconciliation – the reconstruction of Rwandan society through healing and forgiveness. Phil Clark argues that *gacaca's* capacity to promote this restorative justice by providing space and time for public discourse and debate, of which the previously antagonistic parties are integral parts, is often overlooked by critics. Arguably, this form of justice fosters reconciliation far more than the punitive verdicts of traditional court trials.

Tertsakian argues that conditions for release from jail, exchanging the sentence for community work, suffer from the same problems as some *gacaca* hearings. She describes how prisoners fabricated confessions to qualify for release, implicated others in crimes they may have never committed, took responsibility for crimes committed by loved ones to keep them out of prison, and colluded to settle old disputes. She concludes, 'the truth became more and more elusive, until the confessions lost their very meaning' (Straus & Waldorf 2011: 216). It is this manipulation of the system that jeopardises its goals of reconciliation and social reconstruction, perhaps much more than any inherent flaw in the system itself.

While it is difficult to attribute such policies' disconcerting social repercussions to calculated state agency, lamentable implementation, or the population's manipulation, Timothy Longman and Paul Gready provide further examples to support claims of the RPF's furtive control, and suppression, of civil society. They argue that while the RPF overtly supports women's networks and development groups, it also dominates them through umbrella groups and cooptation. For example, when IBUKA, a genocide survivors' umbrella group, became critical of what it viewed as the government's neglect of survivors, its leaders were replaced by RPF cadres. Gready emphasises that this control has been

reified through legislation passed in 2001, allowing the government to control the management, finances and projects of such organisations by requiring them to submit their action plans prior to implementation. He argues that mechanisms intended to protect society against repression have become devices of monitoring and control, impeding the emergence of an independent civil society, and evoking practices of pre-genocide regimes. Longman avers that the freedom of speech and of the press have been similarly stifled through press laws and legislation against 'divisionism' and 'genocide ideology' (*ibid.*: 36–9). Vaguely defined, these laws are intended to prevent ethnic violence and discrimination; they have, however, been applied to punish dissent and criticism of the RPF. According to Waldorf, the RPF's campaign against genocide ideology highlights the tension between its discourse on reconciliation (that negates ethnicity), and its battle against genocide negationism (that stresses ethnicity). He argues that the old labels of Hutu and Tutsi have simply been replaced by new ones – new case returnee, non-survivor and genocide survivor, old case returnee, respectively. René Lemarchand, Helen Hintjens, Tom Ndahiro and Susanne Buckley-Zistel address the same issues in *After Genocide*.

Overall, the authors of *Remaking Rwanda* convey a sense of foreboding and fear for a civil society marked by repression and lack of agency, in a context where negationism, divisionism and genocide ideology are intertwined with the legitimacy of the state and its metanarrative. As Sarah Freedman, Harvey Weinstein, K. L. Murphy and Timothy Longman note, governments embrace new narratives of the past in the aftermath of violent conflict to prevent its resurgence and foster national unity. Nigel Eltringham refers to Rwanda's particular metanarrative as 'the RPF healing truth', a nationalism that requires a return to the pre-colonial 'golden age' located outside living memory, to the times of Rwabugiri and the kings who preceded him in Rusagara's account, and based on the precept that ethnicity was invented by colonial powers (Straus & Waldorf 2011: 269). The RPF attempts the impossible – a restoration of a past in which ethnicity did not exist – because that past never existed. The regime's efforts to 'legislate ethnicity out of existence' have been criticised for masking the monopoly of power by Anglophone Tutsi returnees, silencing political dissent, and concealing the divide between rural and urban Rwanda (*ibid.*: 270). As the author notes, however, people nuance ethnicity in their past and reframe it in the present; their search for 'healing truth' is imbedded in a dialogue with their own personal recollections of that past. They are thus immune to the official, sanctioned narrative.

Eltringham's numerous interviews show that Rwandans do not embrace ethnicity through dichotomies, or dismiss it as a colonial fabrication; they reinstitute ethnicity, and in so doing disarm it of its deterministic, binary qualities. Lyndsay Hilker's research supports Eltringham's claims, showing that Rwandans remain acutely aware of how their history has been manipulated to legitimate power and justify violence – 'since the colonial period and long before' (*ibid.*: 316). While the RPF's version of history dominates the public sphere, Kirrily Pells argues that not even children are passive consumers of these discourses, citing examples from the 2007 summit in Kigali which sought to incorporate children's ideas into the RPF's Vision 2020. Even though government officials quickly silenced their voices, some children questioned the government for failing to address the repercussions of imprisoning their caretakers; others challenged the practicality of reconciliation, and if it was even possible. Children, just like adults, are actively engaged in reframing government narratives, and wrestling with the contradictions between RPF rhetoric and their own lived experiences.

While Pells concludes that such summits are plays of performed participation that inhibit nation-building, I would argue that they also contradict notions of a complacent, controlled civil society. If children negotiate these realities and challenge official metanarratives, their communities must do so as well, as so many contributors to this volume have demonstrated. In *After Genocide* a Tutsi genocide survivor, Jean Baptiste Kayibanda, expresses his fears that the RPF is unwittingly cultivating a culture of impunity too akin to that perpetuated by former Hutu regimes. Kayibanda wrestles with these concerns and his gratitude for the RPF's leadership halting the genocide and rebuilding a state from the ashes of war. Rwandan society struggles with the reality of their country's conflicting complexity. Perhaps academia would be best served to do likewise, analysing the contradictions, noting successes in the same articles that denote failures, and addressing the contrasting voices and arguments so powerfully juxtaposed in this volume.

While raising difficult questions concerning the present and future of this small country, in addition to many valid concerns, the contributors to *Remaking Rwanda* and *After Genocide* are careful to trace historical continuities and ground their claims in careful research, remaining loyal to Des Forges' commitment to human rights. The co-editors of *Remaking Rwanda* convey their concerns over the 'state-centred social control' that characterises the present regime much as it did the pre-genocide republics, warning of the possible consequences of promoting

development and security over freedom of speech and socio-economic equality (Straus & Waldorf 2011: 15). While the contributors note that these tendencies are rooted in Rwanda's political culture and institutions, it should be emphasised that they also resonate with the doctrine on which the kingdom was founded and legitimated long before the colonial period – *ku-aanda*. Other trends also evoke continuities with the pre-colonial past. For example, much as the RPF has replaced executive secretaries in its repartitioned sectors, the Belgian colonial administration had similarly redrawn the map and replaced non-Tutsi leaders in many areas. Power struggles and rivalries within the ruling inner circle marked Rwabugiri's death, which precipitated massive violence described as a 'holocaust'; similar factions were evident before Habyarimana's death, which triggered the 1994 genocide. Today, Kagame's inner circle is shrinking, while the RPF's base of political control is narrowing to a minority of the minority Tutsi – Anglophones raised in Uganda. Similarities between the pre-genocide and post-genocide regimes are equally striking: both exhibited deceptive economic growth rates that masked increasing socio-economic inequalities along lines of class, region and gender. The international community, for its part, has been rather complacent, marred by guilt over the genocide and manipulated by Kagame's adoption of donor preferences and promotion of issues the regime sees as peripheral. As Des Forges illustrates, Musinga comparably negotiated German presence in his kingdom, but was much less successful with the Belgians, when development goals validated inequality and exclusion, as they later did under Habyarimana, and now do under Kagame.

Writing Rwanda

These historical similarities reveal patterns of rule while warning of their consequences. They should not, however, entail scathing condemnations of the regime, but informed and careful examinations of the possibilities of its future, considering that past. Rwandan rulers have played a tactical chess game of manipulation since before colonialism. They have embraced the same ideological justification of the state and its administrative structure. For the first time they are winning, and the ideal of state centralisation, and to an extent expansion, is becoming a reality. It cannot be forgotten that the state Kagame inherited was a carcass: the vast majority of its population had been slaughtered or fled, while its infrastructure and economy had been decimated by five years of war. Out of these ashes, Kagame built a Rwanda greater than the one

he purports ever existed. Paradoxically, the state is riddled with many of the problems that characterised previous regimes. The reconstruction that the president was able to accomplish must be noted, but the possible repercussions of how it was managed must also be acknowledged.

Contributors to *Remaking Rwanda* and *After Genocide* highlight the dichotomy in contemporary scholarship on Rwanda – between those blinded by Kigali's modern cafés, the quality of the roads, and 'genocide guilt' that blurs the realities of the countryside, and those blinded by the regime's 'deft authoritarianism' that paints a civil society devoid of voice and agency. While most are careful to avoid the polarisation, some venture too far in the direction of the latter myopia. This dichotomy is best postulated in the juxtaposition of voices and arguments presented in *After Genocide*. It is far too easy to embrace one of the poplar extremes, and much more difficult to offer a balanced, nuanced analysis of a country whose complex present is a product of its equally perplexing past. Exploring this context, and its historical development, is imperative to such an appreciation, but its research is difficult. People are guarded, as are researchers, inundated with real and contrived fears of an ostensibly authoritarian regime. Transcending these concerns requires more time and resources than many researchers can afford in the field, but the repercussions of ignoring them entail erroneous conclusions that only perpetuate the analytical bipolarity that has come to characterise contemporary literature on Rwanda.

Furthermore, the research focus on national identity and justice has partially obscured the lived reality of most Rwandans, who are victims, former refugees, repatriates and returnees. This reality necessitates a consideration of Rwandan society as an exceptionally mobile one, with a history that transcends international borders and state boundaries, and calls to be examined in a broader regional context of conflict and identity formation. It is when we understand this remarkable mobility, and the way that it shapes processes of continuity and change, that we get closer to a balanced and nuanced understanding of Rwandan state and society. To understand Rwanda today, we must not be selective in our assessments of its past or its present, and we must uphold Des Forges' legacy in tributes like these as well as in future studies.

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