

excellent choice for undergraduate courses in education, anthropology, African studies, and development. Students will relate to this book and come to understand their near-age counterparts in modern Africa from a new perspective. For the specialist, too, Vavrus offers valuable ethnographic data as grist for the theoretical mill.

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**Carol Sicherman. *Becoming an African University: Makerere 1922–2000*.** Trenton N.J.: Africa World Press, 2005. xxii + 416 pp. Appendixes. Bibliography. Index. \$34.95. Paper.

When I first came to Makerere as external examiner in late 1986, the Department of Music, Dance and Drama (MDD) was in shambles. The grand piano rested on empty crates—the legs had been put to better use on wheelbarrows; the lamps, the sockets, the electric wiring had completely disappeared, windows and doors were missing, the floor in the dance rehearsal room was gone. I had brought ribbons for the only mechanical typewriter in the department because the old one had run out of ink long ago and only the carbon copies were legible (I also brought carbon paper). But at the same time, when the structures and the buildings had apparently collapsed completely, the MDD head of department, Rose Mbowa, staged *Mother Uganda and Her Children* in the Main Hall, the most important theater performance in the country up to the present time.

It is exactly this situation, this atmosphere of structural decay and the revival of the Makerere spirit, that provide the central point of reference of Carol Sicherman's history. Her account is rich in detail, based on a myriad of source materials both archival and oral. Since gross violations of human rights—murders, disappearances, detention, harassment and intimidation, mass rape in students' hostels—are all part of the dramatic experiences on Makerere Hill (and missing, of course, from the official documents), the information given by survivors is essential to fill in the picture of all that Makerere and Makerereans have gone through. Their testimonials counterbalance the colonial unbalance in the recorded history, found primarily in the Ford, Rockefeller, and Carnegie archives or in the Public Record Office, the British Library, SOAS, and LSE. The Makerere archive, systematized in the 1990s by a Fulbright scholar, was of minor importance.

Sicherman's account reflects the unique historical development of Makerere University: the rise of the colonial college to an institution of international renown in the 1960s, the decay and ultimate collapse in the Obote I and II and the Amin regimes from 1970 to 1986, and finally the almost miraculous resurrection of the university since the 1990s. At the same time, it is a long overdue study of the politics and philosophies of

colonial and postcolonial education, overdue because Makerere served for East and southeast Africa as an intellectual beacon attracting students and staff from the whole region and beyond, very much as the University of Ibadan did for West Africa or the University of the West Indies for the Caribbean. Whereas the histories of Ibadan, Nsukka, and UWI were written a long time ago, Makerere's remained undocumented.

Some of the important structural patterns have to be read between the lines. One of them is the struggle for dominance between British and American models. The British won as far as physical appearance is concerned: Makerere's Main Hall is a replica of the central building of the University of London (the same for Rhodes University in Grahamstown, South Africa). The colonial legacy, Africanization, staff development, and curriculum reform are ongoing themes throughout the work. Even in Makerere's golden days, expatriates in key positions as deans or heads of departments seemed to be running the show; people like Ali Mazrui, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (then still James Ngũgĩ), David Rubadiri, and Dan Mudoola, with their colonial education, were fighting for emancipation. Thus, for example, the home institution, London University, refused to approve some of Ali Mazrui's exam questions in the late 1960s.

Sicherman also pursues the ongoing battle between academic excellence—British style—and local relevance in the training programs. Agriculture tried to leave behind the restrictions of the service institution for colonial cash-crop agriculture and economy, which was the original reason for setting up an institution of higher education. Medicine tried to emancipate itself from the conventional training system and emphasize tropical medicine and public health. Both the Agriculture and Medical Schools suffered terribly from neglect during the Amin/Obote period: In 1986 the training hospital had no working X-ray machine and no operating theater. Political science reveals another crucial area of development. The colonial government was not interested in the political sciences, but the new government, at least in the first instance, needed qualified staff to take over the administration. Inevitably the government's demand for administrators came into conflict with the aims of Ali Mazrui and Mahmoud Mamdani to train independent minds. The very fact that the head of state was constitutionally the principal of the university virtually guaranteed tensions between political and academic interests. Sicherman refers to the persistent government rhetoric that the university must serve the country. This could have been a clear and welcome call for decolonizing the minds of Ugandans, but the Obote and Amin regimes favored a very personalized concept of decolonization.

In the new millennium, Makerere presents itself once more as an internationally respected institution of higher learning. Some of the ambiguities of the golden days linger, however. Sicherman quotes Susan Kiguli's complaint about the old-fashioned and narrow-minded syllabus in literature, favoring British writing and neglecting Ugandan literature. Then,

too, the old concept that a foreign Ph.D. outranks a Makerere doctorate persists. This fine study reflects the complexities of both global and local aspirations in African higher education.

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