ETHNICITY AND ETHNIC CONFLICT IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION

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Introduction

This paper explains the ethnicity and ethnic conflicts in the Great Lakes region in the context of the historical backgrounds of the region. It attempts to unearth the issue from its historical, sociological, cultural and psychological contexts. Generally the paper discusses these aspects in the light of some parts of the three regional countries, namely Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Specifically, it explains the ethnic conflicts between the Tutsi and their neighbors in Rwanda and Congo, and the conflicts of the Bakonzo, Bamba and Batoro around the Ruwenzori Mountains.

Historically, from its antiquities, the people of the said countries have common ancestry, and culture. The Bantu who are said to have come in the region after the pre-Historic age are said to have ruled themselves through clan leaders. They were afterwards ruled by the Batembuzi, Bachwezi, Babito and the Europeans respectively. The Europeans that attempted to rule and those who finally ruled these nations were Germany for Rwanda and Portugal for Congo, both of whom were taken over by Belgium, and Great Britain for Uganda.

During the colonial era, the colonial masters supported some ethnic groups against the others through a system known as indirect rule. In some areas even the ruling

families began splitting themselves and the colonial masters supported those they came into contact with first without necessarily understanding the real problem and system of governance in the area where they were to operate from. Local people referred to such rulers as "King of the whites" as it were in Rwanda and some parts of Toro respectively. Psychologically, the ethnic groups that were supported by the colonizers seemed to be "the winners" and those who were not supported by them looked to be "the losers". This "winner-loser syndrome" kept on haunting and following them through to the colonial and post-colonial era. They looked for sociological and cultural justifications to either remain or re-gain power, yet the merciless events of the time kept on altering the situations until the dawn of the third millenium. Some of the events taking place in this sub-region are a practical revelation of the phenomenon.

A Historicity of the Ethnic grouping, Movements and Conflicts

The Bantu speaking people are said to have been among the early inhabitants of the Great Lakes Region. They are said to have originated in the Western Sudanic Grassland of West Africa¹ into the present Cameroon² to Congo (Zaire) basin before they spread into Central, East and Southern Africa³. By the time of Jesus Christ, the Bantu peoples were already settled in upper Congo and had developed farming⁴. From this nucleus they moved into the rest of the Great Lakes Region.

Some sections of the Bantu people in the Great Lakes Region are said to have been ruled by the Batembuzi⁵ whose rule lasted for four to five reigns. The Batembuzi rulers were Ruhanga, Nkya, Kakama Twale, Baba, Ngonzaki, Isaza and Ndahura. They

are said to have been supernatural beings who either disappeared or went back to heaven when their reign on earth ended.

After the Batembuzi another small group of pastoralists from Ethiopia or Portugal or Egypt, known as the Bachwezi⁶ followed. According to Were and Wilson people who support this theory believe that "...every good thing in African culture was, imported by the non-black 'Hamites'". The Bachwezi are said to have been the ancestors of the Bahima, Bahuma, Batutsi and Bahinda.

The people who lived before the Bachwezi, who also became their subjects are said to have been the Bantu Basita, Bantu Banyambo, the Batwa and the Bahutu. Other people believed to have been in the Lake Region before the Bachwezi are the Bakonzo, Bamba and Bambuti of Mount Ruwenzori.⁸ In fact, most of the Bakonzo and Bamba believe to have been the original settlers of the region⁹ placed there by God Himself.

Ndahura Karubumbi, the founder of the Bachwezi dynasty is said to have been a grandson of Isaza, the last of the Batembuzi rulers. The Chwezi people are said to have introduced significant political and social innovations in the region. They conquered the Bantu societies and ruled the region in form of centralized monarchies. The Centralized monarchy seems to have taken shape after meeting with the Bantu people who lived in the region¹⁰. Some of the Bantu cultural traits were fused with the Chwezi ones to form a monarchy.

It should be kept in mind that the Bachwezi were a minority group compared to the Bantu¹¹ population but managed to rule over them for two direct consecutive reigns and their descendants continued ruling in some parts of the region.

When the Chwezi rule disintegrated, in the northern and Eastern parts of the Lake Region, there came the Luo Babito. This new dynasty was a small branch of the vast Luo-people, who are said to have migrated from Southern Sudan. The Leader of this group was Insingoma Mpuga Rukiidi, the first Bito ruler of Bunyoro Kitara. His brother Kimera is said to have gone to Buganda and established the Kabaka dynasty. Nevertheless, the Baganda recite their ruling dynasty from Kintu who lived alone in Buganda with his cow until when he got married to Nnambi the daughter of the King of Heaven (Gulu)¹³. Like the Bachwezi, the Luo-Babito are said to have ruled over the majority Bantu speaking people. They are said to have come to Bunyoro in the fifteenth century after Christ. "...They came in peacefully, not as destructive conquerors, and they adopted the language and culture they found in Bunyoro".

Early Conflicts in the Great Lakes Region

The Chwezi Bunyoro- Kitara Empire is said to have come to an end because they "...were tired of constant strife, difficulties with their subjects and increasing misfortune..."

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At the fall of this vast Kingdom several small states and dominions were formed. Among these were Bunyoro, Buganda, and Nkore in Uganda, Karagwe in modern Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi in Central Africa. The Southern Kingdoms of Nkore and Karagwe and the Sub-Kingdoms of Gisaka, and Ndorwa, were Chwezi related. The descendants of the Chwezi who are generally referred to as Bahinda, Bahuma, Bahima and Batutsi were in control of these emerging southern Kingdoms.

After the Bachwezi Kitara Empire had collapsed, the new Bunyoro-Kitara Kingdom of the Luo-Babito dynasty began fighting against the neighboring states of Nkore and Buganda. (Were¹⁶ and Stainhart¹⁷ give detailed expositions on this account). In Ugandan history, some of the remarkable conflicts are said to have began during the rule of Kamurasi of Bunyoro who ruled between 1852 and 1869. It continued through the time of Kabarega who ruled between 1870 and 1899¹⁸ until the coming of the Europeans.

At various times the Babito dynasty of Bunyoro-Kitara also came into conflict with the Bakonzo and Bamba of Rwenzori (Rwenzururu¹⁹) Mountains. The Bakonzo and Bamba are said to have had their own way of governance which was neither based on the Chwezi ruling system nor on the Luo-Babito dynasty. According to Alneas the Bakonzo had several local Kings²⁰ all around the Rwenzori Mountains. Some of these were clan leaders who ruled a clan region with a combined ritual and political authority²¹. The Bakonzo and their Kings looked at a supernatural being, *Kitasamba*²², as the overall king of the *nzururu*²³ (snow) and *Rwenzururu* (land of the snow). Explorer H. M. Stanley the first European to visit Mount Rwenzori, mentions Ruhandika²⁴ as the King of N. Ukunjo – a kingdom of the Kunjo and Amba. Some of the notable Kingdoms were Bughendera, Bukobe Nzururu, Bukobi, and Isale. As the Bakonzo and Bamba defended their land against Bunyoro aggression under the Bito dynasty, they lost some of their prominent Kings such as Ngwirakaghe, Kithengera, Kalikura ka Mugharura, Busongera Bwa Ntule, Ngorokoro and Rubiha.

The course of events changed by around 1830²⁵ when Kyebambe Nyamutukura of Bunyoro Kitara sent his son Kaboyo to collect tribute from Mwenge and Burahya.

Kaboyo took this as an opportunity to rebel against his father. At one, time, after collecting his father's tribute, he drunk blood and vomited it. He then told his father's Afterwards he began attacking his brother envoys that he had become sick. Nyabwongo²⁶ - the Saza (county) chief of Mwenge. Nyamutukura sent soldiers to arrest him but Kaboyo ran a way to Mount Rwenzori where he took refuge in Ruhandika's dominion, the Kingdom of the mountains. A faction of Banyoro who supported Kaboyo with a reinforcement of the Bakonzo and Bamba who supported Ruhandika repelled the Banyoro warriors at Mandaku in Modern Burahya County of Kabarole District. Nyamutukura did not want to kill his son Kaboyo because he loved him so much and believed that he suffered from a weak heart²⁷. Nyamutukura moved his capital to Bugoma in order to avoid more attacks from his son since the Bakonzo and Bahuma supported Kaboyo as a new state of Toro. However some Banyoro say that the Banyoro including Nyamutukura did not recognize the new State as a Kingdom but a county of Bunyoro Kitara and Kaboyo was looked at as a county chiefs, but not a king. Were and Wilson point out that even the Batoro did not feel to have had a kingdom until 1906^{28}

More Banyoro attacks against Kaboyo's small state of Burahya which had come to be known as Toro were launched during the reign of Kamurasi also known as Kyabambe IV between 1852-69. In these attacks, the Banyoro did not distinguish between "wale ambao walitoroka" – the Batoro, but attacked the Bakonzo, the Bamba and the Batoro all together. The Bakonzo and Bamba warriors fought in defense of their land and King and by so doing they also shielded the Toro chief as a fellow victim of

Bunyoro aggression. They are said to have thought of Kaboyo as a refugee who needed help.

In Rwanda, rulers are said to have been drawn from the minority pastoral class known as Tutsi.²⁹ The Rwandese agriculturists were known as Hutu.³⁰ The Tutsi and Hutu are said to have lived a peaceful life under the tie of patronage and chieftainship that woven a tight fabric that bound together Rwanda's diverse social groups. This thread joined Tutsi to Tutsi, Tutsi to Hutu and Hutu to Hutu.³¹ Every one found a place in the Kingdom as an equal with others. In Rwanda it is interesting to note that not the whole of Rwanda was actually under the Tutsi kingdom during the pre-colonial era. "There were several Hutu principalities which had survived, especially in the north, northwest and southwest." These were annexed after the arrival of the Europeans. The Europeans are said to have given a lot of support towards the subjugation of such Hutu territories as Kibari, Bushiru, and Bukonya.³³

Changes took place in the Nineteenth Century when Tutsi Kings began conquering the neighboring areas and subjugating the conquered to their dominion. Farmers and herders were both conquered and paid tribute to the Tutsi. "Wealthy herders from the conquered people could escaped from tribute requirements by forming special relationships with the King's Tutsi and doing jobs for them. By doing this they were 'becoming' Tutsi, in the sense that they were joining the stratum of privileged and politically powerful herders." 34

King Rwabugiri, who ruled between 1860 to 1895, restructured his Kingdom into provinces, and hills and introduced a bureaucratic system that imposed too much tribute on the Hutus and the distinction between Hutu and Tutsi became wide. This system

made Tutsis superior to Hutus. ³⁵ Prunier underscores the point that at this point a distinction was not necessarily between Hutu and Tutsi ethnic groups but it was more of regionalism which he called "...centre versus periphery affair..." ³⁶ Both Hutus and Tutsi were equally subjugated and 'Tutsified" in the pre-colonial era.

Ethnicity and Ethnic Conflicts During the Colonial Period

The European interest in Africa was another factor that influenced and controlled the conflicting situations in the Great Lakes region. Portugal had an interest in Congo, Germany was interested in Tanganyika, Rwanda and Burundi, while Britain was interested in the land of the Nile River – Uganda, Kenya, the Sudan and Egypt. Yet there were other European Nations that wanted to establish empires in Africa. The interested nations were Britain, France, Germany, Portugal, Italy, Belgium and Spain. 37

In 1885, the Berlin Conference was called to settle the issue of dividing up Africa among the European Countries. Germany lost its East African Territory by giving Tanganyika to Britain and Rwanda and Burundi to Belgium. Kenya and Uganda remained territories of Britain. Congo was also taken away from Portugal and given to Belgium.

According to Curtain the Hutus were left with little protection. This was as a result of the existing situation prevailing at the time the colonialists came in. When the Germans came to Rwanda a strong King Kigeli IV Rwabugiri had just died and replaced by his son Rutalindwa. Rutalindwa was a weak ruler who was placed in the hands of a weak lady who acted as Queen Mother but not a real mother and from a different clan than the real

mother. The wife of Rutalindwa, Kanjogera also came from a different clan than that of the Queen Mother. At the death of Rutalindwa Kanjogera conspired with her brother Kabera and organized a coup d'etat against the infant king who replaced Rutalindwa and proclaimed the son of Kanjogera new King. Kabera acted as the regent of the new King Yuhi Musinga. The new regime acted cruelly to the supporters of the former king in order to avoid a revolt. The Germans in dare support of the Kingdom acted on the dictates of Kanjogera and Kabera. They highly centralized the kingdom even more than Kigeli had done by annexing more Hutu principalities. This thus strengthening the Tutsi domination over the Hutu. 40 When the Belgians came to Rwanda they equally worked with the monarch to solicit support of the local chiefs. In November 1931 the Belgians went further overthrowing Yuhi Musinga and replaced him with their own puppet Mutara III Rutahigwa whom the Rwandese called Mwami w' abazungu "King of the Whites." 41 The new structure was Tutsi dominated but still foreign and abstract. 42 By 1920 and 1940 Rwanda Kingdom was highly centralized. The centralized system oppressed people and those who could not comply with the burdens and demands of the crossed over to the British territories, most especially Uganda and Tanganyika. The colonial masters praised the Tutsi too much as a superior race. They deprived the Hutu of all political powers and were exploited by the whites and the Tutsi as an inferior race.44 By 1957 there were strong demands to the United Nations of the submerged Hutu majority over the Tutsi oligarchy. In this struggle the Belgians supported the Hutu majority who formed their own political party PARMEHUTU that proclaimed the Republic of Rwanda in January 1961.

In Uganda the descendants of the Bachwezi did not dominate so much. Wamala the second and last of the Chwezi rulers got a son by the name Ruhinda from a common girl – Nyinamwiru. Ruhinda founded the Nkore Hinda dynasty. He then went south words to Karagwe in Tanzania to establish a ruling class there. Some of the Bahinda went to Eastern Rwanda and then Burundi where they founded a Gisaka Kingdom and other sub-kingdoms. Nkore under the Bahinda and Bunyoro under the Babito became rival Kingdoms. Nkore came to be known by Bunyoro as *Karokarungi*. And the Banyoro Kings kept on fighting the Banyankore and even crossed over to Rwanda and Karagwe.

Some of the Chwezi descendants stayed over near Lake Albert known as Batuku and others mixed with the Bakonzo people on the Southern side of the Ruwenzori Mountains who came to be referred to as the Basongora by settling in the land ruled by a Mukonzo man whose name was Busongera. These pastoral groups, although very small in number, have kept their identity different from the Bakonzo and Bamba. These were joined by a small group of the Babito origin called the Banyabindi who settled on some hills on the Southern part of Mount Ruwenzori. They mixed up with the Bakonzo. Nevertheless, both the Basongora and Banyabindi men avoided intermarriage for keeping their role and class superiority alive. They encouraged their daughters to get married to the Bakonzo people but gave their children either Lunyabindi or Lusongora names. At one time the Banyabindi had to learn the Lukonzo language but kept the Bito names for identity and esteem. The Basongora and Banyabindi being closely linked with the Bahima of Ankole and the Batoro-Banyoro of the Bito blood got education much

earlier than the Bakonzo and held significant offices in government that kept on blocking the Bakonzo majority wish, needs and development.

At the coming of the British to Uganda, Captain Frederick Lugard, the first British administrator who arrived in Uganda in 1890 supported Buganda against Bunyoro. He also supported Nkore (Ankole) against Bunyoro. On his way to Western Uganda Captain Lugard was introduced to Daudi Kasagama Kyebambe, a man who had been protected by the Konzo Kings - Ruhandika, Kalikura and Tibamwenda – against Daudi Chwa Kabarega of Bunyoro and had sent him to Buganda through Nkore.

Daudi Kasagama is said to have explained to Captain Lugard his problem with Kabarega and introduced himself as the King of the Bakonzo, Bamba and Batoro (Banyaburahya). Reaching at Kakule Salt Lake (Katwe), Kasagama told Lugard that "...enyuma y'esonzi oko nsi yange, kandi n'omumaiso ha turukugya na yo isi yange",⁴⁷ meaning "...beyond these mountains is my land and in front where we are going is also my land."

Captain Lugard began fighting against Omubito Kabarega's soldiers and went to Boga in Congo to bring more Nubian fighters to help him. He left only a few of his fighters to protect Omubito Kasagama Kyebambe Ntabinsunga. According to Kihumuro Apuuli, Kasagama was thereby enthroned Omukama of Toro on 1st July, 1891. Ndebesa explains that what came to be Toro Kingdom during the colonial era was not an original Toro. Burahya county is the only territory the Batoro could claim to have been Toro. The Batoro people themselves did not feel to have had a kingdom until 1906. Ndebesa continues pointing out that the Bakonzo and Bamba territories were only added to Toro. According to Steinhart even after installing Kasagama as King of Toro, the

Mountains remained independent and were referred to as Bukonjo (Bukonzo). Kasagama used to run there whenever he felt insecure. The Bakonzo and Bamba people of the Rwenzori mountains refute the idea of even Burahya to have been the place called Toro since they are the original settlers of the area. They point out that the word Toro was just coined from a Sudanese Kiswahili word "Makao ya wale ambao walitoroka kutoka kitara". Mening "the place of those who escaped from Kitara". It is vital to note that the Bakonzo people still occupy the slopes of Mount Ruwenzori in Bundibugyo, Kabarole and Kasese Districts and even on the Congo side.

According to Seteinhart⁵² when Owen took Kasagama to Fort George and the salt Lake in the southern part of the mountains, the local chiefs showed their hostility to Kasagama as a ruler of their territory and even asserted independence from Kasagama's sphere of influence but were willing to support the British rule. In Bwamba (Modern Bundibugyo District), the Bamba people refused to pay tax to the Omukama of Tooro even when the British imposed Kasagama's rule. In 1902 Kasagama tried to use force in collecting hut tax from the Bamba and they resisted with bloodshade since they never recognized him as a ruler over their territory.⁵³ Alnaes an anthropologist who took up enthnographic studies on the Bakonzo between 1958 and 1995 gives the following account on the conflicting factors in the Rwenzori region:

Tooro rule brought much suffering for the BaKonzo. The BaTooro officials treated their subjects with disdain, arrogance and direct cruelty. Already in the decade of Tooro overrule, Tooro chiefs exacted tribute and forced labour from the BaKonzo and BaAmba. Moreover, large tracts of land were declared the possession of the Tooro King, and Tooro chiefs who were placed in positions of power in the areas, used force to obtainland from Konzo citizens.⁵⁴

It was at this time that the name Bayira disappeared and the name Bakonzo was emphasized. According to some elderly Bakonzo, when the white missionaries and administrators asked the royals of Toro about the people living on the mountains, they are said to have replied "wale ni wa gonjwa", which means that "those are sick" and the Europeans who could not understand Kiswahili wrote "Bakonjo". It is said that whenever the missionaries and the British administrators saw gardens on the mountains and wanted to build schools and hospitals over the slopes of Mount Rwenzori the Toro royals are said to have r replied that these are "monkeys" and sometimes referred to them as "baboons."55 Time came when the Kingdom became very strong and the name Bakonzo came to have the same meaning as "primitivity," "foolishness". It was even illegal in the Kingdom of Toro to learn and practice reading and writing in Lukonzo language. This attitude pushed the Bakonzo farther away from associating with the Batoro, and some Bakonzo tried to change their Konzo to Tooro identity. Those who tried to resist such mistreatments are said to have been charged of treason and thereby executed.

In 1918 a Mukonzo man by the name Nyamutswa (Nyamucwa) Kihokolho from Buhira on the northern side of the Ruwenzori Mountains started a freedom movement against. Toro and the British oppressive rule. Nyamutswa began the liberation movement against. Daudi Kyabambe Kasagama because after asserting the throne on Kabarole hill, a slow mode of eliminating the Konzo and Amba Kings and chiefs continued. Nyamutswa is said to have been moved by enormous bloodshed and oppression. He began mobilizing his people to fight against the intruders in 1918. He started the struggle at Ndalibanwa in Kasithu Sub-county of Bughendera. Nyamutswa

went on mobilization campaigns in Burahya, Bunyangabu, and Bosongora. He won a lot of support. He built camps wherever he went. From these camps he worked on his research for a few days, at the same time mobilizing the population for a liberation struggle.

Nyamutswa was later joined by two other brave men called Tibamwenda chief of Bulwa and Kapoli. Nyamutswa united all the Bakonzo from Lame to Lubiriha. He then declared independence and raised a flag at Kanyatsi near Kyalhumba. These three men built a new palace at Nyamisule near Kilembe town in Kasese district. Nyamisule became a strong military base as well as a palace and so Nyamutswa became a King of the Bakonzo and Bamba kingdom between 1919 and 1921. This period came to be known as *Nyamucwa Crisis* in the history of Tooro. Owing to Nyamutswa's military tactics, which he mixed with charms and castor oil baths to pregnant women, Nyamutswa was mistaken to be a mere traditional healer. Tibamwenda acted as his right hand and second in command of the Movement, while Kapoli carried Nyamutswa's royal bags.

On his mobilization tours Nyamutswa held a meeting with local leaders from River Kanyampara to Nyamwamba where he told them of the need to continue resisting the new Toro leadership. Among the chief leaders was Tibamwenda whose territory extended from River Kanyampara to River Nyamugasani. Tibamwenda thought that the fight had started. As soon as he left the meeting, on his way home, he killed a Mutoro chief. Immediately after the incident, the leadership of the Batoro who were supported by the Imperial British government sent armed Sudanese soldiers to overtake Nyamutswa's palace. Nyamutswa and his guards left the palace all alive for Mathungu in Belgian Congo.

In 1921 the infant Toro Kingdom and the Imperial British government with the aid of the Sudanese soldiers captured and imprisoned Nyamutswa, Kapoli and Tibamwenda. They were tried by the colonial court and were sentenced to death. The three faced a public execution and were buried in a mass grave at Kagando in Kisinga sub-county of Kasese District. This execution is said to have annoyed most of the Bakonzo and Bamba, young and old. It became a heroic story to pass on to children and friends.

After the death of the three heroes – Nyamutswa, Kapoli and Tibamwenda the Bakonzo are said to have lived under oppression, some were killed with a sword and others were thrown in Lake Kaitabarogo which is situated between Nyakasura School and Muhote Barracks in present Kabarole District.

Thirty years after Nyamutswa's death, Isaya Mukirania Kibanzanga came in. He first toured the Rwenzori mountains for seven complete years-trying to research on the possibilities of re-building the Kingdom of the Bakonzo and Bamba. This marked the genesis of the Bakonzo/Bamba tife History research work which led to the present Rwenzururu Kingdom.

In 1954 Isaya Mukirania organized the Bakonzo Life History Research Society to search for the origins and settlements of the Bakonzo people and their position in the Tooro Kingdom. The society was aimed at working together in the search for the former glory of the Bakonzo/Bamba territory. When this society began Isaya Mukirania moved around with a British friend, a Journalist of Sunday Magazine by the name Tom Stacey.

At first the Bakonzo and Bamba sought equal treatment in the Toro government. Toro Rukurato refused. The Bakonzo and Bamba then sought for a separate district known as Rwenzururu - Bakonzo/Bamba which would include Bwamba, Burahya, Bunyangabu and Busongora counties. The request for a separate district was petitioned to the colonial government on the 15th of August, 1962. It was then handed over to the new Prime Minister of the infant Independent Uganda government Dr. Apollo Milton Obote. Dr. Obote appointed a commission of inquiry to look into this matter. The commission reported back with a fear that separate districts were not necessary at that time and that the problem would be solved within the Toro Kingdom administration. The issue ended up in a prolonged struggle for the famous Rwenzururu Kingdom.

Ethnic Conflicts in the Post-Colonial Era

In Rwanda the road to independence was rough. The Tutsi began a UNAR party, which was monarchial oriented⁵⁸. The Belgians supported the Hutu majority who formed their own political party PARMEHUTU that proclaimed the Republic of Rwanda in January 1961. The formation of political parties sharpened the differences and even widened them with devastating results. The new Hutu regime drove out 130,000 Tutsi into exile.⁵⁹ These Tutsi refugees went to Belgian Congo, Burundi, Uganda, Tanganyika.⁶⁰

The Tutsi who went into exile began fighting their way back through a movement referred to as *Inyenzi* (cockroaches). An estimated number of 10,000 Tutsi were killed between December 1963 and December 1964. Some Tutsi decided to work with the new regime while others decided to stay in exile. Those who went to

Uganda inflitrated governments as Bafumbira in Kigezi. Some of them raised to high ranks as government officers, cabinet ministers, and other responsible positions as Ugandans. They held Ugandan passports abroad and kept their children in school. Those who did not hold significant offices in government did not hide their Rwandese identity.

The post-colonial Hutu government acted the same as the former monarchy system of the colonial era. President Kayibanda was looked at as the King of the Hutu. They followed the same Tutsi style of administration. He also demanded unquestionable obedience. ⁶³ The president did all the appointments and nominations even of the lowest level like in the previous regime. When General Habyarimana took over in July 1973 he followed the same pattern. Tutsis were highly marginalised. ⁶⁴

The Tutsi who went to Congo met with another Tutsi (Chwezi) ethnic group that had long settled there before the colonial rule – the Banyamulenge. The Tutsi at first showed a friendly and kind relations with the ethnic groups they found in Kivu Province such as the Banyanga, Bahunde, Batembo and Banande. During the time of Mobutu Seseko the Tutsi made friendship with government and acquired land. The Tutsi acquisition of land created conflict with people who traditionally claimed land ownership. The conflicting situations sparked fire. In Masisi the Tutsi got settlements. In the Nande areas the Tutsi did not get enough stronghold but controlled the educational and religious institutions.

According to one Congolese by the name Kaviira, the Tutsi culture was too dominating in some parts of Belgian Congo right from the colonial era. 'Whenever a Tutsi was given a place to build a small house while searching for a more convenient

place to settle, he claimed the whole land of the host and officially leased it without the knowledge of the owner. He wanted to be the overall chief of the area. The Tutsi had no respect of anybody except their own people and the Europeans. Further more Kaviira added that, the Tutsi encouraged other ethnic groups to get married to their Tutsi girls, yet the Tutsi men shunned from getting married to non-Tutsi girls. A Tutsi man could dare marry one of the closest of kin than getting married to a non-Tutsi. They never even married from their Hutu country men. Kaviira continued stressing that it did not take long for the Congolese to find out that whoever got married to a Tutsi girl was bringing up Tutsi offspring. The Tutsi women were highly trained in identifying the period before conception, and as soon as the signs set off the Tutsi girl looked for a Tutsi boy and after making sure that she was conceived she could again accept to have sex with her non-Tutsi husband. This according to Kaviira was "a conspiracy of the highest order for the Tutsi to have other people bringing up children for them without knowing it." No sooner the Congolese learned of it than they developed a negative attitude towards the Tutsi. The Tutsi were found out to have developed a strategic plan of getting as many children as possible who would fight their way back to Rwanda as rulers. Conflict began at the grassroots

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In Uganda the Road to independence was not a simple one. One of the problems that gave headache was the person to be the Head of State. Even when Ben Kiwanuka was already the Prime Minister, Ugandans were seeking for the Queen of England to remain Head of State for an independent country. It was afterwards proposed that one of the four Ugandan Kings was to be the Head of State. This was done but without executive powers.

One of the unresolved issues was the position of the Kingdom of Buganda in independent Uganda.⁶⁷ While Obote's Uganda People's Congress (UPC) was promising the supremacy of Kabaka as Head of State, the Democratic Party (DP) decampaigned UPC to other Kingdoms that Buganda will enslave people by giving too much powers to the Kabaka.⁶⁸ The politics of the day divided people on the basis of Kingdoms, religion and ethnic orientation. Obote rode on the back of Kabaka Yekka to win the election. He afterwards in 1966 abolished the Kingdom of Buganda, and then Ankole, Bunyoro and Toro ⁶⁹ in 1968. The ethnic conflict was just at the cradle of independent Uganda.

Another long standing problem was the Bakonzo/ Bamba issue which Obote failed to resolve from the beginning. The reluctance to solve the problem ended up into violence on the part of both the Bakonzo/Bamba and the Batoro. They was great massacre which Muhindo describes in details.⁷⁰

In April 1964 thousands of Bakonzo and Bamba were greatly massacred by the Batoro at the order of Omukama George Rukiidi and the Bakonzo and Bamba⁷¹ then decided to go to the bush and fight for their rights. Instead of solving the problem, the Obote government supported the Toro Kingdom in torturing, imprisoning and harassing the Bakonzon and Bamba. One of the statements that annoyed the Bakonzo and Bamba was made by "...the minister of Animals, Game and Fisheries, Mr. J. K. Babiha, *warning* that the Bamba and Bakonjo faced extinction within 10 years...and there will be nothing but to declare the areas a national park."

The historical Rwenzururu Kingdom was a popular people's mandate spearheaded by Isaya Mukirania, and his companions in the 1960s. Isaya Mukirania was

blessed by all Banyarwenzururu as a sole King of the land on 30th June 1963. Before this date, he had been blessed by clan leaders of the Baswagha, Basu and others at Kikura. The clan leaders who laid hands on him and ordained him as the Rwenzururu King in a council of elders were Rupande of Mangirisipa, George Basikania of Kikura, Sibendire, and Baundeli of Mbaghu. He then left for Buhumbania where he was installed king of the Rwenzururu people by all the clan leaders. He finally asserted the throne on 29th June 1965 as Isaya Mukirania Kibanzanga I Musabuli. He was made to sit on the traditional royal stool, covered with leopard, lion and calabus (*Ngeya / Ngeye*) monkey skins. He is also said to have put on the leopard skins. All the representatives of mount Rwenzori clan leaders, elders and ridge leaders put on him their hands. He was fully initiated into the rituals of being a Bakonzo king.

Upon the death of Isaya Mukirania Kibanzanga I on the 2nd September, 1966, again elders of various clans from all over the Rwenzururu land were called, and chose one of his sons, by the name Charles Wesley Mumbere successor to the Rwenzururu throne. It was on the 19th October, 1966 when he was crowned Second Rwenzururu King following all the customs and rituals of installing a Konzo king as King Charles Kibanzanga II. He was thereafter re-named Omusinga (Omusangania) Charles Wesley Mumbere Irema-Ngoma, since he was no longer waiting for the Kingdom to come, because the Kingdom was already there and he was ruling *Obusinga Bwa Rwenzururu*.

Rwenzururu Kingdom had a centralized system of governance with a Prime Minister (Omulerembera), ministeries, counties and sub-counties respectively. It also had a royal regalia with seven drums, nine spears, grass huts, leopard, lion and calabus monkey skins, four wooden stools, crowns, royal flutes, royal bags and baskets.

The kingdom had a court of arms and a flag. It had an anthem which has been modified into old and new versions to meet the challenges of the time. It also had royal names and titles.

7

The Rwenzururu armed struggle continued up to the 15th August, 1982 when Omusinga Charles Wesley Irema-Ngoma decided to use peaceful negotiations with the government towards recognizing and restoring the Bakonzo/Bamba Kingdom. According to Alnaes even after the Rwenzururu armed struggle and after Irema-Ngoma had left for the United States, "...many (Bakonzo) expressed the wish that ex-King Irema-Ngoma should come back from exile as their leader." This desire was farther evidenced by the return of Omusinga (King) Charless Mumbere Irema-Ngoma from the United States after twelve years.

The NRM government, in its democratic style invited the Omusinga (King) Charles Mumbere through the mediation of Hon. Mike Mukula, the Member of Parliament for Soroti Municipality. He came back on 19th November 1998 at 3.00 p.m. and stayed around up to the 7th January 1999. It is estimated that more than 80% of Bakonzo people living in Kasese, Kabarole and Bundibugyo adored him as the sole King of the Rwenzururu land and have wished him to return and assert his throne just as it has happened in Buganda, Bunyoro, Toro, Busoga, West Nile and other parts of the country where people have wished the restoration of their cultural institutions as provided by Article 246⁷⁴ of the 1995 constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

Unfortunately Uganda government did not consider restoring the Rwenzururu Kingdom during the Constitutional Assembly in the process of drafting the 1995

Uganda Constitution. Rebel movements like NALU and ADF have used this weakness to disturb he country. Although the Bakonzo people have wanted Uganda to recognize their Kingdom peacefully, the government has taken a slow motion in deciding on the issue. A rebel group which was trained in Congo by Sudan known as the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF)⁷⁵ has hidden in the Ruwenzori mountain in hope of being supported by the Rwenzururu Royalists. The Bakonzo including their King have denied them support although some misguided ones had already entered the rebel movement. Small minority ethnic groups in Kasese such as the Banyabindi and Basongora have insisted that the Bakonzo royalists do support the rebel movement. They use this accusation as a tool to bar the restoration of the most loved Rwenzururu Kingdom. This is costing the Bakonzo a lot of life, property, physical and psychological torture.

In most cases the tribes blame each other for the ADF problem. The Bakonzo blame the Batoro, most especially those leaving in Kabarole district. The Batooro also blame and sometimes arrest the Bakonzo. For this same reason the Bakonzo living in Kabarole district have not been armed while their neighbors - the Batoro are fully armed. A lot of harassment have been reported by the Bakonzo running away from the area, others have been innocently tortured to death. In Bundibugyo the Bamba first blamed the ADF saga on the Bakonzo. It was afterwards found out that there were more Bamba in ADF struggle than the Bakonzo.

Psychological and Sociological roots of Ethnic Conflicts

In the final analysis, the problems in the Great Lakes Region are a dysfunction of the historical accounts interwoven with cultural and psychological symptomatic hysteria of what Prunier calls the "...artificial past, of the present". ⁷⁶ This is a condition that no one person or ethnic group can bear the blame alone. It is a situation that began in the pre-historic period and sharpened by the colonial masters who needed the support of the local rulers in order to work under meager budgets and shortage of personnel. Both in Uganda and Rwanda they supported some ethnic groups without knowing what they would really breed in the future since they did not even have a clear picture of the past historical accounts of the whole spectrum under the countries in which they operated.

In the search of strengthening themselves, they ended up oppressing some groups of people and over "empowered" others against their counter-parts. After independence the unprepared African rulers followed the colonial mode of suppressing their subjects and in most cases over-emphasized it. This ended up in the breed of dictators who promoted bloodshed and *coup detat* after *coup detat*. This has been the experience in Uganda, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo with some examples shown in this essay. Right now in Congo there is much admiration of Ugandan soldiers by the local people than their Rwandese counterparts. This is partly because the Congolese have no bitter experience with the Ugandan people and the gentle way the Uganda Peoples Defense Force (UPDF) in shielding them over the Rwandese exploitations and intimidation augmented by the historical past encounters that hauntfully threaten the people.

Ethnic Conflict in the Great Lakes Region right from the colonial era to the present depicts an environment described by Eric Berne in his book, *Games People Play* published in 1964, as "win-lose" attitude. The book has been followed by other books of the same author and other authors who responded and expanded the theory. A

winner- loser-syndrome develops as a result of an ego state described as "I' m Ok You are not O'K", which is a symptomatic of a transactional analysis of a parent-child relationship. This means that some people develop an attitude that they have the responsibility to direct and show others a way of doing things because others do not know how to go about them. They look at all other people ase children and they themselves as parents who must show them they way and see that they are doing the so called right things. It is an attitude that whether other people like our way or not, they must accept it, if not we can punish them. The Tutsi showed such an attitude in the colonial era, and the Hutu showed it during the post-colonial era. Some Babito kings such as Kyebambe, Kabarega and Kasagama did so to their subjects and the neighboring states. Obote and Idi Amin of Uganda, Kayibanda of Rwanda and Mobutu Seseseko of Zaire used it towards their subjects too. Such an ego state either uses force or power tactics to win. It wants to control and protect itself when others are losing. It is highly critical and instructive."

7

In a sociological point of view some of the factors that bring about ethnic conflicts in a given society are:

Ethnic minority. In a sociological concept, members of a minority group are disadvantaged as compared to the majority population and has some sense of group solidarity, and of belonging together⁷⁸. They often tend to see themselves as a people a part from the majority. They are usually physically and socially isolated from the larger communities. Nevertheless, this point does not apply to the situation in the great lakes region since the minority in most cases have been the ones controlling the affairs of the region since its remote past. The Bachwezi descendants and the Babito rulers were

minority yet controlled the majority Bantu population. They began making friends of them and used force after consolidating power.

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Prejudice. This is the opinion or attitudes held by members of one group toward another. Prejudiced people base their views on rumors rather than empirical evidence. Someone who is prejudiced against a particular group will refuse to give it a fair hearing. Some of the prejudices people developed are the social governance of society in form of laws and sanctions from those groups which regard themselves as "born to rule" and others as unintelligent, servants and serfs. It

Sanctions. In Sanctions there are rewards for conformity and punishment for non-conformity. There develops a formal social structure to execute rules and regulations in favor of those in control. This state of affairs creates sub-cultures and counter-sub-cultures. Sub-cultures share in the overall culture of society, but also maintain a distinctive set of values, norms, life-style and even language. An existance of sub-cultures, sometimes contributes to an appearance of non-conformity when in fact, people may simply be conforming to the norms of different cultures. Counter-sub-cultures are groups with values, interests and life-style that conflict with those of a large culture. Counter cultures reflect radical revisions in and rejection of taken-for-granted ways of life. An example of this is the Konzo re-organization and demand for a separate district and thereby a re-structuring of their ancient Kingdoms into a modern one. 83

This therefore calls for an understanding and acceptance of individual differences between groups in society. Such groups should be accommodated in the formation of national development within the context of unity in diversity. People can not be taken to be alike and forced into a state of affair that the dominant group feels comfortable with.

Discrimination. This is the actual behavior of one group towards the other. ⁸⁴ Discrimination is seen in activities that disqualify members of one group from open opportunities accessible to others ⁸⁵ One of the most common discriminatory stereotypes is 'scapegoating'. Scapegoating is an attitude in which people vent their antagonism against 'scapegoats'. Scapegoats are people blamed for things that are not their fault. ⁸⁶ Scapegoating is common when two ethnic groups come into competition with one another for economic, political or social rewards. It is generally directed against groups of people that are distinctive and relatively powerless, because they make an easy target. It involves a projection of the unconscious attribution to others of one's own desire or characteristics. For example, when the dominant group steals the property of the dominated, they in turn expect the dominated to revenge on the dominant by a more violence act, and the dominated are blamed for both violence of the dominant group and that of their own. This is what is generally called an act of provocation. ⁸⁷

Ethnocentrism - This is a tendency of the dominant or in-group to think of themselves as superior to other groups. It is a tendency to favor the in-group against the other. Representation of thinking that the culture of a certain group is better than that of another. It centers around a tendency to evaluate the culture of others in terms of one's own culture. People outside a dominant culture are called aliens, morally and mentally inferior. This is one way through which most civilizations view members of some cultures — an attitude that has fueled innumerable ethnic clashes in history.

Prunier gives a detailed example of ethnocentric practices in Rwanda during the colonial era. 90

Cultural lag. Cultural lag is a tendency to remain behind on the good-old-time norms, values, and beliefs when the society has radically changed. The dominant group in society sometimes tends to remain on the residue of the old good time when the rest of the society has matched on to different and most practical values. For example, we are living in the age of diplomatic negotiations while some people still believe in war and suppression of those they think are not their allies. Agreements are not respected because they never negotiated and signed agreements during their victorian age. They think the same method is applicable today. In the end everybody suffers even on the issues they do not really understand. In this context the Konzo people do not see why government should not negotiate with the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) who have killed hundreds of their people and destroyed their homes and wealth. Despite the government doing their best to deploy the army and arm some tribesmen to fight, the problem seems to have taken too long for people to stomach. Government needs not to look at the fighting as the only alternative but negotiations as an equally effective tool.

Suggested Solutions to the Ethnic Conflicting Situations in the Great Lakes Region

In any given society it is healthy to have conflicts. The most important think to underscore is not the elimination of conflicting situations since conflicts are inevitable and part and parcel of life. The mechanism of solving those conflicting situations is the greatest challenge to human society. The following are possible alternatives:

Identifying human problem and need. First and foremost, we need to begin asking ourselves such a questions as, "is there a problem? "what is the real problem?" "What are the long-term and immediate causes of the problem?" As a Christian, I wish to first look at the problem from the Biblical point of view. The Bible describes people's problem to be within the human heart. The human heart is so deceitful than anything else. ⁹¹ The human heart is used to doing evil and fails to do good. ⁹² If the human heart is the cause of all these then it is the human heart that can change the situation when it realizes its predicament and seeks to solve it. According to Dr. Nsereko, the Professor of Law at the University of Botswana, it is sin that leads man to hate, oppress and subjugate his fellow man to an extend of committing the crime of genocide and other crimes against humanity. It leads man to be selfish, cheat and exploit his fellow man. Sin breeds suspicion between brother and brother, citizen and citizen, nation and nation and makes national and international concord so hard to attain. ⁹³ For this very reason one Christian writer put down the following lines in relation to human needs:

The greatest want of the world is the want of men-men who will not be bought or sold, men who in their inmost souls are true and honest, men who do not fear to call sin by its right name, men whose conscious is as true to duty as the needle to the pole, men who will stand for the right though the heavens fall.⁹⁴

Seeking to understand the position of humankind in the world. In this context, it behooves people to look at their fellow human beings with respect "...because humans are created in the 'image of God." Human beings need to love their fellow human beings because love is an attitude that persons give and receive. It is an aspect of the image of God in man. It makes man to be like God. God gives his love to people in order to share it with others. If this aspect is fully understood, human misery caused by

fellow human beings will be reduced. Conflicts will be resolved amicably and humanity will not be exposed to torture, harassment and all debasing selfish confrontations between people, nationalities, and ethnic groups. Finally the Great Lakes region will enjoy peace for which we are here, in this conference. Loving our humanity is not something that we need to import from the United States, Belgium, United Kingdom, Russia, China or India, not even from Zambia, Kenya and Zimbabwe. It is something that God has put within us—since all of us are created in his image. It is up to us to practice it by God's Grace. It is here with us.

Choosing the right Transcational analysis. According to Berne "transactional analysis refers to the diagnosis of which particular ego state is active in each individual during a given transaction or series of transactions, and of the understandings or misunderstadings which arise due to the perception or misperception of this factor by the individuals involved." The most desired transactional analysis utilizes an adult ego state. This ego state looks at others as adults too and seeks to treat them as such. It believes in a "win-win" transaction of conflict situations. The parties involved need to win. No only one party winning and the other losing. The adult ego state is rational, calculates possibilities and exhibits unemotional behavior. It comes to decisions by seeking facts, processing data, estimating probabilities and holding on to factual discussions. ⁹⁸ It is Godly to believe that what is good for me is equally good for you.

The resolution strategy for adult ego state is confronting. It seeks to confront problems but not people. It faces the conflict directly and works out its solution through a mutually satisfactory resolution. Adults are assertive in nature. They are direct, honest and expressive. They are confident, have self-respect which they in turn transfer to

others by respecting them and making others feel valued. The whole process of a transaction of an adult ego state results in a "win-win" position. Both parties win and no one loses. According to Harris this position is the same as "I'm Ok- You're Ok" which is a conscious and verbal decision. It takes into account the available information about the individual concerned and others. It also incorporates the not-yet-experienced possibilities which exist in the abstractions of philosophy and religion. It deals with the why not? - a possibility of giving others chance too. These can prove their own worth and the worth of others.

In conclusion I wish to submit to the leaders, intellectuals and citizens of this Great Lakes region three possible solutions to our problems and hence a road to a peaceful settlement (1) To identify our problem. Knowing that the real problem is sin which is within us. Sin which we can control by taking up the opposite – being true and honest to ourselves and refusing to be bought or sold. (2) Accepting the fact that we and our fellow human beings are created in the image of God. Therefore we are all equal. We need not submerge people in the abyss of suffering and prolonged wars. The innocent citizens, children and women need to be taken into account. (3) Allowing all of us to win. The "win-lose syndrome" should hereby be submerged in Lake Victoria and for ever be forgotten. We can no longer afford to live in what Prunier calls the "...artificial past, of the present." We need to face reality with courage and esteem that results in the esteem and respect of others rather than playing political games which result in human misery and suffering.

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