

Patrimonialism in the Causes of the Division of the Kingdom in Israel: A Reading of the Division Narrative from the Perspective of the Rwandan Context of Social Conflict

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ABSTRACT

The account of the division of the kingdom of Israel reported in 1 Kgs 11-14 shows a tension between the recounted episode in itself and its global contextual framework. On one hand, the narrative reports the event as a divinely fated event resulting from Yahweh's judgment on Solomon's apostasy. On the other hand, the larger context described in the biblical traditions as well as the social history of Israel indicate that the division resulted from socio-economic problems that developed throughout the history of Israel. These problems revolved around the people's resistance against the leaders who, instead of serving the people, exploited them through patrimonial regimes in which the leaders appealed to kinship relations to consolidate their rules. Aspects of this socio-economic conflict in Israel find parallels in contemporary social conflicts in Africa and elsewhere. The present essay attempts a comparative and evaluative approach that establishes a dialogue between the context of social conflict in Israel and the context of similar conflict in Rwanda. Issues that provide the space for interaction in the present article include the attitude of political leaders whose inequitable regimes jeopardized social unity; then the deliberate decision of the same leaders to ignore the voice of the peacemakers resulting in tragedies. The paper argues that patrimonialism contributed to conflicts in both contexts. A dialogical interaction between the contexts of conflict in Israel and in Rwanda is preceded by a brief description of the comparative approach adopted in this paper.

A A COMPARATIVE AND EVALUATIVE APPROACH

The comparative approach followed in the present paper is a method that is increasingly characteristic of contemporary African biblical scholarship¹. This is an approach that makes the African context the subject of biblical interpretation and seeks to establish a dialogue between the socio-historical dimensions of the biblical text and the religious and social realities of African life. The approach goes beyond studying the similarities and differences between Afri-

¹ Gerald West, "Interpreting 'the Exile' in African Biblical Scholarship: An Ideological Dilemma in Post-colonial South Africa," in *Exile and Suffering* (ed. Bob Becking and Dirk Human; Leiden: Brill, 2009), 250.

can and biblical situations to interpreting the biblical text on the basis of these similarities or dissimilarities. It includes evaluation of the theological underpinnings resulting from the encounter between the text and the context of the reader. The aim is the actualisation of the theological meaning of the text in today's context, so as to forge integration between faith and life and engender commitment to personal and societal transformation.²

Ukpong has identified various ways in which this evaluation takes place in this approach.³ The present paper illustrates one of these ways whereby the biblical text is interpreted against the background of African life experience. The aim is to arrive at a new understanding of the biblical text informed by the African situation.⁴ The basis for this approach is the realisation that any interpretation of a biblical text or theme is done from the socio-cultural perspective of the interpreter. Approaching a theme or text from an African perspective is therefore expected to offer some fresh insights into its meaning⁵.

The present essay illustrates a mutual and dynamic interaction between a biblical text reporting a social conflict in Israel and a contemporary context of social conflict in Rwanda. The dialogue here is a back-and-forth movement between text and context, as Draper has described such kind of interaction.⁶ In the present article, the discussion uses the Rwandan context as the subject of interpretation, so that the biblical text is interpreted against the background of the Rwandan experience with the aim of arriving at a new understanding of the text.⁷ Yet, the biblical insights are also used to reach a better understanding of issues raised in the Rwandan context. The movement is dialogical since text and context "talk" to each other.

The analytical categories selected from both contexts for interaction reveal my deliberate choice to read the text and its context from the perspective of the victims of exploitation and discrimination, or, in West's words, my ideological orientation influenced by my social location.⁸ The issue of patrimonialism is first described in relation to the Rwandan context before it is related to the ancient context of Israel.

² Justin S. Ukpong, "Developments in Biblical Interpretation in Modern Africa," *Missionalia* 27/3 (November 1999): 315.

³ Ukpong, "Developments in Biblical Interpretation," 318-19.

⁴ Ukpong, "Developments in Biblical Interpretation," 319.

⁵ Ukpong, "Developments in Biblical Interpretation," p 319.

⁶ Jonathan A. Draper, "For the Kingdom Is Inside You and It Is Outside You: Contextual Exegesis in South Africa" in *Texts and Interpretation: New Approaches in the Criticism of the New Testament* (ed. Patrick J. Hartin and Jacobus H. Petzer; Leiden: Brill, 1991), quoted in Gerald West, "Interpreting 'the Exile,'" 257.

⁷ Ukpong "Developments in Biblical Interpretation," 320.

⁸ West, "Interpreting 'the Exile,'" 256-258.

B PATRIMONIALISM AND SOCIAL POLARISATION

Patrimonialism is a term used by Weber⁹ to describe a system of authority whereby those lower in the hierarchy are not subordinate officials with defined powers and functions, but retainers whose positions depend on a leader to whom they owe allegiance. The system is held together by loyalty or kinship ties, rather than by a hierarchy of administrative grades and functions.¹⁰ This tendency, which Gifford deems prevalent in African states, makes them different from Western societies, which rest on another type of authority described by Weber as a "rational-legal authority." In this system, estimates Gifford, power has come to be exercised through legally defined structures, for a publicly acknowledged aim. Operating these structures are officials who, in exercising the power of the office, treat other individuals impersonally, according to criteria which the structure demands.¹¹

Features of patrimonialism were observed in Rwanda and in Israel where some autocratic leaders were determined to maintain their grip on power and to monopolize the control and distribution of resources. In their bid to secure and keep power and its privileges, these leaders sought and obtained support and loyalty from their closest kin, whom they rewarded with privileges, to the exclusion of those judged "outsiders," and at the expense of the labouring masses that bore the price of the production of these resources. The present article identifies aspects of patrimonialism among the root causes of Rwandan social conflicts and attempts to understand the context of tribal conflicts in Israel in the light of patrimonialism.

C PATRIMONIALISM IN RWANDAN POLITICAL LEADERSHIP

Patrimonialism, as described by Gifford, was prevalent in pre-colonial Rwanda. This is a period during which clientelism worked through a hierarchy of "power brokers,"¹² namely, local leaders whom the central figure, the *Mwami*, entrusted with power and socio-economic privileges. The *Nyiginya* aristocracy constituted a class that thrived on the labour of their exploited subjects, the peasant Hutu and the Twa, as well as the Tutsi who were not part of the ruling class. To ensure the security of their domination, the lords from the *Nyiginya* dynasty found it more efficient to entrust political and administrative responsibilities to chiefs selected from their fellow pastoralist Tutsi. This resulted in the differentiation of Rwandan society between ruling pastoralists and ruled agri-

⁹ Max Weber, *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (London: Routledge, 1992), referred to in Paul Gifford, *African Christianity: Its Public Role* (London: Hurst and Company, 1998), 5.

¹⁰ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 5.

¹¹ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 5.

¹² Gifford, *African Christianity*, 6.

culturalists.¹³ These chiefs acted as representatives of the central authority in their constituencies. The central figure delivered benefits to the local grandee, who, in turn, delivered the support of his area to the *supremo*.¹⁴ This structure continued into the colonial period, thanks to the "Indirect Rule" of the Germans and Belgians that continued and reinforced the traditional social structure. In pre-colonial and colonial Rwanda, patrimonialism was practised along kinship lines, as the central figure was always a Tutsi king who entrusted power and privileges to local chiefs who were predominantly Tutsi.

The successive post-colonial regimes did not correct the social imbalances they disapproved of in previous regimes. As a matter of fact, independent Rwanda has now had three regimes, each of which ousted its predecessor on the indictment of social discrimination and exclusion. As Lemarchand has rightly observed, if one takes democracy to mean equal access to opportunities and life chances, irrespective of caste or races, it is just as a remote ideal in republican Rwanda as it ever was under the monarchy.¹⁵ To the classic patrimonial system, where clientelism was formally acknowledged as the official form of government, the post-colonial regimes in Rwanda substituted what Gifford tagged "neo-patrimonialism." This is a system formally constituted on the principle of rational legality, where states function with the apparatus of a modern state, but officials tend to exercise their powers as a form not of public service but of private property.¹⁶

All the post-independence regimes in Rwanda claimed to be democratic and to serve the interests of the masses. What was noted, however, was a persisting determination of the leading elite in the successive regimes each time to look after the interests of its constituent tribe or group and, by that token, the preoccupation to acquire a kind of legitimacy as the authentic representative of that group. In this neo-patrimonial Rwanda, clientelism continued to follow kinship lines. Loyalty to kinship was easily harnessed in the power scramble by the leading elite promising to restore the dignity, security and socio-economic privileges of a particular tribe or group, really or allegedly oppressed by the preceding regime. Each time, the "deliverers" of one social group became the oppressors of the other groups to whom they denied the same rights they were fighting for. The finding of the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission of 2002 was that bad governance has been historically a major cause of disunity among the Rwandan people.¹⁷ The Commission named, among other elements

¹³ Kamukama, "Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relation," in *Arms and Dragners in the Heart of Africa* (ed. Anyang P. Nyong'o; Nairobi: Academy Science Publishers, 1993), 143.

¹⁴ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 6.

¹⁵ René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (London: Pall Mall, 1970), 116.

¹⁶ Gifford, *African Christianity*, 5.

¹⁷ National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, Republic of Rwanda. "Report of the National Summit on Unity and Reconciliation," (Kigali, 2002), 25.

of bad governance, dictatorial and sectarian leadership and biased teaching given to Rwandans over generations.¹⁸ Patrimonialism, coupled with tribalism, exacerbated division in Rwandan society. A similar trend was observed during Israel's dynastic regimes.

D PATRIMONIALISM IN ISRAEL

The rise of the monarchy in Israel meant the formation of a centrally administered territorial state in an area that was formerly structured along tribal lines. As Dietrich¹⁹ pointed out, this development brought about decisive economic and thus social changes. These changes included the development of a new centre of economics and wealth surrounding the royal court, a centre that profited mainly the king and his family, as well as his loyal followers. A group of elites that had not previously existed then emerged, meaning that not everyone participated equally in the increasing political and economic wealth created by the kingdom. In general, we can assume that the rulers particularly cared for their own power bases by granting their supporters a series of privileges.²⁰ This situation is evident through a description of Saul's royal table, where the king sat upon his seat, Jonathan, the crown prince sitting opposite, Abner the leader of the Army and king's cousin sitting by the king's side, the next seat being for David, the commander of the mercenary troops and the king's son-in-law (1 Sam 20:25). All these top leaders in Saul's kingdom were the king's close relatives.

The patrimonial character of dynastic regimes in Israel is better described in the so-called "rights of the king" (1 Sam 8:11-17). This text, believed, though with no certainty, to originate from early monarchy,²¹ contains a list of exploitative measures associated with dynastic monarchy in Israel. Indications pointing to practices similar to those described in this passage are found further in the accounts of the kings that reigned over the united kingdom. Saul's reported scolding of his fellow Benjamites (1 Sam 22:7-8) may indicate that the king's servants, most of whom were his close relatives, were rewarded for their loyalty and services with land and with prominent positions. Commenting on the land alluded to in Saul's speech, Dietrich observed:

The text does not say from where he took these lands. It stands to reason that they were not his own or that of his family; these lands would not have been large enough, and the Benjamites – according to the words used – were no stewards of royal lands but rather owners of their own lands and vineyards. It seems that Saul provided

¹⁸ National Unity and Reconciliation Commission, "Report," 4.

¹⁹ Walter Dietrich, *The Early Monarchy in Israel: The Tenth Century B.C.E.* (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2007), 195.

²⁰ Dietrich, *The Early Monarchy in Israel*, 197.

²¹ Dietrich, *The Early Monarchy in Israel*, 196.

them with land – or allowed them to provide themselves with land that either was without owner or that was taken from previous owners.²²

If Saul favoured the Benjamites, David favoured the Judahites and the Jerusalemites. As seen in the account of David's rise to power, the top positions formerly occupied by Saul's family were, later in David's kingdom, given to David's relatives such as Joab, Asahel and Abishai, sons of the king's sister, Jonathan, his brother's son (2 Sam 21:21) and many others of his relatives or his mercenaries, most of whom were from Judah.²³ David's own sons were royal advisors (2 Sam 8:15-16). In Solomon's kingdom socio-economic imbalances were enhanced by taxes and compulsory labour imposed on northern Israelites, while Judah was exempted from such obligations (1 Kgs 4:12).

Frick has used two concepts to describe the practices by which the sovereigns in early Israel used socio-economic privileges to legitimate and strengthen their own positions of leadership. He referred to "clientship," a bond between a political superior and a person to whom he has delegated part of his authority, and to "reciprocity," a system whereby successful patrons who have accumulated material wealth are able to use their positions to gain more clients and more power.²⁴ In the united kingdom of Israel, dynastic monarchs who controlled the redistribution of resources reverted to clientship and reciprocity to win support and loyalty, mainly from their kin, members of their tribe. Social tensions and conflicts resulted from the reaction of the tribes that were not given equal opportunity for access to such privileges. The phenomenon described above in Frick's terms in relation to Israel is nothing less than the patrimonialism described by Gifford in relation to African states.

A pattern characteristic of patrimonialism has been the emergence of small groups of very influential people surrounding the heads of states, often closely related to them. In many cases this group grows so powerful that they come to constitute an unofficial nerve centre of state power, masterminding decisions that neither the head of the state nor any other constituted organ can overrule. This phenomenon was referred to as Akazu²⁵ in Rwandan politics, but finds its parallel in Israel's regimes.

²² Dietrich, *The Early Monarchy in Israel*, 190.

²³ Tomoo Ishida, "Solomon's Succession to the Throne of David," in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays* (ed. Tomoo Ishida; Tokyo: Yamakawa-Shuppansha, 1982), 177.

²⁴ Frank S. Frick, *The Formation of the State in Ancient Israel* (Sheffield: Almond Press, 1985), quoted in Paula M. McNutt, *Reconstructing the Society of Ancient Israel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), 120.

²⁵ The term literally means "a small house." It is normally used in reference to a group of people with close blood relation, sharing many characteristic traits. In Rwanda the term was used during the Habyarimana regime to refer to a group of

E THE "AKAZU" PHENOMENON: HEADQUARTERS OF OPPRESSION

A Rwandan popular saying "*Umwami ntiyica hica rubanda*" can be paraphrased, "It is not the king who executes, but the people around him." The saying refers to unpopular attitudes and decisions often adopted by kings and for which they are justly held responsible, even though such decisions originate not from the king himself but from his entourage. This saying finds application in the attitude of many head of states in Rwanda and elsewhere, who succumbed to the influence of their entourage and took unpopular decisions that alienated them from the people thus hastening their fall. It may also apply to the influence of people who surrounded the kings in the united monarchy of Israel. More explicitly noted is the influence of Rehoboam's young advisors, which brought an end to the hegemony of 'David's House' over Israel. The phenomenon coined "*Akazu*" in Rwandan politics is similar to what is observed in Israel.

F THE "AKAZU" PHENOMENON IN RWANDAN POLITICS

The pre-colonial and colonial periods were marked by Tutsi regimes, but the power was not distributed equally among all the Tutsi. One particular group of blood-related Tutsi from the *Nyiginya* clan constituted the oligarchy that maintained the monopoly of political power for centuries.²⁶ Their hegemony lasted until late in the early 20th century, when a rival Tutsi clan, the *Bega*, succeeded in toppling them, in what was called the "*Coup d'état* of Rucunshu."²⁷ During the *Bega* regime the "*akazu*" of a Tutsi extremist group, the so-called "*Abagaramu b'umwami bakuru*" (the senior servants of the king) arose to oppose the emancipation of the Hutu masses. Reacting against the egalitarian ideology expressed by the then Hutu counter-elite, this group of Tutsi notables issued in May 1958 a statement rejecting any Hutu pretensions to common ancestry with the Tutsi. Their argument ran like this:

Hutu were already in the country when the ancestors of the Tutsi arrived. Tutsi kings had conquered the Hutu, killed off their princelings, and reduced Hutu to serfs. By what rights then could Hutu claim to be the brothers of the Tutsi, and demand a share in the common patrimony to which only brothers have the right to claim?²⁸

highly influential politicians who were closely related to Agatha, Habyarimana's wife. In the years that preceded the Genocide, this group has become extremely powerful and controlled all the power.

²⁶ Kamukama, *Pride and Prejudice in Ethnic Relation*, 143.

²⁷ Jean P. Chrétien, *The Great Lakes of Africa: Two Thousand Years of History* (New York: Zone Books, 2003), 247.

²⁸ Leon Kuper, *The Pity of It All: Polarisation of Racial and Ethnic Relations* (London: Duckworth, 1977), 176.

The Hutu regime that took over from the Tutsi was not better in terms of power-sharing. Claiming to be republican and democratic, the new leaders did not establish a new dynasty. But it was soon to be observed that political power was concentrated in the hands of people from one region of the country. There was a time when about half of the members of the government originated from two districts among the 149 that made up the whole country. Power was not in the hands of the then President, Kayibanda, but in the hands of a small group behind him. It was this situation that provided a pretext for a group of army officers, led by Major General Habyarimana, to organise a coup that toppled the regime on 5 July 1973. The organisers of the coup were from the northern region of the country, a region they reckoned to have been marginalised by the previous regime, and so they undertook to correct the imbalance. The government's centre of gravity shifted from Nduga in the south to Rukiga in the north, or, more exactly, from Gitarama *prefecture* to Gisenyi *prefecture*.²⁹ This was the beginning of a social rift in the country, which led Rwandans to be identified according to an oversimplified binary division as either northerners or southerners.

The new regime's determination to vindicate the "marginalised" northern region of the country was openly expressed through the so-called "equilibrium policy." This policy was implemented through a quota system allocated to each *prefecture* and to each ethnic group, with respect to admission to public schools and employment.³⁰ The principle itself was unpopular enough among the "southerners" whom it disfavoured and frustrated. The abuse of it by some "northerners," wishing to secure and maintain the monopoly of power and privileges, further increased the rift and created tension between the two camps, north and south. During this time the feeling of being marginalised shifted from the north to the rest of the country. This sentiment somehow reduced the social gap between Hutu and the Tutsi of the "south," who faced a common challenge from the "north."

It was in the face of mounting pressure from those who felt excluded that a nucleus of northern hardliners emerged who were determined to maintain their power and subsequent privileges. Most members of this *Akazu* were related to the President through his wife. They became so powerful, to the point of highjacking power, that Habyarimana could no longer decide anything against their wishes. Members of this *Akazu* are perceived as responsible for Habyarimana's reticent attitude towards the people's demand for genuine democratisation of the institutions and especially his repeated postponement of the implementation of the Arusha peace agreement, which, when implemented, considerably reduced his power and influence and, by the same token, put an

²⁹ Chrétien, *The Great Lakes of Africa*, 307.

³⁰ Tharcisse Gatwa, *The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900-1994* (UK: Paternoster, 2005), 117.

end to the dominion of the *Akazu*. This group of northerners exerted a heavy pressure on Habyarimana, who could not safely ignore the opinion of his closest supporters who were opposed to political changes that implied power-sharing and unavoidably the end of the northern Hutu hegemony. This kind of influence is equally noticed throughout dynastic Israel.

G INFLUENCE OF AKAZU IN DYNASTIC ISRAEL

Israel's leaders were good at surrounding themselves with people of their own tribes and families. One of the corollaries of patrimonialism that pervaded political leadership in Israel was the tendency observed among the people surrounding the king to cling to the privileges that they enjoyed by virtue of their kinship relationship to the king. These people would endeavour to hold on to power, which they deemed to be a property of their tribe, and were very reluctant to release it. This attitude is observed with the Benjamites when Abner suggested the transfer of power from Saul's house to David's. Abner knew that it was not enough to ask Ishbaal to resign, he also needed to convince the house of Benjamin to release the throne (2 Sam 3:19). Power belonged not to Ishbaal but to the "*Akazu*" of the Benjamites. The extremists among them such as Sheba (2 Sam 20) and Shimei (2 Sam 16:5-14), never accommodated this development.

The men of Judah surrounding king David manifested the same sentiment when they felt that their claim to pre-eminence was threatened (2 Sam 20:42, 43). Fokkelman's pertinent observation that the complaint of the men of Israel, the northern tribes, in the incident reported in the passage above, was addressed to David, but that the response came from the men of Judah,³¹ might reveal the kind of control the men of Judah intended to have or believed they had over the king. They felt free to speak for the king who, needing them to maintain his throne, would not dare contradict them. This is at least the view of Tadmor, who believes that it was David's failure to reserve a special status to his men of Judah that had pushed them to support Absalom's revolt.³² David had now learnt his lesson. The attitude of the prominent men of Judah throughout the revolt of Absalom revealed that they had a grip on power and the king could hardly secure his throne without their support.

The biblical narrative that presents the division of the kingdom as a direct result of Rehoboam's arrogant answer to the people's petition still makes it plain that the king's answer was dictated by his advisors (1 Kgs 12:10-15).

³¹ Jan P. Fokkelman, *King David (II Samuel 9-20 & I Kings 1-2)*, vol. 1 of *Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel*, Assen: Van Gorcum, 1981), 316, quoted in Arnold A. Anderson, *2 Samuel* (WBC; Dallas, Tex: Word Books, Publisher), 239.

³² Hayim Tadmor, "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy: Social and Political Tensions in the Time of David and Solomon," in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays* (ed. Tomoo Ishida; Tokyo: Yamakawa-Shuppansha), 249.

Rehoboam faithfully communicated to the people the decision taken by a group of advisors whose opinion he valued highly. The description of these advisors as הַיְלָדִים "the young men" (1 Kgs 12:10) who grew up with Rehoboam (1 Kgs 12:10) may help understand their attitude.

The word הַיְלָדִים is the plural form of יָלֵד meaning "child," "boy," "son" or "youth." In the context of this story it refers to young men who grew up with Rehoboam. The word הַיְלָדִים was explained as a technical term referring to a special group of youngsters raised at court, the sons of officials and courtiers.³³ All that is specified in the text is that these were young men who grew up with Rehoboam and were therefore his contemporaries. According to 1 Kgs 14:21, Rehoboam was 41 when he acceded to the throne.³⁴ Those of the group of הַיְלָדִים were about that age. Compared to הַזְקֵנִים, the elders who had served his father, they could be called young men, but certainly not boys. That they were Rehoboam's age-mates seems to surmise that they were mature enough to understand the pain of the oppressed people. In the narrator's view they deserve the description as הַיְלָדִים probably because their advice is so naive³⁵ betraying their inexperience. The only regime they knew was that of Solomon. They are therefore contrasted with the experienced elders, who knew about the charismatic style of leadership where it was the leaders who served the people and not the other way round.

But there is more to their description. That these הַיְלָדִים "young men" had probably grown up with Rehoboam (1 Kgs 12:10) may indicate that they were men from Judah who had not suffered the hard labour imposed on the northern tribes, but who had been and were still benefiting from this exploitation and oppression. The spoilt aristocrats who knew only the privileged life of the monarchy advised against giving in to the people's demand that had serious implication to their privileges. As members of the ruling *akazu*, they vetoed the wise advice of הַזְקֵנִים and decided what Rehoboam should implement namely, to resort to intimidation threatening the people with a heavier yoke and harsher discipline to keep them delivering services.

It was often observed that the Rwandan Genocide was helped by the intransigence of the President, whose determination to hold on to power led him to ignore the wishes of the people. But in his intransigence the President was just the speaker of a small group of his closest allies, whom he had permitted to usurp the power which normally should belong to the whole people.

³³ Mordechai Cogan, *1 Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday 2001), 348.

³⁴ The Septuagint in its additional narration about the division of the kingdom states in 1 Kgs 12:24a that Rehoboam was 16 years old when he succeeded his father to the throne.

³⁵ Don A. Carson, *New Bible Commentary: 21st Century Edition* (4th ed.; Leicester, England: Inter-Varsity Press, 1994).

The supreme leader of the nation ended up becoming a prisoner of the "Akazu," losing the freedom to exercise his authority. Similarly, the harsh answer of Rehoboam that triggered the division of the kingdom in Israel was a direct consequence of patrimonialism that pervaded political leadership. By surrounding himself with people who prioritised their own interests and the interests of their social group above the interests of the whole people, Rehoboam put himself in a position where he could no longer satisfy his people's expectations. Even if he wanted to be moderate and reasonable, he was not free to do so. Power did not belong to him, it belonged to the "Akazu" from the tribe of Judah. The same abuse of patrimonialism greatly contributed to social conflicts in both contexts. In Israel, as in Rwanda, the conflict reached an undesirable end because the voice of hardliners was louder than that of the peacemakers, whose wise contribution was ignored.

H THE IGNORED VOICE OF THE WISE

Beside the groups of intransigent and arrogant hardliners responsible for the unyieldingness of the regimes in Israel and in Rwanda, there were surely in each context another group of wise, experienced and moderate politicians advocating peace and reconciliation. Unfortunately, the wisdom of these wise peacemakers could not save the situation because it was ignored by the headstrong decision-makers. In the division narrative, these wise people are identified and their contribution revealed. In the case of the Rwandan conflict such people are not well known. Hence, what is known from the context of the biblical text about the ignored voice of the wise may help to recognise and to understand what is less clear in the Rwandan context, with respect to the weak voice of the peacemakers.

I THE IGNORED VOICE OF THE WISE LEADERS IN ISRAEL

Having introduced the crisis that occasioned the division in Israel (1 Kgs 12 1-50), the narrator quickly indicates that there was wisdom available for king Rehoboam, that could have helped the situation, if only the king had been wise enough to make good use of it. This wisdom was to be found in the advice of הַזְּקֵנִים.

The Hebrew word הַזְּקֵנִים can be interpreted as "the elders" or "the old men" and can refer to age or to status. It has been suggested that these people could be understood to be an "advisory council," with roots reaching to the pre-monarchical period; that they were "patriarchal notables" who "served in an advisory capacity."³⁶ In the pre-monarchical period reference is often made to

³⁶ Abraham Malamat, "Origins of State Craft in the Israelite Monarchy," in *BA* (vol. 3; ed. Edward F. Campbell, Jr. and David N. Freedman; Garden City: Anchor Books, Doubleday, 1970), 171-181, quoted in Mordechai Cogan, *I Kings: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, 347.

elders who intervene at a time of crisis. The elders of Gilead appointed Jephthah to lead the campaign against the Ammonites (Judg 11). It was also the elders of Israel who made a covenant with David in Hebron (2 Sam 5:1-3). In the present narrative, the people who take the initiative to address the issues of concern for the people are designated not as הַזְּקֵנִים "the elders" but as כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל "all Israel."

The phrase כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל "all Israel" was used a number of times to designate the whole people as the bearer of political, military or ceremonial authority. The other terms used in the same sense are "the people of Israel," "the men of Israel," "the assembly," "the people," or simply "Israel."³⁷ In the division narrative, the other term used to describe the people confronting the king at Shechem is כָּל־קְהַל יִשְׂרָאֵל "the whole assembly of Israel" (1 Kgs 12:3). The Hebrew word used here for assembly is קְהָל. The term could be used to designate an assembly specially convoked, for war or invasion, for example, as it appears in Num 22:4; Judg 20:2, 21:5-8; 1 Sam 17:47; Ezek 16:40, or used with reference to the whole community of the people of Israel, as in Deut 23:2; Num 16:3, 20:4; 1 Chr 28:8; Neh 13:1, or more generally in the sense of "company," in reference to a multitude of people such as in Gen 35:11, 28:3, 48:4.³⁸ The term could refer to a congregation as an organised body, a societal institution with regulatory responsibilities.³⁹ In the pre-monarchical period such power belonged to הַזְּקֵנִים "the elders," who were heads of local communities. With the establishment of the monarchy it seems that the authority of the elders was weakened to the degree that the king's power increased.⁴⁰ Centralisation was achieved at the expense of traditional tribal structure.

The consolidation of the kingdom and the increased centralisation of its administration were further steps in the transition from tribal society to a state. In Lemche's opinion, the consolidation of the state was to be achieved at the expense of the traditional political significance enjoyed by the tribal society.⁴¹ For Lemche, Solomon's attempted administrative subdivision of northern Israel was presumably intended to reduce the political influence of the northern tribes, by replacing the local form of leadership with that of a centralised administration. The undermining of the tribal society that took a definite shape under Solomon meant that Israel was to be transformed into a state like those

³⁷ Tadmor, "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy," 242.

³⁸ Francis S. Brown, Rolles Driver, and Augustus C. Briggs. *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon*. Electronic ed. Oak Harbor, Wash.: Logos Research Systems, 2000.

³⁹ Cogan, *I Kings*, 347.

⁴⁰ Tadmor, "Traditional Institutions and the Monarchy," 242.

⁴¹ Niels P. Lemche, *Ancient Israel: A New History of Israelite Society* (Sheffield, England: JSOT Press 1988), 139.

which had previously existed and the king was to be the only authority in the country, while the population was to be reduced to the status of his slave.⁴²

In the story of Shechem negotiations, הַזְקֵנִים "the elders" are, therefore, not an organised body and they are not called upon to make a decision. The elders are not even the representative of the people, a role which is here carried out by כָּל־יִשְׂרָאֵל. The description of הַזְקֵנִים as elders who served Rehoboam's father seems intended to contrast them with הַיְלָדִים "the youngsters" who grew up with Rehoboam. The emphasis is on their age, experience⁴³ and wisdom. Rehoboam was much aware of the wisdom of these elders and so he turned to them first. As wise as their advice could be, however, it needed first to be examined by the radical wing of the ruling *akazu* comprising הַיְלָדִים.

The elders who had served under Rehoboam's father (1 Kgs 12:6) understood better the situation of the complaining people because they knew its background. They had witnessed the price that the people paid for the consolidation of Solomon's kingdom. Solomon's reign was marked by huge building projects. Beside the temple and the king's palace, that remained the centrepiece of his building programmes, he undertook to refortify strategic cities such as Hazor, Megiddo, Gezer, Beth Horon, Baalath and Tamar. Most of these cities were built along the main trade route through the kingdom. These monumental cities, together with their temples, military palaces, administrative chambers and oversized granaries, were built by the people subjected to the *corvée*, under the supervision of Adoram.⁴⁴

A glimpse at what these projects cost to the people is provided in the biblical account in 1 Kgs 5:13-18. To build fortresses, palaces and the temple, Solomon reportedly enlisted a crew of 30,000 men from all over Israel. He deployed them in teams of 10,000 each for a month at a time in Lebanon and two months off at home. Their task was to cut, haul and ship timber from Lebanon. Solomon recruited 80,000 stonecutters and 70,000 basket carriers as forced labour. The staff that kept this army of workers at their tasks numbered 3,600. These scores of thousands were fed from state stores or forced to bring food from home stores. Other work could be done only by skilled craftspeople from the cities of the Phoenician coast, who required payment and feeding.⁴⁵ Scholars can debate, as they do, the exact terminology to use in describing the work imposed on the people at this time, whether forced labour, *corvée* or slavery. One thing that seems to be clear is the involuntary character of this labour. This was a kind of work, observes Soggin, which individuals and communities

⁴² Lemche, *Ancient Israel*, 139.

⁴³ John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck, *The Bible Knowledge Commentary* (Colorado Springs: Chariot Victor, 1985), 511.

⁴⁴ Robert B. Coote, *In Defense of Revolution* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1991), 51.

⁴⁵ Coote, *In Defense of Revolution*, 52.

alike were unrelated and had to be therefore forced, because its aims were unimportant or even unknown to them.⁴⁶

The same people who were sweating to support Solomon's building projects were also sustaining his army. David had maintained an economical army, with a small chariot corps and most garrisons inherited from the Philistines. His voluntary tribal infantry supported itself through normal subsistence. Solomon's army was differently organised. It included a larger standing army of charioteers, mercenaries and a drafted infantry. According to biblical record, Solomon's chariots numbered 1,400 (requiring at least 4,200 horses, at three horses per chariot); and horsemen, up to 12,000. All these personnel were supported on food provided by the people. Chariots cost 600 shekels each and trained horses, 150 shekels (1 Kgs 10:26-29). The expense of this army to the people is shown in the following description:

Each vehicle required three horses, so chariot and team came to 1,050 shekels. Then there were the accessory costs; crews, maintenance personnel, weapons, spare parts, housing for personnel, storage areas and repair shops, stables and fodder. Frequent disassembly and lubrication with olive oil were essential. The corps thus consumed a large quantity of the basic foodstuffs of Palestine. The horses required months of training, then ongoing practice and grooming by skilled personnel. The chariot army all told required an outlay on the order of 1, 470.000 shekels, leaving aside the expense of upkeep and renewal.⁴⁷

Beside the requirements for his building projects and his army, Solomon subjected his people to financing the opulence of his palace. According to the biblical record, each day Solomon and his men and their families ate thirty sacks of flour, sixty sacks of meal, thirty oxen, a hundred sheep, assorted antelope and fowl and unspecified quantities of wine and oil. To this should be added the annual payment in kind to Hiram for his timber: 20,000 cors of wheat and 20 cors of pressed oil.⁴⁸ The burden of maintaining Solomon's regime weighed heavily on the people who were required to pay heavy taxes and *corvée*. It was recorded that the people endured the cost of Solomon's opulence more than they enjoyed the benefits of his prosperity.

⁴⁶ Alberto J. Soggin, "Compulsory Labor under David and Solomon," in *Studies in the Period of David and Solomon and Other Essays* (ed. Tomoo Ishida; Tokyo: Yamakawa-Shuppansha), 260.

⁴⁷ Coote, *In Defense of Revolution*, 52.

⁴⁸ Estimated to 3,640 kilolitres of wheat and 420 kilolitres of oil. See estimate in the footnote for 2 Chr 2:10 in Student's Life Application Bible that adds also 3,640 kilolitres of barley and the same quantity of wine, in David R. Veerman and Karen Ball. eds., *Student's Life Application Bible*. (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers), 243.

During Solomon's days Jerusalem became increasingly affluent. The wealth of the world flowed to Solomon's court and was reflected in the glory of the capital city. But bureaucracy grew as well. The nation's wealth was no longer based on the land and what it produced. Increasingly the government controlled the wealth of the land, and taxes drained wealth from the people and funnelled expenditure through the central government. The glory was a superficial thing; prosperity was not for the people as much as it was at the expense of the people.⁴⁹

The elders who had witnessed this situation could understand that the people's service under Solomon had indeed been a *על* "yoke." Their view was that the king should heed the request of the people and become their servant.

That Rehoboam could approach *הַזְקֵנִים* for advice suggests that they were not part of the complaining group referred to as *בְּלִקְהָהּ* or *אֵלֶּכָל-יִשְׂרָאֵל*. Since *הַזְקֵנִים* had served under Solomon, they had been part of the regime that imposed a heavy yoke on the northern tribes and benefited, albeit unwittingly, from the benefits of this exploitation. It is then most probable that they belonged to the tribe of Judah exempted from, and somehow beneficiary of the exploitative measures of the regime. The advice of the elders indicates that they were not in support of the oppressive policies, however. Maybe they never supported this exploitation from the time of its conception, but still they served the regime that conceived and implemented it. The exploitative and oppressive character of the regime may have disturbed them, but they did not oppose it. It was only when a crisis confronted them, and when their opinion was sought, that they were courageous enough to speak the truth. But was this all these wise people could have done? Was their advice not too little and coming too late?

The narrative describes these wise elders as a group of people whose position under Solomon implies some responsibility in the regime's exploitation of the northern tribes. Unfortunately, it does not provide full information that can allow for a fair judgement of their attitude. Whether they enjoyed the benefits of this oppression and actively took part in it, or whether they were silent and passive observers, or whether they had occasion to speak out against the oppression, the text is silent. The elders' advice to Rehoboam (1 Kgs 12:7) may simply indicate that there had been among Solomon's collaborators officials who did not support his unpopular measures. But the presence of diverging opinion did not prevent the implementation of his policies. The reason may be that such people were not bold enough to challenge the regime, fearing for their personal security and that of their positions. It may be that they, or some of them, were not in favour of the exploitation but remained indifferent, feeling

⁴⁹ Larry Richards and Lawrence O. Richards, *The Teacher's Commentary* (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1987), 247.

that they should not interfere, since the exploitation, was not directed against them and their families. It may be that they did speak, but their voice was too soft and easily ignored, when the voice of the hardliners was louder and stronger. A similar situation is observed with respect to some peoples' attitude toward the Rwandan Genocide.

J THE WEAK VOICE OF THE PEACEMAKERS IN RWANDA

It is generally agreed that not all the Hutu, peasants or politicians, actively participated in the Genocide, not even all those who were members of the most indicted political party, Habyarimana's MRND,⁵⁰ nor those who were members of his army. Some of these Hutu people made clear their position against the Genocide, either through their boldness in speaking out against it or through their courageous attitude in protecting the Tutsi targeted by the killings. There are many others whose personal participation in the Genocide is not established, but who are credited with little or no express act of opposing it. The question of their responsibility defies easy answers.

In an attempt to distinguish different levels of responsibility in the Rwandan Genocide the people involved have been grouped into categories. For instance, Sibomana⁵¹ places at the top those who planned the Genocide, followed by their technicians who implemented the plan, then the people who carried out orders, and the chain includes the spectators who, though not active in the killing, were present at the scene of the crime. Those who belong to this last category are guilty for their tacit agreement, their indifference, or their failure to revolt. For Sibomana, this attitude of silence determined the success of the enterprise. The law on the crimes of the Genocide adopted by the Rwandan government in August 1996 follows a similar approach of categorising the perpetrators according to levels of their responsibility.⁵²

Despite these laudable efforts to differentiate the level of responsibility in order to render an even-handed justice, it remains difficult to establish the responsibility of those whose alleged crime is that they did nothing. Their indictment is essentially based on the mere assumption that since they were there, they could do something, which they failed to do. Sibomana believes that had all those who held their peace shouted in opposition to the killings, their noise could have made a difference. Sibomana's argument is based on the assumption that the Genocide happened because there were not enough voices against it. This logic is in line with the opinion of those who wonder how a

⁵⁰ *Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement.*

⁵¹ André Sibomana, *Hope for Rwanda, Hope for Rwanda: Conversation with Laure Guilbert and Hervé Deuigne* (London: Pluto Press, 1999), 101.

⁵² The Organic Law No. 8/96 of 30 August 1996. Quoted in Charles Villa-Vicencio, Paul Nantulya and Tyrone Savage, *Transitional Justice in the African Great Lakes Region* (Cape Town: Institute for Justice and Reconciliation, 2005), 89.

minority of extremists ended up having their own way. The fact is that crimes like the Genocide are not adopted following a democratic vote so that the opinion of the majority may prevail. The limited impact of the advice of הַזְקֵנִים of the court of Rehoboam reminds us that countering the extremists requires more than a shout.

Speaking out might have made more of a difference in preventing the Genocide than in stopping it. Even at the prevention level the voice that could have made a difference would have been that of people expressing themselves through organised social structures rather than the voices of individuals. Had such voice been heard calling for reconciliation and power-sharing before, or at least after, the events of 1959-1962 that cost the lives of many Tutsi and sent into exile more of them who later opted for the war to return to their country, Rwandan history could have taken a different turn and may have avoided the Genocide. Had the Rwandan church and the civil societies in general united their voices to speak for the Tutsi refugees when they were expelled from Uganda by Obote's regime in 1982, and denied entry into Rwanda by the regime of the Second Republic, the Rwandese Patriotic Front would probably have had more problems in motivating its attack on Rwanda in 1990. Unfortunately, during such periods of crises that later produced the Genocide, the peacemaking voice was weak, if there was any.

To stop the Genocide after it had been launched much noise could have been good, but surely not enough, because the effect of these noises still depended on the willingness of the perpetrators to listen. In the absence of the will to listen to "normal" logic, these killers needed to face something more persuasive than mere opposing opinion. The militiamen involved in the killings may have been fewer in number, but they were equipped, encouraged and often co-ordinated. Those who resisted had no power to make the killers listen to them. All who resisted did so in isolated cases. They could not count on anybody for protection or support; the few politicians perceived as potential objectors to the killings having been the priority targets of the massacre. There was nobody to encourage the people to resist and oppose the Genocide. For many of the silent observers, abstaining from active participation in the killing was all they could do to remain clean and keeping quiet was their only way to remain safe. Any form of resistance was an act of heroism. Heroism is not a common virtue and, as Sibomana admits, nobody can be condemned for not being a hero!

The genocide in Rwanda and the division of the kingdom in Israel were direct consequences of patrimonial regimes that ignored the voice of the people. Both cases of Israel and Rwanda seem to indicate that social crises or tragedies can be expected when the leaders prioritise their personal interests and refuse to be answerable to the people. In biblical traditions, patrimonial

regimes clearly go contrary not only to the will of the people but also to the will of God.

K PATRIMONIALISM WANTED NEITHER BY GOD NOR BY THE PEOPLE

In biblical traditions, the people's rejection of patrimonial regimes was expressed through their resistance to nepotism and dynastic tendencies from the pre-monarchical period. In the book of Judges, Israel is described as a confederation of tribes led by spirit-filled heroes directly raised by Yahweh not to exploit the people but to serve them in times of crises. The Judges' leadership style is regarded as having been acceptable to, and understood by, the community, who presumably viewed it as a continuation of the functions exercised by Moses and Joshua.⁵³ In Judges, the inclination to the charismatic form of leadership is clearly affirmed, as the voices calling for the institution of dynastic kingship are resisted. Opposition to kingship is expressed for example, through Gideon's rejection of such a position, with the claim that the Lord is the only one to rule over Israel (Judg 8:23). Gideon's negative view of kingship is vindicated in Abimelech's narrative and in Jotham's parable (Judges 9). Abimelech wanting to be a king is presented as the antithesis of all that the leader of Israel should have been.⁵⁴

Each time that the charismatic type of leadership was threatened by despotic, dynastic or exploitative tendencies, the people voiced their objection. Most known cases of such resistance include the case of the so-called revolt of Korah, when 250 community leaders confronted Moses and his brother Aaron protesting: "You have gone too far! The whole community is holy, every one of them. Why then do you set yourselves above the Lord's assembly?" (Num 16:1-3). If, in this case, the people's objection ended in a tragedy, they were later more successful in rejecting the rule of Samuel's corrupt sons (1 Sam 8:1-5).

The people's expressed dissatisfaction with the leadership of Samuel's house was the motive for their requesting a king. In Samuel's objection to this request he provides a description of exploitative measures characteristic of a patrimonial regime, the so-called rights of the kings (1 Sam 8:10-18). These despotic measures to which Yahweh was clearly opposed, were probably inspired by the oriental type of kingship of the time. The same practices oppressing the poor were denounced and strongly condemned by Yahweh's prophets like Amos. The people, however, seemed not to be requesting an ori-

⁵³ William J. Dumbrell, "In Those Days There Was No King in Israel; Every Man Did What Was Right in his Own Eyes: The Purpose of the Book of Kings Reconsidered," in *The Historical Books: A Sheffield Reader* (ed. Cheryl J. Exum; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 76.

⁵⁴ Dumbrell, "In Those Days There Was No King in Israel," 78.

ental kingship like that described by Samuel, rather they wanted a king who would remain a military commander, able to defeat their enemies.⁵⁵ This is exactly what Saul did after his appointment. In putting down the Ammonite threat he acted as the military king that the people demanded and thus wined more support from them (1 Sam 11:1-15). Saul ruled as a military king and he achieved some remarkable successes, as summarised in 1 Sam 14:47, 48.⁵⁶ It is on the eve of his downfall that Saul is portrayed as a king concerned about establishing a dynasty, distracted by his conflict with David, his rival, and no longer focusing on his main duty to serve the people in fighting Israel's enemies.

David took over from Saul and his public rise and his ultimate success in achieving the throne are firmly based on his early military victories. His battle with Goliath and the subsequent refrain on the lips of women, "Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," highlight David's credentials, making him a suitable candidate for a military king. It is his military skills and experience that made him relevant to the northern tribes when they went to ask him to be their military leader. In the early part of the first book of Samuel (2 Sam 2-10), David is a military king who not only fights and defeats Israel's enemies but also conquers more territory and expands Israel's kingdom. This is the kind of leader that the people needed at the time.

David deviated from his main responsibility as a servant of the people when he began to build a great palace for himself with the help of Hiram, king of Tyre (2 Sam 5:11, 12); he takes more concubines and wives from Jerusalem (2 Sam 5:13-16); then a prophecy announces that his throne shall be established forever (2 Sam 7:1-27). This description brings David's kingship closer to oriental despotism.⁵⁷ David's shift of focus away from his duty as a military king is openly expressed in the story of his affair with Bathsheba. At the time when kings go to war, David sends Joab and his servants, but he remains in Jerusalem and eventually has an affair with the wife of his servant (2 Sam 11:1-5). Preston interprets David's behaviour in this affair as capitulation to the oriental despot view of kingship. In Preston's estimate:

David has in essence abandoned the concept of king as a military leader, upholder of the covenant, and sustainer of the covenanted tribal league. His seduction and seizure of Bathsheba violates several laws of the covenant; but it is primarily the act of an oriental

⁵⁵ Thomas R. Preston "The Heroism of Saul: Patterns of Meanings in the Narrative of the Early Kingship," in *The Historical Books: A Sheffield Reader* (ed. Cheryl J. Exum; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1997), 126.

⁵⁶ Hayes, John H. "The Period of the Judges and the Rise of the Monarchy," in *Israel and Judean History* (ed. John H. Hayes and James. M. Miller; London: SCM Press, 1977), 327.

⁵⁷ Preston, "The Heroism of Saul," 126.

despot, the kind of king Samuel railed against earlier in the narrative.⁵⁸

The Deuteronomistic editor, believed to be responsible for the version of the division narrative, explains the division underlining Solomon's idolatry as the main sin that called for Yahweh's judgment (1 Kgs 11:1-13). However, even for this editor, Solomon's sin may have been broader than idolatry alone. His attitude towards material possession (1 Kgs 10:14-29) was contrary to God's will (Deut 17:14-17). His attitude towards the people (1 Kgs 5:13-18) epitomises the negative aspect of the monarchy that made it displeasing to Yahweh (1 Sam 8:10-18). Solomon's sin consisted of both his disloyalty to Yahweh and his oppression of the people. It was suggested that Solomon gradually entered into open violation of three divine rules Yahweh had given to govern the conduct of kings: (1) he multiplied military forces with chariots and horsemen (Deut 17:16); (2) he loved many foreign women (Deut 17:17); (3) he amassed silver and gold (Deut 17:17)⁵⁹. It is Solomon's extravagance at the expense of the people that resulted in moral deterioration and religious apostasy.

Solomon's patrimonial regime was the opposite of what God had commanded and what the people expected. At this time of constant wars for territorial expansion, Israel needed a charismatic leader, a military king. Any candidate for the top position needed to be approved by the people having satisfied themselves that he met the conditions. This is what they did with Saul, David, and Solomon all of whom had started well but later disappointed the people. Rehoboam failed the test from the beginning.

In Rwanda like in Israel, the people were disappointed when the leaders they expected to serve them turned against them to oppress and exploit them. From the "*Abagaragu b'umwami bakuru*" in monarchic Rwanda, to the Gitarama politicians of the First Republic and then the members of *Akazu* of the Second Republic, each group, in its time, was determined to keep the monopoly of power and to share its privileges with a small group of insiders to the exclusion of those they deemed outsiders. These extreme aspects of patrimonialism were attested even when the concerned regimes claimed to be democratic. The First Republic in Rwanda abolished the monarchy to replace it with a democratic regime, which Lemarchand later evaluated as a "democracy for the Hutu."⁶⁰ This was not democracy for everybody since it was enjoyed only by a small group from the Hutu social group. The Second Republic promised to be

⁵⁸ Preston, "The Heroism of Saul," 137.

⁵⁹ Wayne A. Brindle, "The Causes of the Division of the Kingdom," *BSac* 141/563 (July-September 1984): 232.

⁶⁰ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 116.

more democratic, but its concept of "*democratie responsable*"⁶¹ could simply be called a "democracy for the northern Hutu," since only some Hutu from the north of the country enjoyed its benefits.

The post-Genocide regime in Rwanda has an understandable concern to prevent multi-party politics from taking shape along ethnic lines, which could revive ethnic disputes and undermine national unity. This concern prompted the Rwandan government to exercise vigorous control over civic activities.⁶² Current Rwandan leaders will surely uphold the famous claim that democracy in Africa ought to be different from the Western type of democracy with its corollary of majority rule. In Rwanda, majority rule means Hutu rule and, to some, this unavoidably leads to discrimination against the Tutsi. The question now is: What kind of democracy will be suitable for Rwanda that would be democracy for all? Since nobody has ever described the kind of democracy that is suitable for the African context, whatever is suitable to the leader and his inner circle is often paraded as democracy. Exclusivist democracy, not checked by the people, is not democracy but sheer patrimonialism, which is desired neither by the people nor by God.

L CONCLUSION

The comparative approach followed in this paper has allowed for an examination of two situations of conflicts one in ancient Israel narrated in the Bible and the other in contemporary Rwanda. The conversation of the two contexts in this paper showed that in both contexts, the practice of patrimonialism benefited only the leader and his kinsfolk. By surrounding himself with the people of his tribe, the central figure, hoping to secure loyalty and support from his best trusted kin, granted them strategic positions. In so doing he made them stakeholders whose vested interest in the regime motivated them to support and defend it. As a result he lost support from the excluded people, and by the same token, his regime lost its legitimacy. The paper then claims that there is no legitimate leadership that is not sanctioned and checked by the people.

This paper has also demonstrated the disheartening reality that peacemakers in patrimonial regimes may not necessarily have the last say in decisions affecting social harmony. They may be many, but still lack ways of making their voices heard. From both the Israel and the Rwandan cases it was noted that the extremists do not need to be in the majority to pull the situation their way. This is not surprising in these days when, in Africa and many parts of the world, the possession and exercise of power do not have much to do with the opinion of the majority. The need for, and ways of, empowering peacemak-

⁶¹ This was the slogan which the Habyarimana regime used to remind the people that democracy in Rwanda ought not to be of the Western kind. They should mind the way they use it, a clear way of making it a controlled democracy.

⁶² Villa-Vicencio, Nantulya and Savage, *Building Nations*, 82.

ers in Rwanda and in Africa, so that their voice may be heard, remains a challenge. This is an issue that extends beyond the scope of the present paper but should be explored further.

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