

RWANDA: THE STATE OF RESEARCH

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Auteur: Lemarchand René

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List of abbreviations (English / French)

ICTR : International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
TPIR : Tribunal Pénal International pour le Rwanda

RGF : Rwandese Governemental Forces
FAR : Forces armées rwandaises

RPA : Rwandese Patriotic Army
APR : Armée Patriotique Rwandaise

RPF : Rwandese Patriotic Front
FPR : Front Patriotique Rwandais

UNAMIR : United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda
MINUAR : Mission des Nations Unies pour l'Assistance au Rwanda

INTRODUCTION

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The 24 years that have gone by since the Rwanda genocide an avalanche of books, reports, memoirs, conference papers and journal articles years have attempted to grapple with the crimes committed in 1994 and the many issues they raise. Some of the more significant publications that came out since 1994 by have been discussed in an earlier

version of this article (2013); this update (2018) attempts to cast a wider net. It seeks to underscore the more recent contributions to the dynamics mass murder, to outline the new research dimensions. But first a few notes of caution. This is not a comprehensive inventory of every work in print about the genocide. Our choice of materials has been dictated by their overall significance in terms of theory, methodology or their impact on the terms of public discourse about the Rwanda genocide.

Another consideration is their relevance to the analytic themes around which we have constructed this discussion. No less important we have tried to give voice to a number of Rwandan actors who, whether as survivors or perpetrators or would be neutral observers, have in one way or another shaped public perceptions of the Rwanda tragedy.

For all our efforts to refrain from being judgmental, our track record on that score is open to debate. So fraught are issues surrounding the Rwanda bloodbath, so charged are the debates it has engendered, that it is all-too-easy to take sides, or at least to tilt, even so subtly, towards one side of the argument or the other.

Nonetheless despite its shortcomings, my hope is that this attempt at stock taking may help the readers find their way across this violent and complicated landscape.

FACTS AND SPECULATION

While there are still a number of gaps to be filled, the basic facts that emerge from the huge corpus of literature on Rwanda are beyond dispute. These can be briefly summarized as follows:

(a) unlike other mass killings in the Great Lakes region, which can best be described as partial genocides (as in Burundi in 1972), or massacres, we are dealing here with a total genocide, resulting in the death of anywhere between 500,000 and a million civilians, overwhelmingly Tutsi, killed in approximately one hundred days, beginning on April 7, 1994 (Des Forges 1999, 15);

(b) the precipitating factor behind the slaughter occurred the day before, on April 6, at 8:25 pm, when a SAM-16 surface -to-air-missile scored a direct hit on the plane carrying the Rwanda president, Juvénal Habyarimana, as it was about to land in Kigali (Braeckman 1994, 174-180; Prunier, 1995, 213-217);

(c) the killers were drawn primarily from the solidly Hutu youth wing of the ruling Mouvement Républicain National pour le Développement et la Démocratie (MRND-D), the so-called interahamwe (“those who fight together”) as well as units of the FAR and the Presidential Guard; much of the mobilizing force behind the grass-roots killings came from the communal authorities (burgomasters) and local civilian defense networks put in place in 1993 (Des Forges 1999 223-231; Melvern 2004, 24-32; Prunier 1995, 239-250);

(d) the first to be killed on April 7 were all Hutu, the Prime Minister, Agathe Uwilingiyimana, a key member of the opposition party Mouvement Démocratique Républicain(MDR), Faustin Rucogoza (MDR), Minister of Information, Frédéric Namurambaho, Minister of Agriculture, and member of the Parti Social Démocrate (PSD), and the Tutsi Minister of Public Works and Secretary General of the Liberal Party, Landoald Ndasingwa (Melvern, 2004,149-153);

(e) while Tutsi civilians were the prime target of the génocidaires, a substantial number of Hutu affiliated to opposition parties were massacred in the south and central regions (Des Forges 1999, 555-559);

(f) despite the presence on the ground of the 2,700-strong UNAMIR, headed by Romeo Dallaire, the latter proved utterly powerless to pre-empt the crisis, let alone prevent the

killings, owing in large part to the determination of certain key members of the Security Council, notably the US and France, to stay away from the mounting violence (Braeckman 1994, 201-220; Melvern 2000, 2004, 245-264)

(g) nearly three months after the killings got under way, and after lending considerable logistical and military support to Habyarimana's FAR, France - in what seemed like an eleventh-hour attempt to redeem itself - received the backing of the UN to establish a "humanitarian zone" in the southwest of the country, and on June 23 the first elements of the 2,500-strong Opération Turquoise began to take up positions in Rwanda (Prunier 1995, 281-311);

(h) with the capture of Kigali by Paul Kagame's RPF, on July 4, 1994, the killings of Tutsi finally came to a halt but not the killings of Hutu. Just as in the course of the civil war a large number of Hutu civilians were deliberately massacred by RPF troops - a fact substantiated in the so-called Gersony report, after the UN official who investigated the killings - after the defeat of the génocidaires an even greater number of Hutu lost their lives within and outside Rwanda at the hands of the RPF (Des Forges 1999, 726-34). From the standpoint of this discussion the above summary is perhaps less significant for what it tells us than for what it leaves out.

Consider some of the questions it raises:

- * Who bears the onus of responsibility for lighting the fuse that brought down of the presidential plane?
- * How did this critical juncture relate to what Sémelin calls "le passage à l'acte", the move from the will to kill to the act of killing? (Sémelin 2005)
- * What does the massacre of Prime Minister Agathe Uwilingiyimana and other cabinet members tell us about what was left of the state and its relationship to the dynamics of mass murder?
- * Who were the organizers of the killings in the capital city and the countryside?
- * What were the motives behind the killings?
- * How many Hutu were killed by other Hutu, where and why?
- * How many Hutu were killed by the RPF between the time of the invasion, on October 1st, 1990, and the fall of Kigali on July 4, 1994?
- * How does the "numbers game" "i.e. the evaluation of victims on both sides of the ethnic divide - relate to the double genocide thesis?
- * How should one assess France's role prior to and during the genocide?

Our aim here is not to offer conclusive answers to these questions - some may never be known - but to bring out of the extant literature the complexity of the chain of events leading to the carnage, with due attention to the different positions taken by analysts on certain key issues. The absence of a common consensus of opinion about the why and how of the Rwanda bloodbath helps explain those "grey zones" which so profoundly complicate our understanding of why so many were killed, in so little time, and with such devastating consequences in Rwanda and beyond.

IN THE BELLY OF THE BEAST

The story of Rwanda's agonies has been told many times in many forms, but nowhere more persuasively than in Alison Des Forges's landmark investigation, *Leave None To Tell the Story* (1999). It remains the most wide-ranging, thoroughly researched and reliable source of information on the 1994 genocide. Trained as a historian and a Rwanda expert, with the help of eight research assistants the author takes us into the belly of the beast. She delves into the historical past, lays bare the workings of the propaganda machine, the organization of the killings, the strategies of slaughter, the social structures that provided support (including the clergy); she brings out the regional dynamics at work and leaves no doubt as to the mix of obfuscation and indifference that marked the international community's response. In dealing with motivations of the killers she underscores their diversity, noting that "some moved by virulent hatred, others by real fear, by

ambition, by greed, by a desire to escape injury at the hands of those who demanded they participate, or by the wish to avoid fines for non participation that they could not hope to pay." (De Forges 1999, 770) But she also sees the other side of the genocidal coin "the violation of the cease-fire" and "human rights abuses, killings and other abuses" committed by the RPF during and after the genocide, including the ruse of holding public meetings designed to round up and kill Hutu civilians (Des Forges 1999, 109, 707, 728).

Published five years before Des Forges's inquest, Colette Braeckman's *Rwanda: Histoire d'un génocide* (1994) is the first serious attempt to look at the 1994 butchery from a broad historical perspective. A journalist with years of experience reporting from Central Africa for Belgian newspapers, the author looks at the impact of the colonial and pre-colonial past on Hutu-Tutsi relations; she dissects the workings of the Habyarimana dictatorship, the networks built around the informal power center (the so-called *akazu*), the mechanics of the killing machine; she shows the significance of the regional context (most notably of how events in Burundi reverberated in Rwanda), the part played by individual actors, Hutu and Tutsi, the complicated sequence of events leading to the bloodbath. Even though the author did not have the benefit of the information yielded by subsequent research (and notwithstanding her implausible account of the circumstances surrounding the crash of Habyarimana's plane) at the time her book came out it had all the qualities of a pioneering work.

The same applies to Gérard Prunier's *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (1995), by a historian thoroughly familiar with the Great Lakes region. The book immediately attracted a wide readership in the English-speaking world, and for good reasons: well written, richly documented, historically grounded, this is the best general introduction to the roots of carnage. The most illuminating chapters deal with the circumstances leading to the civil war, the origins and organization of the RPF, the dynamics of genocidal violence, and the politics of the French intervention under the code name Operation Turquoise. As an advisor to the French government during the deployment of French troops, the author gained an insider's view of their less than successful efforts to carve out a "Safe Humanitarian Zone" for civilians fleeing the slaughter, an episode he refers to as "Gotterdammerung in Central Africa" (chapter 8). Of the early works on the genocide this is unquestionably the richest in analytic insights and the most original in terms of the scope and quality of information.

Central to an understanding of the colonial and pre-colonial roots of the Hutu-Tutsi problem are the works of French historian Jean-Pierre Chrétien. His early essay on Hutu and Tutsi in Rwanda and Burundi is still one of the best introductions to issues of ethnicity in each state (Chrétien, 1985). His history of *The Great Lakes of Africa* (2003) stands as the most illuminating discussion of the transformation of ethnic identities under colonial rule, and how this phenomenon in turn led to the emergence of an "African racism". To this theme his co-authored book on *Les médias du génocide* (1995) makes a decisive contribution: nowhere is the relationship between the racist incitements to murder conveyed by the media and the killings more persuasively argued, and more richly illustrated, not just by quotes from the press and Radio Mille Collines, but also by countless cartoons and caricatures. Unfortunately, nothing is said of the propaganda distilled through the vehicles of the pro-RPF

press, such as *Kanguka, Kiberinka, Burakeye Hobe, Le Flambeau*. A collection of Chrétien's early articles can be found in *Le défi de l'ethnisme: Rwanda et Burundi 1990-1996* (1997).

Pierre Erny's *Rwanda 1994* (1994) is one of the earliest efforts to reflect critically on the events leading to the bloodbath. Published a year later, Jean-Claude Willame, *Aux sources de l'hécatombe rwandaise* (1995), brings into focus a number of neglected themes, including what he calls "the mini-genocide of 1963" - when perhaps as many as 10,000 Tutsi were massacred in the wake of an abortive Tutsi-led raid from Burundi - the 1973 flight of Tutsi residents in the wake of anti-Tutsi pogroms, and the numerous massacres committed by the Habyarimana regime in the years immediately preceding the genocide.

A groundbreaking exploration of the relationship of Rwanda's past to its post-genocidal present is Jan Vansina's *Antecedents to Modern Rwanda: The Nyiginya Kingdom* (2004), which, in addition to offering a brilliant synthesis of the Hutu-Tutsi ethnogenesis, shows that "reliance on power as a means of extracting a maximum amount of human labor is not a new phenomenon in Rwanda". When one recalls that it was under king Rwabugiri (1867-1897) that the hated *corvée* labor was institutionalized, it is easy to see why the chapter on his tormented reign should be titled 'Nightmares', and why some readers might detect in this

period of ceaseless internecine strife an ominous harbinger of later tragedies. Especially suggestive in this regard is the concluding chapter, 'History and the Present'.

No attempt to grasp the historical context of genocide can ignore Catherine and David Newbury's seminal contributions. These range from the relationship of ethnicity to "the politics of history", to the interplay between local and regional loyalties in pre-colonial Rwanda and Burundi, the place of the peasantry in agrarian history, and the relevance of different types of patron-client relationships to an understanding of state formation in Kinyaga (Catherine Newbury, 1988, 1998; David Newbury 2001; Catherine and David Newbury 2000). In a different vein, Manigara Balibutsa's erudite treatise on the archeology of violence in the Great Lakes is worth mentioning for its interesting forays into the field of linguistics and critical re-examination of early European sources on Rwandan history (Balibutsa 1999).

Leaving aside the historically grounded *longue durée* dimension, Filip Reyntjens, offers an excellent overview of the Rwandan political scene on the eve of the genocide in *L'Afrique des Grands Lacs en crise* (1994). Not the least of its merits is to analyze the murderous game of mirrors between Rwanda and Burundi, how Hutu-Tutsi violence in one state reverberated on ethnic tensions in the other - a crucial element in Rwanda's march into the abyss. Co-editor for many years of the *Great Lakes Yearbook, L'annuaire des Grands Lacs*, Reyntjens has established his name as the most reliable source on post-genocide developments in Rwanda.

Valuable additional information can be found in André Guichaoua's massive tome, *Les crises politiques au Burundi et au Rwanda: 1993-1994* (1995). A sociologist with privileged ties to key political actors, Guichaoua has assembled 33 contributions from French, Belgian, Swiss and American scholars as well as African observers and politicians, to which has been added a thick slice of "Facts and documents" relating to the crises in Rwanda and Burundi. The book offers a rich palette of interpretations by key politicians, journalists and NGO activists, some of whom, like Dismas Nsengiyaremye, Alphonse Marie Nkubito, James Gasana, Jacques Bihozagara, Seth Sedashonga, have played important roles at one stage or another of the Rwandan tragedy.

To James Gasana, who briefly served as minister of defense under Habyarimana, we owe one of the most detailed and reliable analyses of Rwanda's trajectory into the abyss. His *Du parti-Etat à l'Etat-garnison* (2002) is a first-rate insider account of the complex inter-party maneuverings following the transition to a multi-party system in 1991.

Major contributions have come from the field social anthropology. Though much of the field work for her classic monograph, *A Hill Among a Thousand*, was done before the genocide,

Danielle De Lame's description of rural life in pre-genocide Rwanda is of considerable significance for anyone trying to understand how the internal tensions at work in Rwanda society - including the growing polarization between the middle classes ("the fourth ethnic group") and the landless peasants - were manipulated into a potential for violence against both Hutu and Tutsi (De Lame 2005). Particularly arresting and innovative is her recent exploration of the carry-over of traditional norms and institutions into the context of mass murder, including Rwanda's "warrior culture", the organization of militias, the obligation of vengeance directed against a murderer's lineage, and the "faithfulness to a pre-Tutsi past" (De Lame 2004).

Johan Pottier's *Re-Imagining Rwanda* (2002) is a highly successful attempt at deconstructing the officially inspired narratives of the tragedy, showing how the world's media in particular, most of them echoing the RPF line, have generally conveyed a misleading picture of the state of the play in both Rwanda and neighboring Congo. Nigel Eltringham's *Accounting for Horror* (2004) is a ground-breaking effort to show the inadequacy of conventional modes of historical explanation. Instead of looking for "absolutist narratives", we need to recognize the limitations placed on the debate about history by individual and group representations and collective memories (Eltringham 147-182). Christopher Taylor's *Sacrifice as Terror* (1999) looks at the genocide from a radically different angle as it tries to bring out its cultural underpinnings. Its main focus is on the symbolic meaning of practices related to the body and aimed at maintaining it or restoring it to health and integrity (Taylor, 111). Bodily fluids, he writes, "such as blood, semen, breast milk and menstrual blood are a recurrent concern as is the passage of aliments through the digestive tract. In the unfolding of human and natural events, flow/blockage symbolism mediates between physiological, sociological levels of causality" (ibid., 111-2). There is more to his work than an arcane inquest into the

symbolic aspects of murder. Following a chilling first chapter dealing with the atrocities that he and his Rwandan wife witnessed in the early days of the carnage, the author delves at length into the myth of the Hamitic hypothesis before turning to a sustained discussion of "the cosmology of terror".

It is hardly surprising that the first book-length discussions of the genocide should have been penned by French and Belgian observers. In addition to those above, at least three other deserve mention: Linda Melvern's *Conspiracy to Murder* (2004), Peter Uvin, *Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda* (1998), and Mahmood Mamdani's *When Victims Become Killers* (2001), the first by a journalist, the last two by political scientists. Linda Melvern's earlier work, *A People Betrayed* (2000), dealt specifically with the responsibility of the international community in Rwanda's agonies; her more recent book, based on testimonies to the ICTR and interviews with participants and survivors, is an in-depth investigation of the role played by individual actors in the genocide. Uvin, by contrast, turns the spotlight on the impact of development aid on processes of inequality and exclusion, and ultimately on the rise of "structural violence", a concept borrowed from Johan Galtung to refer to "the unequal life chances, usually caused by great inequality, injustice, discrimination, and exclusion" (Uvin 1998, 105). Elsewhere the author uncovers a little-known dimension of ethnicity, i.e. how colonial and post-colonial census data have misrepresented ethnic identities through arbitrary categorization, and, in one specific example (post-colonial Burundi), have contributed to dissimulate massive state-sponsored violence by falsifying population data (Uvin, 2001, 154- 5).

Building on previous research (Newbury 1988; Lemarchand 1970), Mamdani's book is an attempt to rethink the concept of genocide in the light of the Rwanda tragedy. The stated objective is to remedy the "three silences" from which most accounts of the genocide suffer: history, agency and geography. At another level it is an effort to recast the history of Hutu-Tutsi relations by emphasizing the racialization of ethnicity under Belgian rule and the carry-over of the phenomenon into the first and second republics (he could have added the third). Although the author's unfamiliarity with the French language literature on Rwanda shows up, notably in his questionable interpretation of the Hutu revolution (Lemarchand 2003), his

discussion of “The Politics of Indigeneity in Uganda” adds an important chapter to the story of the “refugee warriors” involvement in the RPF invasion.

THE MANICHEAN TEMPTATION

Nowhere is the temptation to frame the Rwanda tragedy in moral absolutes more likely to get in the way of sober analysis than in the relative weight to be assigned to the two principal underlying “causes” of the genocide. There is, on the one hand, the gathering force of genocidal rage, fueled by incitements to murder, mobilized by militias, supervised and manipulated by Habyarimana’s cronies, local officials, and army men. And there is, the context in which it occurred - the context of a civil war triggered by the invasion of the country by some 6,000 Tutsi refugee warriors from Uganda, fighting their way into the country under the banner of the RPF, and thus threatening to reduce to naught “*les acquis de la revolution*” - everything that had been accomplished since the 1959-62 Hutu revolution. As Robert Melson persuasively argued no other context is more congenial to genocide than one in which civil war appears to pose a mortal threat to the legacy of revolutionary ideals (Melson 1992).

While there would have been no genocide without an infrastructure of murder, i.e. the police and the army, the paramilitaries and the interahamwe, and the likes of Colonel Bagosora - the chief organizer of the killings

- it is doubtful that any of the above would have led to mass murder without the climate of ethnic hatreds and fears generated by the RPF invasion. The retributive element, to borrow Helen Fein’s terminology, (Fein 1990, 86-91) is clearly central to an understanding of the roots of the carnage.

Omission of this necessary dualism can only produce a lop-sided image of the dynamics of violence. This is plainly demonstrated by the one-sidedness of the early accounts of the tragedy. Partly because of the sheer horror of the images conveyed by the media - what some refer to as the CNN effect - and because of the skillful management of information by Rwanda’s new leaders (Gowing 1998), many of these works are oblivious of the retributive side of the story, and thus tend to reflect the official version of the facts projected by the RPF. The result has been a politically correct view of the genocide which is only now being

challenged in the light of a new body of evidence (of which more later). This is not to say that the early works of journalists and scholars were necessarily inaccurate, or that the authors twisted the facts or falsified the evidence. The point, rather, is that in many instances some crucial historical facts were left out, or their significance underrated or misinterpreted. Much of the literature that appeared in the wake of the tragedy revolved around good guys vs. bad guys dichotomy, the former globally identified with the Tutsi, the latter with the Hutu.

A prime example is Peter Gourevitch’s acclaimed best seller, *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families* (1998). A staff writer for the New Yorker, the author has produced a masterwork of travel writing as well as one of the most chilling accounts of the sufferings endured by genocide survivors. No other work has had a more decisive impact in shaping the image of the genocide among the English-speaking public. Yet, the book is short on analysis. It says little about the how and why of the killings. In the words of one critic, “Gourevitch demonstrates little understanding of Rwandan culture and history, treating the genocide as pre-programmed by colonialism and Hutu as inherently violent” (Longman 2004, 33). Allusions to the Holocaust are unconvincing. So is his tribute to Paul Kagame as the hero who brought the genocide to an end (see also Gourevitch 1996). From this uncomplicated tale of woe emerges an image of the Hutu as the collective embodiment of evil. This is where the narrative carries implications that go beyond the realm of travel writing: it is not unreasonable to assume that this uncritical rendering of the genocide has had a powerful hold on the official thinking of US policy-makers towards the

new Rwandan state. To this day the Tutsi-dominated state enjoys the support of the US government.

Among the early reports on the genocide, none matches Africa Rights, *Rwanda, Death, Despair and Defiance* (September 1994) for the clinical description of the atrocities inflicted upon Tutsi victims, ranging from political murders to collective massacres in churches, schools and stadiums, and the daily manhunts conducted on the hills. Significant as it is to our understanding of the sheer savagery that has accompanied the carnage, the Africa Rights report is utterly silent on the crimes and torture inflicted by Tutsi soldiers on innocent Hutu civilians, some of which are by now well documented (Nduwayo 2002, 9-16; Amnesty International 1994; Des Forges 1999; Reyntjens and De Souter 1994).

Political correctness intrudes in more subtle ways in Colette Braeckman's early works (1994, 1996), notable for the absence of references to the human rights violations committed by Kagame's army in the course of the civil war. Revealing is this idyllic description of Rwanda in 1996: the cities are more animated than ever, the rural areas are again under cultivation, all children are attending school, the churches are overcrowded with people, the road-menders are at work on the roads and the widows weed out the public gardens (1996, 269). Not until 2003, with the publication of *Les nouveaux prédateurs: Politique des puissances en Afrique Centrale* (2003) - an excellent introduction to the history of the crisis in the Great Lakes - would the image of the RPF strongman emerge in a less flattering light, as one "who denies the evidence and lies while looking at you in eye" (Braeckman 2003, 213), ruling over a country compared to a Potemkine village (ibid.).

The struggle between good and evil comes through with clarity in Chrétien's *Défi de l'ethnisme* (1997, 307- 388), where a number of journalists and scholars suspected of pro-Hutu biases are excoriated. Important as it might be in other respects, his major collaborative work, *Les medias du genocide* (1995), has a reductionist bias. It emphasizes the effects of the Hutu-controlled media as the only determinant of the bloodshed. Here Michael Mann's advice is worth bearing in mind: "it is not easy to gauge the effects of mass media in the absence of detailed sociological studies. Many scholars have a tendency to exaggerate the power of this propaganda" (Mann 2005, 444). Recent research by Straus also shows the limits of ideology as a motivating force (Straus 2006, chap. 6; Mann 2005, 469). By and large *Les medias du génocide* makes short shrift of the intense fears provoked by the RPF invasion as a motivating force behind the killings.

Much the same criticisms could be addressed to Prunier (1995), except for the fact that the second edition of his book (1997) includes an excellent additional chapter which clearly brings into focus what was missing in the first edition: a clear recognition of the onus of responsibility borne by Kagame's RPF. The tendency to exonerate the RPF of all sins is nowhere more evident than in the papers presented at the *Genocide: A Collective Memory*, conference held in Kigali in January 1995, which, in the words of the editors, "attempts to record the words and opinions of individuals who experienced the genocide" (John Berry and Carol Pott Berry 1999, ix). This, however, is not meant to detract from an otherwise illuminating collection of

testimonies from a broad cross-section of Rwandan elites (journalists, human rights activists, civil servants and army men).

Pro-Hutu analysts, one might add, are no less prone to fall prey to a Manichean interpretation, as shown by Charles Onana's selective account of *Les secrets du genocide rwandais* (2001). Stating at the outset that since "numerous works have been written about the Hutu and their responsibilities in the genocide, we do not see the need for another book on the accusations leveled against them" (p. 12), the author reveals few secrets. Many of the accusations directed at Belgium, the US and the UNAMIR are unsubstantiated. Despite its impressive array of valuable statistical data, A.E. Gakusi and Frédérique Mouzer's discussion of the "structural constraints and governance" in Kagame's Rwanda glosses over the human rights violations committed under the Second Republic. (Gakusi and Mouzer,

2003). As for Pierre Péan's *Noires fureurs, Blancs menteurs* (2005), an effort to write the history of the genocide as a Tutsi-engineered plot, its positive contributions notably in the form of some revealing official documents about France's role during the genocide are offset by factual inaccuracies and a tendency to settle scores with dissenting analysts.

THE LIMITS OF THE HOLOCAUST PARADIGM

Unsurprisingly, the comparison between the Rwanda genocide and the Holocaust has proved hard to resist. French and Belgian scholars were the first to call attention to the parallel, with Jean-Pierre Chrétien speaking of "tropical Nazism" to describe the ideological thrust of the Rwanda killings (1994). For Alain Destexhe "the extermination of the Jews is the only precedent one can prudently evoke to understand that of the Tutsi, for Jews and Tutsi were targeted as such and for no other reason than they happened to be born Jews and Tutsi" (Destexhe 1994, 14).

In recent times the Holocaust analogy has received growing attention from English-speaking scholars (Hintjens 1999; Chalk, 1999), and in 1999 the African Studies Association (ASA) organized a special roundtable session titled "The Politics of Comparison: Nazi Holocaust and Rwandan Genocide" (Miles 2003, 131). The most sustained exploration of the parallel came from Marc Levene, who argued that in Rwanda as in Nazi Germany genocide was the concomitance of the crises experienced by modernizing states. "Modern genocide", he writes, "is closely bound up with the efforts of nation-states to operate independently and effectively within an international nation-state system. When a regime encounters, or perceives itself to encounter serious obstacles which seem to threaten not only the achievement of this agenda but the integrity of the state itself, the potentiality for it "taking it" out on some scapegoat group or groups is greatly magnified." (Levene 1999, 46).

Compelling as the analogy may be in some respects, its limitations are no less obvious. The contextual differences cannot be ignored:

- * Jews did not invade Germany with the massive military and logistical support of a neighboring state;
- * nor did they once rule Germany as the political instrument of an absolute monarchy;
- * nor were they identified with a ruling ethnocracy;
- * nor did Jewish elements commit a partial genocide of non-Jews in a neighboring state 22 years before the Holocaust.
- * Again, Jews did not stand accused of murdering the head of state of a neighboring state (*ibid.* 500-1).
- * Furthermore, whereas the Holocaust is the classic example of an ideological genocide, the Rwanda genocide is better seen as a by-product of the mortal threats posed to the Hutu-dominated state by the RPF (*ibid.*).

In one of the papers presented at the 1999 ASA conference Catherine and David Newbury correctly underscored the risks involved in looking at Rwanda through the lens of the Holocaust: "such a view is ahistorical", they write, noting the "differences in the context and the sequence of events leading to the Holocaust and the genocide in Rwanda"; furthermore, in contrast to the Holocaust, the Rwanda genocide is better understood as a case of "retributive genocide" (Catherine and David Newbury, 2003, 140-1). Drawing from a variety of materials, including interviews with exiles, Eltringham likewise offers particularly thoughtful critique of the Holocaust template (Eltringham 2004, 51-58).

Regardless of whether one can speak of a “Great Lakes version of the Final Solution” (Miles 2003, 134), this is indeed how many Tutsi survivors and exiles have internalized the agonies of their kinsmen (Sehene 1999, 120). But as Eltringham shows, on that score as on many others there is no unanimity among exiles; possibly as many among Tutsi and Hutu would endorse the analogy as would challenge it (Eltringham 2004, 51-54). Interestingly, among the former, Sehene does not hesitate to quote from Daniel Goldhagen to make the point that “all Hutu, or at least a very large number, whether they took part in the massacres or not, were convinced that the Tutsi deserved to die” (Sehene 1999, 120). Whether informed by Holocaust references or not, however, the tendency of Rwandan government officials to grossly overestimate the number of Hutu perpetrators is well established (Straus 2004, 95, note 1), and stands as a major obstacle to reconciliation.

THE WITNESS LITERATURE

A wealth of revelatory insights can be gleaned from the growing body of witness literature by Hutu and Tutsi survivors, as well as from the testimonies gathered by outside observers. In this latter category pride of place must be given to Scott Straus’s invaluable interviews with convicted prison inmates in Kigali and several provincial towns. The accompanying photos by Robert Lyons provide a chilling visual counterpoint to the text (Straus 2006). What makes this contribution unlike any other is the resonance of authenticity conveyed by the interviews, which, in his words, combined with the extraordinary images of inmates, offer a largely unmitigated and intimate view of the Rwandan genocide (ibid., 14). Though lacking the powerful rawness of Straus’s narratives, Jean Hatzfeld’s *Une saison de machettes* (2003) captures the cynicism as well as the ordinariness of the Hutu killers. Just as its earlier *Dans le nu de la vie* (2000) revealed the agonies of the victims, *Machete season* brings us face to face with the inner workings of the killers motivations, reminiscent of Arendt’s phrase about the “banality of evil”.

The witness literature can be conveniently divided into two kinds of narratives - by Tutsi survivors of the genocide, and by Hutu who survived the manhunt conducted by units of the RPA in eastern Congo after the destruction of the refugee camps. Among the latter, Béatrice Umutesi’s recently translated narrative, *Fuir ou mourir au Zaïre: Le vécu d’une réfugiée rwandaise*, is by far the most compelling. The scenes of apocalypse she describes are no less emotionally wrenching as the images of murder witnessed by Tutsi survivors. “Here is the voice of hundreds of thousands who never lived to tell their story” of the countless men, women and children who died of hunger, disease and sheer exhaustion in a murderous game of hide-and-see with advancing rebel units; of the untold numbers trapped at the Tingi-Tingi death camp (Lemarchand 2006, 94).

The hell of Tingi-Tingi figures prominently in Maurice Niwese’s moving testimony, *Le peuple rwandais un pied dans la tombe : Récit d’un réfugié étudiant*, as well as many other localities evocative of the refugees agonies in their murderous game of hide-and-see with the RPA. His book is also a remarkably lucid commentary on the social context of Rwanda in the early 1990s, on the ambivalent relationship of ethnicity to murder, on the involvement of school drop outs in the killings. As former president of the *Association Générale des Etudiants de l’Université Nationale du Rwanda (AGENEUR)* the author is particularly well placed to analyze the trend towards radicalisation among university students, and how off-campus extremists were able to make political capital out of this situation. This is only one of the many illuminating insights that make his book worth reading. No less important as a first-person account of the refugees harrowing Odyssey is Philippe Mpayimana, *Réfugiés rwandais: Entre marteau et enclume. Récit du calvaire au Zaïre, 1996-1997*, by a former radio journalist for the Bukavu-based Agatashya station. To this must be added Benoit Rugumaho, *L’hécatombe des réfugiés rwandais dans l’ex-Zaïre: Témoignage d’un survivant*. All of these add up to a devastating commentary on the conspiracy of silence surrounding one of the biggest ethnic cleansing operations that followed in the wake of the genocide.

Among Tutsi survivors of the bloodbath Yolande Mukagasana was the first to tell the story of her excruciating experiences while trying to escape death, of how her husband and three children were murdered, the first before her own eyes, and how in the end she owed her survival to the reluctant protection of a Hutu colonel of the FAR : *La mort ne veut pas de moi* , co-authored with Patrick May, is more than a tale of woe; it also tells us a great deal about the way ethnicity can be manipulated, both as an incitement and a deterrent to murder. In *Les blessures du silence*, in collaboration with the photographer Alain Kazienierakis, she returns to Rwanda to confront the killers, including those responsible for the death of her children.

In a more explicitly political vein Venuste Kayimahe reflects on the collusion between the French government and its Rwandan ally, France's betrayal during the genocide, and the dramatic circumstances of his flight into exile. His *France-Rwanda Les coulisses d'un génocide. Témoignage d'un rescapé* (2002), based in part on his own experiences while working for the French Cultural center in Kigali, is an indictment of France's indifference to the fate of those who were left behind during the "cut and run" phase of the genocide.

One of the most arresting testimonies, by a survivor on mixed origins, is Edouard Kabagema's *Carnage d'une nation: Génocide et massacres au Rwanda*, 1994 (2001). His message comes clear and loud in the first pages: "Not only have I seen the genocide of Tutsi perpetrated by their neighbors and their huts going up in flames, I also saw many Hutu using a thousand tricks to save their Tutsi neighbors and I saw RPF rebels engaging in a selective and then a large-scale massacre of Hutu, to avenge their own people and consolidate their grip on the country" (Kabagema 2001, 5). Leonard Nduwayo's *Giti et le génocide rwandais* is a captivating account of why the Giti commune was spared the agonies of virtually every other locality, making it a "commune d'exception" and why the subsequent bloodshed was largely the work of the RPA (Nduwayo 2002).

The pertinence of this witness literature to an understanding of "*mourning and memory*" in *contemporary Rwanda* is the subject of Catherine Coquio's contribution on the theme of the ambivalent nexus between "reality and the narratives" (Coquio 2004). A more comprehensive and ambitious effort to give the reader access to this important corpus of testimonies is Francois Lagarde's *Mémorialistes et témoins rwandais (1994-2013)*, which includes close to a hundred titles, in French and in English, covering a broad range of authors, Hutu and Tutsi, civilians and army men, victims and perpetrators.

THE REVISIONIST AGENDA

Revisionism covers a wide gamut, from the outrageous to the plausible. To this day some Hutu extremists stubbornly insist that no genocide ever occurred, only a spontaneous outburst of violence in reaction to the threats posed by the RPF (Braeckman 1994; Lanotte 2006, 300-301). Untypical though it is, the case of Antoine Nyetera, a Tutsi claiming royal origins, is worth mentioning: on the occasion of a colloquium held in the French Senate on April 4, 2002, Nyetera stated that "although massacres happened, there was no genocide, a statement echoed on the same occasion by the former UN Representative in Rwanda, Jacques- Roger Booh-booh, who volunteered the opinion that to claim that a genocide occurred is "closer to the politics of surrealism than to the truth" (quoted in Lemarchand 2002, 561). If anything can be termed surreal it is the denial of the massive evidence supplied through countless testimonies and eyewitness accounts.

For the sake of clarity we shall look at four distinctive issues around which hinges most of the discussion about revisionism: How many lives were lost during the killings? What is the onus of responsibility borne by the RPF? What is one to make of the "double genocide" thesis? What has been the role of France before, during and after the genocide?

THE NUMBERS GAME: HOW MANY VICTIMS? HOW MANY PERPETRATORS?

On both counts the answers are anything but clear. As has been noted, citing numbers is a widely used rhetorical device. Since accurate head counts could not be taken in most cases, none of the contradictory numbers that have been offered concerning victims of massacres (including the genocide) or of refugees fleeing from or returning to Rwanda and Burundi are substantiated (Vansina 1998, 38). Nonetheless, whether dealing with victims or killers, not all estimates are arbitrary.

Official statistics regarding the number of Tutsi victims are unreliable and predictably at variance with the estimates cited by social scientists. Based on demographic data of a total of Tutsi population of 657,000 on

the eve of the genocide, Des Forges, after subtracting from that figure some 150,000 Tutsi survivors, arrives at a total of 507,000 Tutsi killed, or 77 per cent of the total population registered as Tutsi. But she goes on to note, "deliberate misrepresentation of ethnicity complicates how many were actually Tutsi" (ibid., loc. cit). Using data from the UNDP and HCR Filip Reyntjens reaches the figure of 600,000 Tutsi killed (Reyntjens 1997, 182). In view of the total number of human lives lost approximately 1.1 million he suggests a total of 500,000 Hutu killed. Compared to such careful estimates the figure of 280,000 cited by Pierre Pean carries little conviction. The global figure of 1,074,017 dead cited by the Rwanda government, though too precise to inspire confidence, conveys a realistic order of magnitude, but there are reasons to question whether 93.67 per cent of these can be identified as Tutsi (Republic of Rwanda, Minister of Local Administration, 2002).

Even more controversial is the number of Hutu who participated in the slaughter. Mamdani recalls how from one year to the next Rwandan officials ratcheted up the level of Hutu participation, from "three to four million in 1995, to four to five million in 1997" (Mamdani 2001, 266). Christian Scherrer for his part suggests the possibility of an even higher percentage, i.e. 40-66 per cent of male Hutu farmers, 60-80 per cent of the higher professions, and almost 100 per cent of Rwanda's civil servants (Scherrer 2002, 115), but as Straus points out, no substantiation is offered for such claims (Straus 2004, 96, note 2). In an impressive piece of research based on field work and interviews with perpetrators and survivors, Straus reaches the more plausible estimate of between 175,000 and 210,000 active participants (ibid. 93). He goes on to raise the question of the perpetrators profile, and makes the arresting argument that most of the killing (75 per cent of all genocide deaths) was done by perhaps 10 per cent of a total of roughly 200,000 genocidaires, i.e. - soldiers, paramilitaries, and extremely zealous killers - , while the remaining 90 per cent, made up of "non- hardcore civilians", might account for no more than 25 per cent of the killings (ibid., 95). In his landmark book on the Rwanda genocide the author comes up with an estimate of a number of perpetrators equal to 7 to 8 percent of the adult Hutu population and 14 to 17 per cent of the adult male Hutu population at the time of the genocide. (Straus 2006, 118).

Such findings are important not only because they run counter to the officially-sanctioned conventional wisdom of the Rwandan government, and much of the unwisdom of foreign observers, but because they demonstrate how erroneous and counter-productive is the collective guilt argument when it comes to exploring ways of bringing about national reconciliation.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RPF

Widely praised at first for stopping the genocide, the virtuous image projected by the RPF is now being seriously dented: there is a growing body of evidence pointing to its involvement

in war crimes and crimes against humanity in eastern Congo, for its alleged participation in the military operation that brought down Habyarimana's plane, and more generally for its responsibility in the 1994 genocide. An excellent general discussion of the crimes committed by the RPF can be found in Filip Reyntjens's *Political Governance in Post-Genocide Rwanda* (2013).

Central to the debate about the role of the RPF is one key question about the trigger that set off the killings: Who is responsible for shooting down the plane carrying the presidents of Rwanda and Burundi from Dar- Es-Salaam to Kigali on the evening of April 6, 1994"

To this question the French judge Jean-Louis Bruguière gave a straightforward answer: On the evidence of his 2006 brief there is little doubt that the mastermind behind the downing of the plane was President Kagame. Bruguière issued arrest warrants against nine Rwandan officers suspected of being involved in the attack. Rwanda's reaction was immediate. After severing diplomatic ties with Paris Kagame appointed a National Independent Commission headed by a former minister of justice, for the purpose of "collecting evidence to show the implication of the French State in the 1994 genocide". Its report, issued in 2008 rejected en bloc Bruguière's conclusions, arguing that that onus of responsibility fell squarely on French authorities at the highest level, including President Mitterrand and 13 senior officials, all accused of "complicity in the preparation and execution of genocide". The French Embassy in Kigali is further described as "the hub of resistance of Hutu extremists", and Ambassador Marlaud as the chief orchestrator of the killings. What became known as the Mucyo report, after the Commission's chair, was dismissed by the

French authorities as "unacceptable". For a short but clear-eyed assessment of Mucyo Report there is no better source than Sémelin's well-informed article (2008)

Kagame's next step was to appoint another so-called "independent commission", this time to investigate "the causes, circumstances and responsibilities involved in the attack against the presidential plane on April 6, 1994". The report, known as the Mutsinzi report, issued in April 2009, states that the presidential plane was brought down by Hutu extremists close to the president, as an attempt to neutralize the moderates in his government, including Habyarimana. All facts pointing to Kagame's involvement were ignored.

Though flawed by factual errors, inaccuracies and improbable assertions (Reyntjens 2010), the report found a receptive echo among observers of the Rwanda scene in France and elsewhere. Despite the scantiness of the evidence, the notion of a criminal plot concocted by Hutu extremists is still the standard explanation advanced by a number of journalists, historians and genocide scholars. The names of Patrick de Saint Exupery, Gérard Prunier, Francois-Xavier Verschave, Stephane Audoin-Rouzeau in France, Daniela Krosiak in the US, and Gerald Kaplan in Canada come to mind. The opposite viewpoint is perhaps best represented, albeit with notable nuances and reservations, by Pierre Péan, André Guichaoua and Rony Brauman in France, and Filip Reyntjens in Belgium. Adding to the intensity of the debate a number of NGOs have taken up position on opposite sides.

In retrospect one wonders why so little attention has been paid to a number of articles, testimonies and books which give the lie to the official Rwandan thesis. All of them came out before the Bruguière bombshell. In an article published in 2004 "Provoking genocide: A revised history of the Rwanda Patriotic Front", Alan Kuperman squarely blamed the RPF for creating the conditions that led to Genocide. "The Tutsi rebels expected their challenge to provoke genocidal retaliation but viewed this as an acceptable cost of achieving their goal of attaining power in Rwanda" (p. 79). He fully endorses Des Forges's contention that all five major outbursts of anti-Tutsi violence from 1990 to 1993 were launched "in reaction to challenges that threatened Habyarimana's control" (Des Forges 1999, 87-88), and goes on to identify the retaliatory massacres triggered by RPF incursions (Kuperman, 80). The pattern of challenge and response analyzed by Kuperman points to a key aspect of the dynamics of violence preceding the genocide.

Much more could have been said, however, about the threats posed to the RPF and Tutsi civilians by Hutu extremists, or for that matter about the likely involvement of the RPF in the plane crash of April 6, 1994. This is where Abdul Ruzibiza's testimony breaks new ground (Ruzibiza 2005). A former Lieutenant in Kagame's army, member of the crack unit known as the Network Commando and assigned to the Department of Military Intelligence (DMI), the author was directly involved in the operations leading to the shooting down of Habyarimana's plane on April 6, 1994. The careful marshalling of the evidence, the remarkably precise information concerning who did what, where, and when, the author's familiarity with the operational code of the RPF, leave few doubts in the reader's mind about Kagame's responsibility in triggering the event that led to the bloodshed. The narrative's dispassionate, factual tone, only adds to its credibility. While there is evidence that the author harbored grudges against Kagame for doing little to save his family from the clutches of the genocidaires, this is hardly enough to call his testimony into question. It substantiates the findings of the French investigating magistrate Jean-Louis Bruguière, as disclosed by Stephen Smith (Smith 1994, 2004) and corroborates the views of several other defectors from the RPA. Claudine Vidal's preface to the book, along with André Guichaoua's post-script provide a fascinating commentary on the author's background, and how they came in contact with him.

Ruzibiza's testimony refutes the notion that behind the shooting down of the plane lies a plot by Hutu hard-liners to rid themselves of the all-too-liberal Habyarimana - the pinning responsibility on the so-called *akazu*

- and brings to light a massive body of circumstantial evidence concerning the crimes committed by the RPF in the course of the civil war. These had already been richly documented by Reyntjens and Desouter in their Working Paper, drawing attention to the thousands of civilians killed by the RPF after its violation of the cease-fire on February 8, 1993 (Desouter and Reyntjens 1995). Des Forges likewise makes reference to the findings of the UNHCR official Robert Gersony to the effect that "during the months from April to August the RPF had killed between 25,000 and 45,000 persons, between 5,000 and 10,000 persons each month from April through July and 5,000 for the month of August" (Des Forges 1999, 728). Without trying to downplay the atrocities committed by the interahamwe, Ruzibiza states that after April 6 Kagame had planned the massive elimination of Hutu in the regions under control of the RPF, and that "after the fall of Byumba "the

RPA has systematically killed the civilian population, irrespective of age or sex" (Ruzibiza 2005, 272), adding that there was "a will to exterminate the Hutu as a group" (ibid.). He goes on to describe the wholesale extermination of Hutu populations in places like Kageyo, Meshero, Mukarange, the regions of Gokoro and Kabuga, the commune of Bicumbi where "at least 3,000 persons were killed" under the supervision of the High Command Unit, Kagame's personal guard, at the request of Kagame himself (ibid. 280).

Ruzibiza's record while serving in the Network Commando is somewhat spotty. As reported by Vidal, it includes a two-year prison sentence (May 2, 1997-June 5 1999) for the alleged mishandling of funds set aside for the payment of officers salaries (Ruzibiza, 2005, 48, note 1). We are told that in October 1999 he rejoined the RPA "to participate in the invasion of ex-Zaire", and that after a training stage as company commander he felt threatened and fled to Uganda on February 3, 2001. (ibid., 49). Whether these facts lessen the credibility of his testimony is open to debate. The evidence at any rate is too overwhelming to be dismissed out of hand.

Perhaps the most tightly argued, well documented and provocative challenge to the conventional wisdom is Barrie Collins's *Rwanda 1994: The Myth of the Akazu Genocide Conspiracy and its Consequences* (2014), to which might be added his *Obedience in Rwanda: A critical question* (1998). While the latter, a brief pamphlet, specifically rejects the notion, frequently advanced in the literature, of a culturally conditioned, obedient peasantry blindly heeding instructions from above, the former is a wide-ranging effort to call into question the role of the *akazu* - the phrase means "little hut" in Kinyarwanda and refers to

the hard-core group of family-based cronies around Habyarimana - as the central architect of the genocide. According to Collins, the conventional narrative spawned by much of the media and not a few scholars conveys a misleading view of what really happened. The author doesn't mince his words: "Having won the war, the RPF also won the argument. The widely accepted narrative of the *akazu* genocide is simply an endorsement of the RPF war propaganda. It rests on three completely false propositions: that the killings were the product of an *akazu* planned and implemented program of genocide; that the scale of the ensuing slaughter reflected the *akazu*'s ability to key into their culturally conditioned expectations that Tutsi would be killed with impunity; and that the RPF's return to the battlefield arose from a sense of moral obligation in the face of the civilian slaughter" (p. 6). The victory of the RPF, he goes on, inaugurated "Africa's first morally constituted tyranny" (p. 4), and this in large part because of US support. "America vetoed an intervention force because it had no wish to obstruct the RPF's military takeover, and because it did not want to risk the lives of its own forces in doing so" (p. 7). Admittedly, the author overstates his case, yet there is much about his argument that needs to be taken seriously, including his refutation of the genocide as the outcome of a long-standing, *akazu*-engineered master plan to exterminate the Tutsi.

Some of the more arresting points made by Collins are significantly elaborated upon in Judi Rever's path-breaking inquest, *In Praise of Bloodshed* (2018), to which we shall return in the next section.

THE DOUBLE GENOCIDE THESIS

In view of the atrocities attributed to the RPA, it becomes tempting to subscribe to the "double genocide" thesis. The argument that the genocide of the Tutsi finds its counterpart in the genocide of the Hutu by the RPF was first articulated by Hutu Power extremists before it became the stock in trade of the *Internationale démocrate chrétienne* (Saur 1998, 103-106). It gained further publicity when the same argument was made by the French Minister of Foreign Affairs Alain Juppé in June 1994, and by Président Francois Mitterrand a month later in an interview to the south-african daily, *The Star*, both insisting on pluralizing the G-word (Lanotte 2006, 302). The double genocide argument is also explicitly set forth by Ruzibiza (2005, 328-330). "If we define genocide in accordance with the 1948 UN Genocide Convention", he writes, "as the intent to destroy in whole or in part a national, ethnic, racial or religious Group, the RPA has committed a genocide against the Hutu. The massacres perpetrated by the RPA were always planned; We are not dealing with acts of vengeance nor accidental facts as some would claim" (ibid. 335).

Much the same argument is endorsed by the investigative reporter Pierre Péan, who writes that "in the ultimate phase of his conquest strategy Kagame planned the downing of the plane, and therefore also planned its direct consequence: the genocide of the Tutsi perpetrated as reprisal" (Péan 2005, 19). By drastically downsizing of the number of Tutsi victims, he suggests that, if anything, Kagame is guilty of an even worse genocide. Although the book leans on Ruzibiza's testimony, it is different in tone and substance. Where Ruzibiza is coldly descriptive and factual, Péan's style is that of a pamphleteer. Woe unto those observers, journalists, scholars (e.g. Marie-France Cros, Colette Braeckman, Jean-Pierre Chrétien) and NGOs (e.g.

Action Survie) whose views and actions are at odds with his version of the truth. The characterization of Kagame is not untypical: "A Fuhrer who ended up being director of Yad Vashem, the Shoah museum, and from the top of his mountain of bones, here he is dispensing verdicts and morality lessons to the entire planet" (ibid. 20).

What Pean and Ruzibiza's books have in common is their adherence to the notion of a genocide of Hutu as horrendous as that committed against the Tutsi. "Why has this situation remained unacknowledged?" asks Ruzibiza (ibid. 347). The short answer is that it fails to convince. More specifically, and notwithstanding statements to the contrary, the fact is that

the scale of the massacre of Tutsi civilians has been widely perceived as far exceeding that of the Hutu at the hands of the RPA; furthermore, the sustained coverage given to the genocide of Tutsi in the media has all but eclipsed the massacre of Hutu by the RPA; finally, some of the worst atrocities committed by the RPA occurred not in Rwanda but in eastern Congo (French, 2004, 125-149). That such atrocities could conceivably be described as acts of genocide was noted by the June 1998 UN investigative commission: "The killings (in eastern Congo) constitute crimes against humanity, just as the denial of humanitarian assistance to Hutu refugees. The members of the team feel that certain types of murder could constitute acts of genocide, depending on the intention of the perpetrators, and request that such crimes and their motives become the object of further investigation" (UN, 1998). In 2010 another UN Team issued an important if controversial report, the so-called "Mapping report" : based on the team's findings after an extensive review of the evidence, it leaves few doubts about the crimes committed in DRC by several armies and insurgent groups from 1993 to 2003, with pride of place going to the indiscriminate killings of thousands of Hutu refugees by the RPA. (UN, 2010)

The double genocide thesis cannot be dismissed out of hand. After the publication of Judi Rever's expose of the crimes of the RPF , there appears to be considerable evidence to justify the use of the g-word to describe such atrocities. Some reputable scholars did not hesitate to single it out as one of the most important books on Rwanda to appear over the last ten or fifteen years. This is not the first time that accusations of criminal behavior have been directed at the RPF, or that evidence to that effect had been pieced together. But never before has a such sustained effort been made to establish the scale of such crimes, their contextual circumstances, locales, and the responsibility of the individuals and organizations involved. No other analyst has done a more commendable job of interviewing defectors and former RPF operatives. Few other professional journalists have been willing to take the same risks, and go to such lengths in conducting interviews and collecting data. The result is a book unlike any other. The reader is confronted with descriptions of how tens of thousands of innocent Hutu civilians were sent to their graves, how they were killed, by whom, and where. Biumba, Kibeho, Karambi, Gabiro, Gikongoro, are among some of the names that will be remembered as sites of mass murder, along with those identified with the crimes committed by the *interahamwe*. In addition to references from a number of confidential documents from the archives of the ICTR and evidence drawn from interviews with Hutu and Tutsi actors her book offers a most useful description of the "Structure of RPF violence from 1994 through the counterinsurgency" (Appendix A) and, even more illuminating, some two dozen biographical sketches of "The criminals of the Rwanda Patriotic Front" (Appendix B)., with pride of place going to Kagame. Clearly, this is journalism at its best. Rever's contribution is destined to become required reading for any one claiming competence on the Rwanda genocide.

THE UNITED NATIONS ASSISTANCE MISSION TO RWANDA (UNAMIR): THE VIEW FROM THE TRENCHES

The consensus of opinion about the performance of the UNAMIR is that it has done little to prevent the worse from happening: it has been morally inept, politically counter-productive and financially onerous. For a general view of the UNAMIR peacekeeping mission, see the overall assessment by its former head, Roméo Dallaire (2003). For most Belgian observers its failure to prevent the assassination of ten Belgian blue helmets on April 7 cast irreparable discredit on the UN in general and its military assistance mission in Rwanda. Much of the public ire targeted the Belgian commander of the Kigali sector, Colonel Luc Marchal, who, on his return was summoned to appear before the country's highest military court. In his remarkably honest and meticulously researched memoir, *Rwanda: La descente aux enfers*, the author offers a more nuanced judgement, framed in a detailed analysis of the daunting obstacles faced by UNAMIR in its mission to Rwanda. Some are well-known, such as the presence on the ground of troops drawn from different countries, whose levels of

competence and training are uneven, and where issues of coordination are complicated by language barriers. Nowhere were these hurdles more challenging than in establishing operational coordination with the Bangladeshi battalion, unprepared for the job. Less well-known are the “disconnects” arising from bureaucratic rigidities, conflicting jurisdictions, poor planning and lack of reliable intelligence, all of which are cruelly demonstrated in page after page of critical observations. Enforcing the ban on arms in Kigali proved unmanageable. “Collaboration at daggers drawn” is how the author describes his efforts at controlling the contents of the vehicles making their way into the RGF compound, sheltering some 600 troops. The same could be said of checking arms supplies to other protagonists. On the other hand, the fact that arms deliveries and equipment often lagged behind schedule was cited as a standard source of complaint by UNAMIR battalion commanders, who, against heavy odds, made desperate efforts to live up to their mandate. Delays in troop deployments explains why by the time boots were on the ground an entirely new, deeply fragmented and radicalized situation had developed, confronting the mission with totally unforeseen challenges.

Not the least of the headaches faced by UNAMIR was to comply with the “no go” guideline issued by The Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) in New York. At critical junctures when immediate action was urgently required requests remained unmet. Illustrative of this is the “Jean Pierre” incident: the critical information relayed to Marchal by a certain Jean-Pierre, a presumably reliable source, concerning the existence of training camps and weapons caches, with the warning that thousands of lives could be at risk, called for an immediate investigation and follow-up measures; the response from New York, however, was to veto any such move, in effect denying the UNAMIR the authorization it needed to avert a disaster foretold.

The DPKO’s unresponsiveness was not the only handicap that hobbled the UNAMIR. Just as serious was the absence of intelligence gathering and analysis within its own organizational structure, which the author attributes to budgetary constraints as much as strategic ineptitude. The costs of this handicap were made tragically clear by the death on the line of duty of ten Belgian UNAMIR soldiers. As one goes through Marchal’s catalog of dysfunctions and structural shortcomings the point that emerges most forcefully is the huge disconnect between the carefully elaborated UN guidelines and the sheer messiness, fluidity and unpredictability of the political configurations on the ground. No one has captured the essence of this dilemma more lucidly and persuasively.

THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL TRIBUNAL FOR RWANDA (ICTR): A COURT OF REMORSE?

Along with the question of whether the crimes committed by the RPF can be described as genocide, one of the most contentious issues in the current debate revolves around the role of the ICTR. Its performance as an instrument of transitional justice has long been questioned. The sentencing of 85 suspects in twenty years at the cost of more than \$ 1.3 billion can hardly be described as a distinguished track record. Already in 1998 the UN Under Secretary General Karl T. Paschke issued a report detailing a number of irregularities, including careless bookkeeping, overpayments or suspect special payments to employees, a lack of satisfactory witness protection and victim protection programs and use of official vehicles for personal trips. More serious charges came into focus in Florence Hartmann’s hard-hitting memoir, *Paix et Châtiment* (2007). In it the former spokesperson for the chief Prosecutor, Carla del Ponte, goes to great length to heap

scorn on the Office of the Prosecutor (OTP) for knuckling under to US pressures to desist from investigating charges of criminal wrongdoings against the RPF. Del Ponte (2009) and Guichaoua (2015), the latter making the most of his intimate grasp of the ICTR, provide

further evidence of US and UK pressures to close the cases involving the crimes committed by the RPF.

The same story is picked up by Thierry Cruvellier's *Court of Remorse* – published in its original French version, *Le tribunal des vaincus. Un Nuremberg for the Rwanda?* In 2006 – which remains to this day the most comprehensive, best informed and nuanced account of the ICTR shortcomings. An investigating journalist who covered the ICTR from 1997 to 2002, the author tries to encapsulate “three histories that intermingle and collide with one another”: the history of Rwanda, the history of each person accused of genocide, and the history of justice, i.e. “of a new kind of an international tribunal in search of its own existence and legitimacy” (p. 8). His book breaks new conceptual ground. Unlike the Nuremberg military tribunal at the close of World War II, often said to represent the victor's justice, the ICTR can best be seen as the embodiment of the loser's justice, and in this sense “it is the product of a history that distinguishes it from all other international tribunals” (p. 165). The loser in this context is the international community, not just the UN but France and Belgium, the US and UK, all of whom failed to prevent the crimes from happening. “The ICTR was created by powers that failed, on the moral level if nothing else. Thus I had to render a justice in their image. It had to be a court of remorse” (p. 167) The implications are shattering: “There is no better explanation for the fact that no respected human rights organizations ever publicly expressed any concern over these violations of rights. And of course there is no better explanation for the failure to prosecute the RPF”. (ibid.) None of this detracts from the merits of the tribunal. Besides silencing supporters of the génocidaires, it has “emphatically reinforced the recognition of the crime committed in Rwanda in 1994” (p. 172). Last but not least it makes available a rich source of documentation, some of which has already been used to good effect by genocide scholars and historians.

THE ROLE OF FRANCE

Radically different assessments have been made of the role of France during and after the genocide. While some would not hesitate to assign a large part of responsibility for the slaughter to France's massive military, logistical and financial support to the Habyarimana government, others would seriously question this judgment. Illustrative of the former is Daniela Kroslak's unremitting onslaught in *The French Betrayal in Rwanda* (Kroslak 2008); a more nuanced brief is found in Olivier Lanotte's more carefully contextualized contribution in *La France face aux conflits Rwandais (1990-1994)*.

Much of the confusion surrounding French policies in Rwanda relates to the different phases and modalities of France's intervention. Code-named respectively Opération Noroit, Amaryllis and Turquoise, the first, launched in 1990, was meant to stop the RPF advance; the second in April 1994 was aimed primarily at saving the lives of French citizens but also many non-French nationals, including 400 Rwandans (“Mission d'information Assemblée Nationale 1998”); the third, in July 1994, involved both political and humanitarian objectives. As shown by Lanotte, each must be seen in the overall context in which it occurred, and in the light of the forces at work in the French domestic arena as well as the international scene (Lanotte 2006).

Although France's interventions have consistently been justified through a “discourse of moral legitimation” aimed at projecting an image of selfless commitment to the highest moral values (Ambrosetti 2000, 87-119), Lanotte identifies a more complex mix of motives, ranging from security interests and the need to live up to its reputation as a guarantor of stability to the conditioning influence of the “Fachoda prism” and the exigencies of ethnic clientelism. In what is perhaps the most original part of his discussion, he also draws attention to the discords among French decision-makers, and the efforts made by Mitterrand to counter Turquoise's strictly humanitarian objectives by developing an alternate plan (“plan bis” in

Lanotte's terms) designed to stem the advance of the RPF as the first step towards a resumption of negotiations (Lanotte 2006, 376-380).

A major source of information, used extensively by Lanotte, is the multi-volume inquest conducted by the French Mission d'information parlementaire in 1998, headed by Paul Quilès. While the main thrust of the final report exonerates France of all wrongdoing, it freely admits the government's shortsightedness in dealing with the Habyarimana government, its erroneous reading the military capacities of the FAR

(Assemblée Nationale, Final Report, 1998), and disagreements among decision-makers. But the most interesting part of the evidence unearthed by the mission is found in the hearings or "auditions" which include the verbatim transcripts of the testimonies of experts and government officials (Assemblée Nationale, Enquete, tome 3, vol. 1 and 2, 1998). The French mission offers an interesting contrast with the Commission d'enquête parlementaire appointed a year earlier by the Belgian Senate. Whereas the former's primary objective was to "inform", its Belgian counterpart had as its mandate to "investigate", to question, to cross-examine, to go "to the bottom" of the issues, and in so doing to shed light on Belgium's role in Rwanda (Willame, 1999). The selectiveness and ambiguity of the information disclosed by the French mission is one reason why France's role still remains a matter of considerable controversy.

The "France-as-villain" argument has been made a number of times by many competent observers (Des Forges 1999, 654-690; Melvern, 2000; Prunier, 1995, 281-311; Chrétien 1997, 123-144), but nowhere more vehemently than by *Le Figaro's* correspondent in Rwanda, Patrick de Saint-Exupéry, in *L'Inavouable: La France au Rwanda*, an indictment of the attitude of high-ranking French officials before, during and after the genocide (Saint-Exupéry, 2004). France's obsession with Francophonie and its corresponding distrust of Anglophone rebels, its military and financial support to the genocidal government, the coziness of its relationship with key members of the presidential family, including those directly involved in the killings, the shortcomings of Opération Turquoise, intended to save Tutsi lives but in fact deeply flawed by incompetence (Prunier 1995) - all of these and more are part of the broadside directed by the author to his imagined interlocutor, Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin, in response to the latter's reference to *les génocides* on Radio France Internationale in September 2003 (*ibid.* 14).

The information carved by Péan from the archives of the French presidency offers a partial corrective to Saint-Exupéry's vituperations. For *Noires fureurs, blancs menteurs* France's record needs to be set straight: Turquoise's aim was primarily humanitarian, not a thinly veiled attempt to throw its weight behind the new Hutu government; at no time did France provide military training to Hutu militias; France's intervention saved thousands of human lives, including 1,220 Tutsi in Bisesero (Péan, 457); in short, there is no basis for the accusations leveled by Saint-Exupéry. The most valuable pieces of information in the book are found in the unpublished materials reproduced in the annexes, ranging from confidential cables, notes and reports to verbatim proceedings of ministerial meetings chaired by Mitterrand. Once this is said, the mixing of fact and fiction - such as accusing Canadian Lt. Gen. Romeo Dallaire, Head of the UNAMIR, of being "sold" to the US - explains that the book did not find a receptive audience among scholars and policy-makers. Which is unfortunate, for amid the polemics and settling of scores the discerning reader can find some rare nuggets.

On the basis of the evidence France's responsibility is hard to deny. Anyone in search of documentary evidence in support of France's involvement in the events that led to the genocide will consult with profit the list of official sources compiled by the opinionated NGO Survie in *Génocide des Tutsi au Rwanda: 20 documents pour comprendre le rôle de l'Etat Français* (Paris 2014). Yet to look for proof of France's direct participation in the killings is a non starter. Where it bears the heaviest burden - a point convincingly argued by Krosiak - is in the support given to the Habyarimana government and successor regime via the military assistance mission in Rwanda. Nothing could have done more to boost the morale of the

killers; besides raising expectations of international support in diplomatic arenas, the result was to give a new lease on life to the death squads, in effect allowing the killing spree to last several months.

Perhaps the most shocking revelations of where France's sympathies lay came in the hours immediately following Habyarimana's death, when his all-powerful and deeply compromised widow, Agathe Kanziga, was flown to Paris to be later introduced to high-ranking officials in the Ministry of Foreign affairs.

Continued French military assistance should not come as a surprise, and while there is no doubt that, in the words of the parliamentary commission, mistakes were made, the point to be stressed is the gravity of the mistakes, and their appalling consequences.

PRO KAGAME SENTIMENT

In 2017, some French intellectuals reacted negatively to the publication of Filip Reyntjens's *Le genocide des Tutsi au Rwanda* in the respected French *Que sais-je?* Collection. Meticulously researched, wide-ranging in

scope, measured in tone, this thin volume (126 pages) is a summary of the key events, issues, actors and their shared responsibilities involved in the bloodbath. The book got a very critical reception in the newspaper *Le Monde*, collectively endorsed by some twenty historians, journalists, human rights activists ("Rwanda: Le *Que-sais-je* qui fait basculer l'histoire" *Le Monde*, sept. 25, 2017). Of these only four claimed a first-hand experience of Rwanda. Aside from "trivializing" the genocide of the Tutsi, the author is taken to task for falsely claiming scientific objectivity ("*il mime l'objectivité scientifique*") and producing a book that looks like a political squib ("*un brûlot politique*"). The principal charge against Reyntjens is to have mentioned the crimes committed by the RPF.

The author's response to his accusers, published shortly thereafter in *Mediapart*, makes clear that the *J'accuse* does not stand up: "My book presumably has only one goal, 'to denounce the RPF for its countless crimes', yet 33 pages out of 128 are devoted to the genocide perpetrated by the Hutu extremists as against 5 to those committed by the RPF" (Reyntjens 2017). What emerges from this controversy is the visibility in France of a pro-Kagame reading of events, heaping scorn on France's policies during the genocide and defending the reputation and accomplishments of the Kagame regime. Survie, a vocal and well-funded French NGO founded in 1984, is among the 24 signatories of the collective protest against the new *Que Sais-je ?*

France is not the only country where pro-Kagame sentiment is on display, but nowhere else does it have a more positive resonance among intellectuals. One example is Stephane Audoin Rouzeau's *Une initiation (Rwanda 1994-2016)*, a personal reflection rather than a research work (see Vidal 2018). The text inspires a sense of revulsion for the crimes committed by the Hutu extremists and downplays those attributed to the RPF. The author's "initiation" came in the course of a state-sponsored visit to Rwanda of a group of selected French academics. The high point in this "rite de passage" came during the commemorative ceremonies of the twentieth anniversary of the genocide. It was on this occasion that Kagame chose to accuse France of having planned and participated in the execution of the genocide, prompting the Minister of Justice at the time, Christiane Taubira, to cancel her visit to Kigali.

For a counter-narrative one can turn to Anjan Sundaram's *Bad News: Last Journalists in a Dictatorship*. The commemorative ceremonies witnessed by the author generated a different feedback from some of his students. A professional journalist who spent months in Kigali while in charge of a journalist training program, Sundaram paints a harrowing picture of the constraints faced by journalists while trying to meet minimal standards of professional

reporting. As he explains in a series of telling anecdotes, failure to exercise self-censorship carries consequences, including imprisonment, involuntary exile, or death. The statistics contained in an appendix to the book are self-explanatory: out of the 59 Rwandan journalists identified by the author as having worked in Rwanda after the genocide, seven were killed, three were “disappeared”, eleven were arrested and imprisoned, and twenty-eight were forced to flee.

NEW RESEARCH DIMENSIONS

Among other attempts to shed new light on the genocide, the works of Jean-Paul Kimonyo, Timothy Longman, Scott Straus and André Guichaoua, among others, draw attention to a range of significant new breakthroughs. As a point of entry into their works one major article stands out: Claudine Vidal’s “Enquêtes au Rwanda: Questions de recherche sur le génocide Tutsi (Vidal 2014). Besides turning a critical eye to some of the contributions discussed below, she examines the different levels at which research is proceeding, ie. national, prefectural, communal and individual, and shows how specific angles of vision helped illuminate the dynamics of mass murder at each level. The variable operating at the national level (in this case political parties) are analyzed in considerable detail by Kimonyo (2008); Guichaoua (2005) brings out the decisive impact of extremist “entrepreneurs” in the Butare prefecture; Strauss turns the spotlight on the local-level commonalities and specificities among five different communes; and the individual motivations behind the killings are perhaps best captured by Lee Ann Fuji (2009). In her commentary on each of the foregoing Vidal raises important questions about the issues that still need to be explored, and by what kinds of methodologies. Especially arresting are her conclusive thoughts, in which she draws from the works of Jacques Revel and Giovanni Levi on the epistemology of micro-histories: one of the key issues, she argues,

is to comprehend the process by which causal reconfigurations are shaped by the manner in which grass- roots realities are perceived or observed (“les échelles d’observation”).

THE LOCAL DYNAMICS OF MASS MURDER

Scott Straus’s *The Order of Genocide: Race, Power and War in Rwanda* must be seen as a landmark in the social science scholarship on Rwanda. His argument revolves around the mutually reinforcing interactions between the racial myths surrounding issues of ethnicity, the role of the state as an instrument of power, and the civil war as a key contextual variable. The double entendre quality of “order” appears deliberate: genocide as involving orders from above, but also a certain logic. Obeying orders is not to be confused with blind obedience; it is better understood as a rational choice based on the risks involved in refusing to comply with the hard liners incitements to violence. “What the evidence suggests”, he writes, “is that acute insecurity and orders from above ignited a categorical logic of race and ethnicity”. Neighbors became enemies in war and under the authorities direction (p. 173). He shows how the collective fears born of the civil war, reached a new pitch of intensity with the crash of Habyarimana’s plane, thus opening a space of opportunity for power struggles at the local level, while drastically transforming perceptions of “the other”. The transition from civil war to genocide is indeed inseparable from what must be seen as the tipping point in the process of escalation: the shooting down of Habyarimana’s plane. One of the striking conclusions to emerge from Straus’s interviews with convicted killers is their near unanimous perception of that event as the moment when Tutsi are globally defined as the enemy: “I understood that the Tutsi was the enemy because the president had died” ; “If (the RPF) had not killed the president there would have been no killing” ; “The origin of this is the death of Habyarimana” (Straus 2006a, 39, 40, 46). Although radicalization and violence had been building up long before, with the crash of the presidential plane a critical threshold was crossed that marked

the shift to genocide. In the constellation of factors behind “le passage à l’acte” (Sémelin 2005), this is the one that most starkly framed the logic of the security dilemma: either we’ll kill them first, or else we’ll be killed.

On the basis on open-ended interviews with local respondents and prison inmates Straus pieces together a captivating narrative of the local struggles that presided over the capture of power at the communal level. In one of his most illuminating chapters the author turns the spotlight on local dynamics and shows why, so far from being a sudden, uniformly orchestrated butchery, the genocide is best understood as the outcome of “a play for power among Hutu” (p. 65). Out of the deadly confrontations between moderates and extremists a pattern emerges, where violence spread as a cascade of tipping points, and each tipping point was the outcome of local, intra-ethnic contests for dominance (p. 93). On the basis of data drawn from five communes (Gafunzo, Kayove, Kanzense, Musambira and Giti), the author identifies the processes through which genocidal violence penetrated communal arenas: mobilization from above by civilian authorities,

intra-communal challenge to existing authorities by subordinates, military mobilization of civilian authorities and local elites, and invasion from outside the commune either to remove or pressure recalcitrant officials. (p. 66). Seen through the prism of these intra-mural struggles the Rwanda genocide thus unfolds as a deadly competition for power among Hutu, rather than as a straightforward Hutu-Tutsi confrontation. Much the same conclusion emerges from his discussion of the genocidaires and their motivations: from all the evidence intra-Hutu pressures and out-group fear or revenge were the major variables, with radio incitements to commit murder, the benefits of looting, and ethnic enmities assuming secondary significance. With exemplary methodological sophistication, ranging from regression analyses to triangulation, and lengthy citations from his interviews, the author conclusively demonstrates the central role played by intra-Hutu threats in the spectrum of motivations behind the killings.

Many of the theories spawned by the Rwanda case end up demolished, casualties of Straus’s probe into the dynamics of violence. One after another, the author refutes (or seriously qualifies) the notion of a planned total genocide, the myth of long-standing ethnic hatreds, the contention that the ideology of genocide propagated by the media lies at the heart of the killings, the cliché phrase of a culture of obedience. While opening up new critical perspectives on the Rwanda genocide, on some specific points questions arise. This is particularly true of the chapter on Rwanda’s Leviathan, which brings out the role of the state in the killings. Of the historic centrality of the Rwandan state system, and its enduring relevance through the colonial and post-colonial period, there can be no doubt. Whether the genocide can be seen as conclusive

proof of the efficacy of the strong state syndrome is debatable, however. Indeed much of the evidence set forth by the author in his analysis of the challenges faced by hard-liners at the local level suggests a rather weaker state than some might imagine. In the days immediately following the crash of the presidential plane the Rwandan Leviathan was effectively shot to bits, opening a “space of opportunity” occupied by non-state actors. True, in matter of days, an interim government came into being, which proceeded to re-appropriate what was left of the lame Leviathan; but surely this new state system, propped up by gangs of killers and army men, was a far cry from the republican mwamiships of Kayibanda and Habyarimana.

The book, however, is thin on references to the plethora of works by Rwandans - ranging from eyewitness accounts to court testimonies and first person narratives. Admittedly, this literature is of uneven quality, but it is illustrative of how the experience of genocide has been perceived and internalized by victims and actors. An unfortunate omission, given the author’s special attention to the case of Giti - the only commune where genocide did not happen - is Léonard Nduwayo’s account (Nduwayo 2002), which offers a different interpretation of the Giti exception: for Nduwayo, a native of Giti, the absence of violence there is traceable to the specificity of the commune’s socio-historical context, and therefore has little to do with the timely arrival of the RPF, as Straus argues. If anything, says

Nduwayo, the worst killings were committed after the arrival of the RPF, mostly in the form of revenge killings. The case of Giti remains something of an enigma.

Again, despite his efforts to lay bare the killers social background characteristics and motivations, the author has relatively little to say about the individual profiles of the murderous big men who set in motion the wheels of the killing machine, their connections to the militias and communal authorities. Repeated references to faceless “hardliners” (the term appears like a leitmotiv in the conclusion) prompts further questions about their social identities, resource-base, mobilizing strategies, local and regional ties: while there is little question about the central role played by the Bagosoras, Nziroreras, and Ngirumpatses, to cite but the most notorious, in orchestrating the carnage, little is said of the networks through which collective violence became operational at the communal and prefectural level. This is where Guichaoua’s anatomy of mass murder in Butare fills some important gaps in the Strausian frame of analysis.

STRUGGLES FOR POWER AT THE TOP

The closest we come to an understanding of how local nets linked up with the bosses in charge of running the killing machine is found in Guichaoua’s *Rwanda 1994: Les politiques du génocide à Butare*, an analysis of how the genocide came into effect in the southern prefecture of Butare despite considerable initial resistance (Guichaoua 2005). Central to his analysis is the detailed description of the political trajectories of certain key local actors, how they were able to establish close personal links among themselves, and with armed networks, the latter ranging from armed refugees from Burundi to presidential guards, gendarmes and party militias. He shows how the leading actors involved in the killings (including the omnipresent Pauline Nyiramasuhuko and Callixte Kalimanzira) were able to overcome the resistance of the Tutsi prefect by mobilizing radical support groups through patron-client ties running from the capital city to Butare and its environs. The result is a remarkably instructive case study of the politics of genocide at the prefectural level. Guichaoua’s conclusion is consistent with the pattern described by Straus in his discussion of how outside intervention helped neutralize local resistance, but it paints a much fuller picture of the mobilization strategies employed by certain key personalities to transform the territorial administration into obedient clienteles of the killers. The wealth of empirical data unearthed by Guichaoua thus provides a crucially important addendum to Straus’s chapter on “local dynamics”.

The role of agency in the genocide is the subject of his more recent work, *Rwanda: De la guerre au génocide, les politiques criminelles au Rwanda (1990-1994)*, now available in English in a much reduced version as *From War to Genocide : Criminal Politics in Rwanda 1990-1994* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2015). Besides calling into question many of the assumptions underlying the literature on the genocide, including the notion of a carefully premeditated, long-standing plan to annihilate the Tutsi population, the book offers a detailed analysis of how the context of civil war, political and military, helps us understand the dynamics of mass murder. His argument draws heavily from the documents and testimonies presented before the ICTR, and interviews with key actors. Furthermore, the author brings to his subject the benefit of years of

observation of the politics of the Great Lakes region as well as his experience on the ground on the fateful date of April 6 1994. His book is an invitation to take a fresh look at the events leading to the genocide.

In contrast with most other works on the subject the author goes to great lengths to analyze the internal discords and rivalries that accompanied the decision to engage in a total genocide. He distinguishes among the different phases leading to the ultimate catastrophe, beginning with politicicide as the preface to genocide,

i.e. the killing of opposition government officials and civil servants by elements of the presidential guard, including the prime minister; this first phase was immediately followed by the informal meeting of the army high command, the setting up of a military crisis committee, and the appointment of an interim government. Through each phase massacres of Tutsi civilians went on, with the militias doing all the “work”. Not until April 12, when the interim government moved to Gitarama, did the genocide option win the day against the pacification policy advocated by the interim authorities. What clinched this decision was the ability of a small group of extremists to gain full control over the militias and the army. Directly involved in this “final solution” strategy were Joseph Nzirorera and Mathieu Ndirumpatse, respectively national secretary and president of the ruling party, along with Théoneste Bagosora, chef de cabinet in the Ministry of Defense. As the author convincingly demonstrates, among the many bearing responsibility for the extermination of over half a million Tutsi, those three deserve pride of place.

What the book shows is not the absence of planning behind the killings, but the somewhat improvised, belated attempt at planning made by a handful of actors to organize a final solution, against the consensus of the pro-pacification moderates. The Rwanda genocide thus emerges as a process involving a convergence of factors and circumstances, but whose outcome was by no means foreordained by the existence of a long-standing conspiracy to kill all the Tutsi. What comes into focus out of the welter of personalities, institutions, faction, bloody encounters and settlements of accounts described by the author is not the image of an all-powerful state rooted in the pre-colonial past but the crucial role played by individual personalities. Agency, in short, is the name of the game. No one trying to get a handle on the complexity of the Rwanda tragedy can ignore this monumental addition to the existing literature.

THE VIEW FROM BELOW

In contrast with Guichaoua’s top-down perspective Jean Paul Kimonyo, in his oddly titled *Rwanda: Un génocide populaire* (Karthala 2008), draws a compelling picture of the local impact of party politics into the dynamics of genocidal killings. The gist of his thesis is that much of the violence unleashed after the introduction of multiparty competition in 1992 is traceable to the legacy of the First Republic (1962-1973), via the Mouvement Démocratique Républicain (MDR). In its first incarnation, as the Parti de l’émancipation Hutu (Parmehutu), the MDR served as the vehicle of a violently anti-Tutsi ideology, which led as early as 1959 to a Belgian-assisted revolutionary movement against the Tutsi monarchy. Under the Second Republic (1973-1994) the MDR took on a distinctly radical tinge. Its bitter rivalry with the dominant, pro-Habyarimana Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement (MRND) led to countless deaths and destruction of property, followed by the rise in 1993 of an extremist faction, known as Hutu-Power. The trend toward radicalization received a fresh impetus from the worsening economic conditions sweeping across the southern prefectures (where MDR traditionally held sway). All of which explains why the MDR emerged as the principal organizational weapon behind the surge of mass killings in the Butare and Kibuye prefectures, where the author carried most of his research. He deserves credit for his impressive methodology, including his careful examination of local archives, a wealth of interviews with local actors and familiarity with the history of the country and the literature on genocide. The result is a work of considerable originality. He shows the marginal role of the state as a mobilizing factor, as against local actors and party notables; he brings out the critical influence of Hutu refugees from Burundi fleeing Tutsi-led violence in their homeland; he notes the decisive impact of the assassination of Melchior Ndadaye in Burundi on the rise of Hutu-Power in Rwanda. No less important is the attention paid to the conditions of extreme poverty faced by a great many Hutu peasants; to leave out the economic motivations behind the killings – including land hunger and the forceful appropriation of cattle – is to ignore a key dimension of the appalling atrocities that swept across the southern prefectures. The title’s reference to a “popular genocide” takes on its full

significance as we reflect on Kimonyo's investigation of the powerful grassroots support encountered by the genocidaires.

Even closer to the ground is Helène Dumas's attempt to make sense of the "proximity crimes" committed against friends, relatives and neighbors in the Shyorongi commune, some ten miles away from Kigali. *Le genocide au village. Le massacre des Tutsi au Rwanda* is an impressive effort to combine the tools of history and anthropology to lay bare the circumstances and motivations that caused the breakdown of even the most intimate social relations. Her book is based on a ten-year period of field work in anticipation of a doctoral dissertation, supplemented by a close examination of *gacaca* court proceedings; the result is an arresting micro-level investigation of the violent sundering of the social ties that once brought together the perpetrators and their victims. Few other works are more revealing of the range of social forces behind such atrocities. But for all its merits the impression one gets is that of a social scientist on a mission. Reflecting on what her book tells us about similar atrocities elsewhere in Rwanda, one wonders how far one can generalize from the conclusions drawn from a single case study; some may question the choice of informants; others must surely raise questions about the somewhat uncritical reading of the *gacaca* materials. The *gacaca* courts it will be recalled were based on a traditional form of conflict resolution; the aim was to speed the handling of crimes committed during the genocide, establish the truth about who did what to whom, and to lay the groundwork for reconciliation.

The *gacaca* materials are overwhelmingly prosecutorial, a fact made reasonably clear in Bert Ingelaere's *Inside Rwanda's Gacaca Courts: Seeking Justice After Genocide*, one of the most illuminating inquests into the *gacaca* process. His findings are based on the first-hand observation and analysis of 1917 trials dealing with 2573 individual cases, and 1359 recorded interviews, conducted in thirty months of fieldwork. Unlike most other works on the subject the *Gacaca* courts are here placed in their social and political contexts. Of particular interest is the chapter on "the weight of the state", described by one informant in terms that are worth quoting: "Four people are part of the committee at the district level, the mayor, the executive secretary and two vice-mayors. In addition there is the military commander of the region and of the police. The way the system works is a bit like the CIA" (p. 102). The presence of an all-embracing state apparatus raises obvious questions about the independence of the courts, but this does not rule out the possibility of "navigating the social", again to quote one of the book's title. Grafted onto the genocidal agenda are sub-conflicts that may involve disputes over land, cattle, conjugal tiffs and personal enmities, all of which lend themselves to the settling of scores above and beyond the issue of genocide. This is where dissimulation, tactical silence, thinly veiled accusations - all of which may figure under the rubric of *ubwenge*, a trait of character seen as synonymous with intelligence - may come into play. In the end what comes into focus is a sense of the extreme diversity of historical and social settings in which the *gacaca* process unfolded. Just as evident are the doubts cast on the prospects for a lasting reconciliation. The multiple meanings attached to *umutima* - including, broadly speaking, the experience or perception of "true humanity" (p. 154) - are by no means synonymous with reconciliation. The question raised by the author at the end of his discussion - "How to heal a country that has been traumatized by repression if the fear to speak out is still present everywhere? - will remain in the minds of most Rwandans for the foreseeable future.

Along with Ingelaere's, Dumas's work cuts across many of the themes explored by Lee Ann Fuji in *Killing Neighbors: Webs of Violence in Rwanda*, a pioneering analysis of local-level interactions as a mode of recruitment into killing networks (what she refers to as the "Joiners"). She cautions against the all-too-prevalent tendency to overemphasize ethnicity as the only point of entry into the dynamics of murder. She goes to great lengths to lay bare the variety of social referents to describe collective and individual identities. From regional affinities to patron-client ties, clan relationships and cross-ethnic family ties, a wealth of networks come into play to determine who will join whom. She correctly underscores the significance of fear as the single most important factor in the dynamics of mass murder. "It was not overwhelming hatred for Tutsi that Joiners felt but an overwhelming sense of fear". (p.120). But if fear was all pervasive, "the picture the ethnic fear thesis paints is

indeterminate. With which Hutu leaders were the Hutu masses supposed to align themselves? The MRND Hutu? The MDR Hutu? The northern Hutu? Southern Hutu? Moderate Hutu or extremist Hutu? Pro-RPF Hutu or anti-RPF Hutu?" (p.120). There was no such thing as a pre-existing script for mass murder. Engagement in violence and ethnic definition of the enemy were but two sides of the same coin. The script for violence, we are told, was not intended to depict or mirror life as people knew it, but to conjure up new reality" (p.121) Out of the many interviews conducted with killers and survivors emerge an image of the grass-roots dynamics of the killings that is theoretically original and suggestive of further avenues for research.

HAMITIC AND OTHER MYTHOLOGIES: THE IDEOLOGICAL ROOTS OF GENOCIDE

Ideology is a crucial ingredient of mass murder. In one form or another racism is the common denominator that underpins rationalizations to kill other human beings. The Aryan myth is only one example among others of how history is manipulated to serve as a pretext for the annihilation of an entire community. As Jean-Pierre Chrétien and Marcel Kabanda argue in their joint effort to lay bare the ideological roots of the Rwanda genocide, *Rwanda. Racisme et génocide. L'idéologie hamitique*, the Hamitic myth is to the Rwanda bloodbath what the Aryan myth has been for the Shoah. In both instances historical truth has been distorted, manipulated and mythologized to give a semblance of justification to mass murder.

The senior author, Chrétien, is a well-established authority on the history of Rwanda and Burundi. His earlier investigation of the role of the media, *Les medias du génocide*, is an important contribution to help us understand the part played by the media under Habyarimana: the propagation of racist stereotypes cannot be separated from the climate of ethnic hatreds that has led to the bloodbath. This theme is central to the authors' analysis of the Hamitic myth as a key ingredient of genocide.

The merits of the book are clear: it offers a wealth of original insights into the history of colonial rule; it makes available a rich collection of little-known primary and secondary sources; it shows the critical nexus between the "events" of 1972 in Burundi and the hardening of ethnic relations in Rwanda; it carefully delineates the emergence of what the authors refer to as "the ethnic obsession" in Central Africa; last but not least is the highly readable style of writing.

As to whether or not the analysis brings us any closer to an understanding of the roots of the bloodbath, the jury is still out. A weakness of the book is that it makes short shrift of the empirical evidence pointing to the lack of a direct connection between extremist ideology and genocide. If the survey compiled by Scott Straus about the Hamitic Hypothesis is any guide, the relationship between ideology and genocide appears tenuous. To the question "Before 1994 had you heard Tutsi were Hamites who came from the Horn of Africa?", 58,3% of 204 respondents said "No", as against 14% who said "Yes and believed it was true", while 27,7% "said yes but did not believe the idea or had no interest". (Straus, 2006, p.132). Straus goes on to note, "In sum, my interviews with perpetrators show that most Rwandans did not participate in the genocide because they hated Tutsi as 'despicable others'... or because racist propaganda had instilled racism in them. The perpetrators had an awareness of different ethnic categories but that awareness did not create ethnic hatred or directly lead to violence" (*ibid.* p.134).

This is not to say that the Hamitic ideology did not carry a significant impact on some sectors of society. It became a major theme in the "media de la haine"; it shaped the perceptions of countless pro-MRND and Hutu-Power urban elites; as a tool of racist propaganda its significance cannot be denied. But this did not percolate down into the rural sectors, the principal recruiting ground of génocidaires. There is no direct, one- to-one relationship

between ideology and genocide. One cannot leave out of the accounting the murderous tit-for-tat dialectic that figures so prominently in the dynamic of the killings. Unless one takes into account not just the atrocities committed by Hutu extremists but those of Tutsi elements affiliated to the RPF, much of what happened in Rwanda is bound to defy comprehension.

The Rwanda genocide cannot be reduced to a tropical version of Nazi ideology. Chrétien's earlier phrasing comparing the dynamics of genocide in Rwanda to a "Nazisme tropical" is the central theme of the concluding chapter which draws the Holocaust parallel: the "wandering Jew" finds a counterpart in the "invading Tutsi", the legendary Oriental charm of the "Belle Juive" has its pendant in the subversive attractiveness of Tutsi women, echoes of the Nazi press (*Der Sturmer*) and French anti-semitic right wing media (*Gringoire, Je Suis partout*) can be found in the newspaper *Kangura*, whose pages never missed an opportunity to discredit the Tutsi opposition. Regardless of how to construe such points of convergence, they cannot eclipse the divergent parameters within which each genocide has come into being. This is not the place to reiterate why the two cases differ from each other in some fundamental ways (see "Rwanda and the Holocaust Reconsidered", chapter 8 in Lemarchand, 2009). History, it has been said, does not repeat itself,

but it sometimes rhymes. No matter how troubling the echoes of the past, all genocides are different, and so also the two biggest genocides of the last century.

It is useful to consider the conclusions drawn by Hervé Deguine in his meticulously researched inquest into the case of Ferdinand Nahimana, one of the founders of Radio et Television Mille Collines (RTLM) who also served as the head of the Rwandan information services ORINFOR) under Habyarimana before being sentenced by the IPTR to life imprisonment, and on appeal to a thirty-year sentence before he was finally set free in 2016. His book, *Un idéologue dans le génocide rwandais: Enquête sur Ferdinand Nahimana (2010)* is more than a refutation of some of the charges brought against him; it is a persuasive critique of the ICTR. Although he makes no attempt to turn a blind eye to Nahimana's ideological commitment to the MNRD ideology, or to downplay the mistake he made in joining the government of interim President Sindikubwabo, Deguine demonstrates the weakness of the accusations held against him. He had little to do with the RTLM's incitements to violence after April 6, 1994, as he was no longer living in Rwanda; nor is there evidence that until then the RTLM served as a vehicle of genocidal violence. To quote from Deguine: "Nahimana's accusers wanted to turn him into an activist of genocide, an early planner (of the genocide). To do so they've invented facts which did not exist." (p. 379) They invented that he had control over the recruitment of RTLM staff and content of its broadcasts after April 6; and they mistakenly read into his "patriotic", anti-RPF sentiment proof of his genocidal dispositions.

Much the same argument is set forth in Barrie Collins's previously mentioned *Rwanda 1994: The Myth of the Akazu Genocide Conspiracy and its Consequences (2014)*: "not one broadcast of RTLM from July 1993 to April 1994 incited ethnic hatred. From 6 April 1994 onwards, RTLM was under the protection of the military. Individual broadcasters did incite killing, and at least one broadcast is shown to be an incitement to commit a crime against humanity. These individuals may well have committed offences that were punishable by war crimes courts but the evidence of RTLM acting as a vehicle for genocide is forced". (p. 171) The author, drawing from a document reproduced in Deguine's book, underscores Nahimana's real concerns on the eve of the genocide, what he called "regionalism, collinism and ethnism, these are the true causes of the disaster that is now befalling Rwanda and its people ethnic identity has been used as a tool to divide and foment hatred among member of the national community." (p.170) This takes us far from the accusations leveled against him by the ICTR, and even further from the Hamitic hypothesis as the ideological kernel of the genocide.

THE ROLE OF CHRISTIAN CHURCHES

What is one to make of one of the biggest mass murders of the last century occurring in one of the most thoroughly Christianized societies of the continent? What is the explanation for Christians killing Christians, for priests killing their own parishioners, and vice versa? By what horrific twist of fate could some 15 000 Tutsi civilians seeking refuge in the church of Kaduha end up being slaughtered to the last man, woman and child? And what of those thousands seeking shelter in the Churches of Kibuye (4 000) and Ntarama (3 000), almost all of them wiped out in a matter of days?

One basic fact is beyond controversy: the closeness of the relationship of Catholic Church hierarchy with the Habyarimana government has been underscored time and again, most notably by the late André Sibomana - priest, journalist and humanitarian activist - who, in a book-length conversation with two French journalists, stated, "the ties between the archbishop of Kigali, Vincent Nsengiyumva, and Habyarimana's entourage was a matter of public notoriety. Nsengiyumva was indeed member of the central committee of the ruling party, the MNRD, until the Pope, on the occasion of a trip to Rwanda, demanded his resignation" (Sibomana, 1997,

p. 49). As editor of *Kimanyateka*, a widely read newspaper known for the quality of its information, Sibomana revealed the involvement of the president and his son in drug trafficking deals, in turn causing the archbishop to insist that he should deny the information. Sibomana refused. But if the cozyness of the relation between Church and State is well established, this is hardly enough to explain the horrifying behavior of Christians during the bloodletting. For an overall assessment of the role of the Catholic Church, as distinct from the clergy, there is no better source than Sibomana's nuanced and thoroughly detailed discussion in a chapter appropriately titled, "Eglise coupable ou témoin gênant"? (ibid. pp. 179-200).

One is at a loss to look for rational motives. But there are tentative suggestions. In a collection of articles notorious for their anti-colonial bent, a group of intellectuals argues that the failings of the Church are rooted in its racist colonial legacy. Rather than developing policies aimed at bringing Hutu and Tutsi into a common oecumenical framework, the impact of Christian churches has been profoundly divisive, sowing the seeds of a conflict that reached its apex during the mass killings of tens of thousands Tutsi in the churches nearest to their homes, hoping they would serve as safe havens. Such, in brief, is the gist of the arguments offered in several of the contributions to *Rwanda: L'Eglise Catholique à l'épreuve du génocide*, a volume edited by Faustin Rutembesa, Jean-Pierre Keregeye and Paul Rutayisire, supporters of the Kagame regime.

A very different take is offered by Saskia Van Hoyweghen in an article titled "The Disintegration of the Catholic Church of Rwanda: A Study of the Fragmentation of Political Religious Authority". Rather than holding the Church responsible for its past failings the author points to the cultural resistance to Church teachings inherent in Rwandan society. Rwandans joined the Church for economic and social reasons; seldom did they internalize its ethical message. Churches have reflected rather than molded Rwandan attitudes. This point of view finds an echo in many other statements, notably by members of the European clergy. What happened in Rwanda's holy places during the genocide has little to do with the role of the Church as an institution; it is the expression of collective hatreds rooted in the country's violent history.

But not all Churches, whether Catholic or Protestant, behaved the same way. Though all suffered heavy losses, some showed a capacity to resist, while others didn't. This is the central issue explored by Timothy Longman in *Christianity and Genocide in Rwanda*. Informed by an excellent grasp of the literature on civil society organizations, and extensive fieldwork in the early and mid-1990s, Longman takes a comparative look at two Presbyterian Churches, one in Kirinda, the other in Bihugu: the first, whose leaders were closely connected to, and supportive of the ruling MRND, acted as the spearhead of the massacres; the other, owing to a different social profile, did all it could to stop them (though, unfortunately, with mixed results). Among the factors behind such contrasting patterns are

the links between Church leaders and the state, the role of civil society organizations, the ethno-regional underpinnings of religious communities, and the attitude of individual Church leaders. Longman's close attention to the history of Church institutions, combined with a fine grasp of their internal structure and societal linkages, enables him to draw a remarkably convincing picture of the complexity of Church behavior during mass killings. Longman's analysis stands as a major contribution to our understanding the genocide in Rwanda.

GENOCIDE AS THE DARK SIDE OF DEMOCRACY

That electoral democracy contains in germ a lethal confusion between *demos* and *ethnos*, and thus creates the conditions of ethnic cleansing or genocide, such, in a nutshell, is the essence of the argument developed by Michael Mann in *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (2005). Out of seventeen chapters, two are devoted to Rwanda. Whether Rwanda is an appropriate case study in support Mann's thesis is open to debate, but there can be no question about the significance of his contribution on a number of important issues

Mann's answer to the question "How premeditated was the genocide?" (p. 442) rejects the notion of a long-standing genocidal conspiracy: "It is tempting to view prior escalations as stages in a single planned process. But this would be mistaken. What more probably happened was that as the regime lost cohesion and then its presidential head, and as it suffered a coup and was then rebuilt, it experienced a radicalization that few had anticipated beforehand, but that was also paralleled by a radicalization of sentiments among ordinary Hutus. Genocide was then improvised by radical elites and militants out of opportunity and threat. It was not long nourished as Plan A" (Mann 2005, 442). He cites from Romeo Dallaire in support of his contention that what was at first envisaged was a *politicide*, not a genocide: "The plan aimed at exterminating the opposition, it was impossible that a plan to carry such a holocaust could have existed" (cited in Mann, *ibid.* 451), a position shared by many others, including former Minister of Defense in Habyarimana's government, James Gasana (Gasana 2002, 280).

On the issue of participation in the killings he identifies six main levels of perpetrator: the Hutu MRND little house clan that seized power on April 7, 1994; other Hutu Power political factions entering the post-coup

regime; cooperating Hutu officials and army and police officers; cooperating Hutu local social elites; Hutu paramilitaries; a large number of ordinary Hutu (Mann 2005, 449). The first five categories, he argues, formed the various levels of a party-state whose ideological, economic, military and political powers enabled them to mobilize the sixth group in a genocidal process (*ibid.*). Exactly when and where each of these categories became participants in the killings remains unclear. The party-state, which he identifies with the first five categories, was, of his own admission, a highly disorganized apparatus. At the time of the crash, he writes, "the state was divided from top to bottom into various party factions so that the genocide was not statist in the conventional sense" (*ibid.* 453). After the death of the president and the chief of staff of the armed forces, and the killing of the prime minister, three ministers and president of the Supreme Court, there was little left of the state. What served as a surrogate state were the informal networks centering around the "little house" and ramifying into the civil society, the paramilitaries, the *interahamwe*, down to the prefectural and communal levels (Gasana 2002, 281; Braeckman 1994, 154-158).

In this fragmented, faction-ridden environment, the central figure in the genocide, Colonel Théoneste Bagosora, is portrayed as the super-patron, while "national notables quickly returned home to activate their patron-client networks into awful tasks" (Mann 2005, 472). The role played by local "big men, mayors, prefects and notables" is well described by Mann (*ibid.*, 454-460). It confirms the pattern observed by Michele Wagner in the course of her interviews with *génocidaires*: their face, she writes, was not the hoary face of time

immemorial (but) a modern face the self-confident smile of a rural fonctionnaire, projecting himself as an intellectual among non-literate farmers and striving to become a local patron in the politics linking his rural center to Kigali (Wagner 1998, 30).

Though somewhat remote from his central thesis about the negative implications of electoral democracy, his conclusions draw attention to some critical aspects of the Rwanda genocide. First, profound bi-ethnic rivalry underlay this genocide, not as constant ethnic hatreds but as a series of modern escalation over who was to control the state. Second, genocide resulted from particular form of power exercised by hundreds of leaders, thousands of militants and the 200,000 who eventually joined in. Third, genocide was again perpetrated not by a cohesive or totalitarian state, but by a party state recently factionalized and radicalized. Fourth, this resulted in very mixed perpetrator motives. In Rwanda even top-level perpetrators mixed personal material goals with a strong ideological sense of ethnic identity, justice and retribution. (Mann, 470-472).

The principal contribution of Mann's discussion is not so much in the presumed novelty of the "*dark side of democracy* argument" as in its many stimulating insights into a broad range of critical issues having to do with the motivations, perceptions and levels of participation in the killings.

THE MALTHUSIAN DIMENSION

The inner tensions arising from rising population densities and the growing scarcity of cultivable land constitutes a major variable in any attempt to grasp the dynamics of genocidal killings. The phenomenon has been ably analyzed by Catherine André and Jean-Philippe Platteau in their ground-breaking analysis of "land relations under unbearable stress", in which they convincingly demonstrate the impact of land hunger on intra-Hutu killings in the Kanama commune of northern Rwanda. (André and Platteau, 1998) How the same causal factor has contributed to the killings of Tutsi by Hutu during the genocide is the subject of Jared Diamond's chapter on *Malthus in Africa: Rwanda's Genocide* in his best-selling work about "how societies choose to fail or succeed", titled *Collapse*. (Diamond, 311-328)

After a brief and somewhat confusing historical sketch of ethnic relations in Rwanda and Burundi the author turns the spotlight on the two critical factors at the heart of his argument, i.e. Rwanda's high population density and its impact on land resources. By 1990, he notes, Rwanda's average population density was 760 people per square mile, thus approaching that of Holland (950). Holland's highly efficient mechanized agriculture, however, is in stark contrast with Rwanda where farmers depend on handheld hoes, picks and machetes, and most people have to remain farmers, producing little or no surplus that could support others (ibid. 319). Further aggravating the situation, - even the most elementary measures that could have minimized soil erosion, such as terracing, plowing along contours rather than straight up and down hills - were not being practiced (ibid. 320). The combined effects of a rising population and shrinking land

resources, Diamond argues, created the "Malthusian dilemma: more food but also more people, hence no improvement in food per person" (ibid.).

Just how the Malthusian dilemma contributed to the genocide remains unclear. In support of his argument Diamond leans heavily on the data supplied by André and Platteau to show the drastic shortage of land created by the population explosion. In Kanama, he writes, "high population densities translated into very small farms: a median farm size of only 0,89 acre in 1988, declining to 0.72 acre in 1992. Each farm was divided into (on average) 10 separate parcels average only 0.09 acre in 1988 and 0.07 acre in 1993" (ibid.). There is no reason to dispute these statistics. Nor is there any doubt about the centrality of the conflict between the relatively land-rich and the landless, as was the case in Kanama, where violence

involved Hutu against Hutu. Whether one can generalize from the Kanama case to help explain the nation-wide mass murder of Tutsi by Hutu remains a question. Diamond himself writes: "One should not misconstrue a role of population pressure among the Rwandan genocide's causes to mean that population pressure automatically leads to genocide around the world. To those who would object that there is not a necessary link between Malthusian population pressure and genocide I would answer "Of course!" Conversely genocide can arise for ultimate reasons other than overpopulation, as illustrated by Hitler's efforts to exterminate Jews and Gypsies during World War II, or by the genocide of the 1970-s in Cambodia, with only one sixth of Rwanda's population density" (ibid. 327). Between population pressure and genocide lies a range of intermediary factors, which the author enumerates: Rwanda's history of Tutsi domination of Hutu, Tutsi large-scale killings of Hutu in Burundi and small-scale ones in Rwanda, Tutsi invasions of Rwanda, Rwanda's economic crisis and its exacerbation by drought and world factors (especially by falling coffee prices and World Bank austerity measures), hundreds of thousands of desperate young Rwandan men displaced as refugees into settlement camps and ripe for recruitment by militias, and competition among Rwanda's rival political groups willing to stoop to anything to retain power. Population pressure joined with those other factors. In other words, just connect and you'll get the answer.

Malthus in Africa is intended for the general reader. Whether in terms of theory or empirical evidence, it adds little to the research conducted by André and Platteau. Nonetheless, the discussion stands as a salutary warning in the face of what many would consider an impending catastrophe in Rwanda and Burundi. "Severe problems of overpopulation", he writes, "environmental impact, and climate change cannot persist indefinitely: sooner or later they are likely to resolve themselves, whether in the manner of Rwanda or in some other manner not of our devising, if we don't succeed in solving them by our own actions" (ibid. 328). In this cautionary tale lies the principal merit of Diamond's encounter with "Malthus in Africa".

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Though sharing traits common to all genocides, the violence experienced by Rwanda is unique in many ways. Both are well illustrated in the range of issues explored in this review. Equally clear is that the phenomenon has been perceived, described, and interpreted in strikingly different ways. But regardless of one's perspective, the basic questions remain: not just the why and how of the killings, but their consequences for the post-genocidal task that lies ahead. How to reinvent the nation?

History suggests a few paths: one is to ignore that genocide ever happened (as in contemporary Turkey, and now also in Myanmar), another is to recognize the responsibility of the genocidal state and make amends (as happened in post-war Germany), yet another is to combine admission of guilt and pro forma judicial proceedings, but with a minimum of sanctions against those responsible for the crimes they have committed. The case of Cambodia is one example. The singularity of the bloodbath in Rwanda suggests important differences with all of the above. Claims to the contrary notwithstanding, and bearing in mind the lack of a consensus among scholars about what, exactly, constitutes genocide, only in Rwanda is there enough research-based evidence to hypothesize the notion of a double genocide, a genocide of Tutsi by Hutu and of Hutu by Tutsi. Albeit in unequal quantities, victims and perpetrators are found on both sides of the ethnic fault line.

From the perspective of the government in Rwanda, however, the only acceptable, legally permissible interpretation of genocide is that of Tutsi by Hutu. However regrettable acts of violence committed by individual Tutsi soldiers they clearly do not fall into the same category. If so, how is this likely to impact on President Kagame's ongoing efforts to reinvent his nation?

The key points in Kagame's reconstruction agenda are the elimination of ethnic identities -- on the grounds that they are colonial inventions that carried within themselves the germs of ethnic carnage -- and, as noted above, the firm conviction, now part of the official ideology, that the only genocide deserving recognition is that of Tutsi by Hutu. In a fundamental and radical sense Kagame is rewriting the history of his country.

Seen as an attempt to leave out of the historical record some of the more painful episodes of the past this strategy calls to mind two prestigious names, Ernest Renan, and, more recently, David Rieff. In his famous essay on "What is a nation?" the first argued, provocatively, that oblivion and historical error are essential elements in any attempt to forge a nation ("L'oubli et je dirai même l'erreur historique sont un facteur essentiel à la création d'une nation"). The second, in his thoughtful book-length essay, *Against Remembrance* (published in 2011 and later re-issued as *In praise of Forgetting: Historical Memories and its Ironies*), sets forth the idea that shared memories of common sufferings are not only self-serving but sometimes dangerous. At no time, he argues, has the "never again" phrase served as a protective formula against a recurrence of mass murder. If anything keeping alive memories of atrocities are likely to nurture vengeful retribution rather than contrition. "Auschwitz does not inoculate against East Pakistan, East Pakistan against Cambodia, Cambodia against Rwanda. To believe otherwise is pure sentimental wishful thinking" (p. 90). Nor did the repeated bloodsheds in Burundi from 1972 to 1993 inoculate against Rwanda. What we are dealing with in Rwanda is not a cross-border phenomenon but a reciprocal mass murder where victimhood is shared albeit in uneven quantity. This is where Rieff's cautionary remarks are worth bearing in mind: "Remembrance is not just strengthened by grief but sustained by the sense of victimhood. Over and over again we have been confronted by the reality that nothing is more socially uncontrollable and hence more dangerous politically than a people who believe themselves to be victims" (.102). Where two communities within the same state believe themselves to be victims the stage is set for endless conflict.

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