

# Burundi since the genocide

The Minority Rights Group **Report No.20**



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- To help prevent, through publicity about violations of human rights, such problems from developing into dangerous and destructive conflicts which, when polarised, are very difficult to resolve; and
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# Burundi since the genocide

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*The cover photograph shows Burundian refugees in Ulyankulu, Tanzania (Hanne Christensen, UNRISD, Geneva 1985).*

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# THE UNITED NATIONS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS

*Whereas* recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world.

*Whereas* disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from any fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

*Whereas* it is essential, if a man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

*Whereas* it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

*Whereas* the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

*Whereas* Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in co-operation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

*Whereas* a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore,

## THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims

THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

*Article 1.* All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

*Article 2.* Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status.

*Furthermore*, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

*Article 3.* Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.

*Article 4.* No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

*Article 5.* No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

*Article 6.* Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

*Article 7.* All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

*Article 8.* Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

*Article 9.* No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.

*Article 10.* Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

*Article 11.* (1) Everyone charged with a penal offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defence.

(2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offence on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offence, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offence was committed.

*Article 12.* No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

*Article 13.* (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.

(2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

*Article 14.* (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution.

(2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

*Article 15.* (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

*Article 16.* (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage and at its dissolution.

(2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses.

(3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

*Article 17.* (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others.

(2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

*Article 18.* Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

*Article 19.* Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

*Article 20.* (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association.

(2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

*Article 21.* (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives.

(2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country.

(3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

*Article 22.* Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international co-operation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each State, of the economic, social and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

*Article 23.* (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

(2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work.

(3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

(4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interest.

*Article 24.* Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

*Article 25.* (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.

(2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

*Article 26.* (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit.

(2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

(3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

*Article 27.* (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.

(2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author.

*Article 28.* Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

*Article 29.* (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.

(2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order and the general welfare in a democratic society.

(3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

*Article 30.* Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein.

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## INTRODUCTION

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The understanding of recent and current developments in Burundi is complicated by the scarcity of independent information. This was a problem with the MRG's earlier report of July 1974, 'Selective Genocide in Burundi', by Lemarchand and Martin, and remains so today. The official media is tightly controlled by the government which has systematically closed independent channels of information. Any observer, however, confronted with the evidence of the killing of at least 100,000 people in 1972, has enough reliable information to explain the events in ethnic terms as a slaughter of the Hutu majority, with the particular attention of the murderers in the Party youth and the military directed at the educated. The further development of the same argument – which has the sympathy of the present author but not his support on account of the necessarily weak data – is that the Micombero government started to plan the massacres through carefully calculated provocations and misinformation as soon as it overthrew the monarchy in November 1966.

A new MRG report on developments since 1972 is necessary, despite continuing problems with evidence. The government of the Second Republic, inaugurated in November 1976 when Colonel Bagaza replaced Micombero as president in a bloodless coup, has consolidated the power of the same ethnic minority with a series of measures that are presented by the official media as isolated and unconnected steps. However they point to increased centralization and to growing restrictions on the rights of the individual. The policy of villagization has supposedly economic benefits but also has the effect of regrouping the community in units which can be effectively managed by the authorities. Restrictions on religious worship are intended to maximize agricultural production but they also impinge on liberty of worship and weaken the authority of the Catholic Church, the leading non-governmental organization in Burundi, and the smaller Protestant sects. The government has expanded the network of state schools but at the same time tightened its control over access to the necessarily limited places at the secondary level: the evidence is strengthened by reliable reports from Kirindo in 1986 that the government inspectors make a note of the ethnic origins of students when assessing the merits of those in the final year of primary school. Not surprisingly, these reports have been denied – since the authorities maintain that there are no ethnic distinctions in Burundi and certainly no ethnic discrimination.

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## Part I: THE SELECTIVE GENOCIDE\*<sup>1</sup>

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### The background to the crisis

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Burundi, a small landlocked country in the heart of the African continent and currently among the ten poorest nations of the world, became, along with neighbouring Rwanda, part of German East Africa in 1899.<sup>2</sup> Following the First World War, German rule was replaced by a Belgian mandate over the two territories, administered as a single entity, Ruanda-Urundi. In 1946 the basis of Belgian administration was transformed into a trusteeship on behalf of the United Nations. The colonial power experimented with political reform, introducing advisory councils in 1952 and elections at both local and national level in 1960. Factions, based on largely pre-colonial patterns and each reflecting the interests of *ganwa* groups (families of the nobility with royal antecedents), fought the legislative elections in Burundi in September 1961. UPRONA (*Parti de l'Unité et du Progrès National*) secured a resounding victory over the PDC (*Parti Démocrate Chrétien*). The assassination of Prince Rwagasore, the eldest son of *Mwami* (King) Mwambutsa and UPRONA leader, the following month led to a short period of near absolute monarchy and caused growing suspicions of the Roman Catholic Church which had supported the losing PDC. On 1 July 1962 the former trust territory of Ruanda-Urundi became two separate states, the Republic of Rwanda and the Kingdom of Burundi.

The structure of society in Burundi was unchanged in any significant way during the colonial period. The population consists of three very different ethnic groups. An estimated population of

3.5 million in 1972 was comprised of **Tutsi** (16%, people of Ethiopid stock), **Hutu** (83%, negroid origin) and **Twa** (1%, pygmoid stock).<sup>3</sup> Terms such as 'Ethiopid' and 'negroid' should be used sparingly, and the estimates should be considered as no more than a very rough estimate, not least because of intermarriage which was not uncommon. A more recent calculation is not available since the Second Republic, established after the overthrow of the Micombero government in November 1976, does not admit the existence of ethnic differences. The mass killings of 1972 would have altered the numerical balance by a few points in favour of the Tutsi.

An understanding of society is further complicated by divisions within the various groups. The *mwami* and the *ganwa* were Tutsi. They stood apart from the two principal Tutsi groups, the Banyaruguru ('those who came from the north'), pastoralists who started to immigrate from the early 16th century, and the Hima, also cattle raisers who began to settle in the area from the east in the 17th century and who are generally considered, at least by the Banyaruguru and by Western sociologists, of 'low caste'. Neither Tutsi grouping can be definitively considered as living in a certain area of the country although the Hima are associated with the southern provinces. Readers of works recommended in the bibliography are likely to come across the term Banyabururi ('those from the province of Bururi'). It is a geographical and not an ethnic definition. The current head of state and his predecessor fall into this category and are also Tutsi-Hima. Nor are the Hutu, established in Burundi before the arrival of the Tutsi, a monolithic ethnic group. Although generally farmers and, since the development of the market economy small traders, they, too, are divided by wealth, status and geographical location. In some areas they became cattle owners with a marked tendency to intermarry with the Tutsi, in others the relationship was more likely that of serf to the Tutsi lord.

At the start of the colonial era, Burundi had been governed by a sacred monarchy for about a century. The succession was passed in turn to the four principal *ganwa* groupings, each descended from past rulers. The *mwami* was seen as a figurehead with near-divine powers and a symbol of national unity. His court was staffed by both Hutu and Tutsi officials with religious and secular functions. He delegated authority to *ganwa* chieftains within his kingdom: they, in turn, delegated power to sub-chieftains who tended to be responsible for one hill, then as now the basic social and economic unit in Burundi. Both the German and the Belgian administrations worked with the existing social structure and recognized the *mwami* as the indigenous head of the people. Indeed, there is a case for arguing that the Belgians helped the *mwami* to increase his authority through measures of centralization, which ironically have facilitated the consolidation of power by UPRONA in the past decade.

Probably the most important development in the colonial period in the light of events in the early 1980s was the advent of Christianity. German White Father missionaries first set foot in the country in 1881 but their stay was short-lived. Foreign missionaries, mostly Catholic but some Protestant, arrived in large numbers during the Belgian administration. The result has been a substantial catholicization which is among the highest in Africa. The Catholics came to play the dominant role in health care and education, especially in rural areas. Their contribution in the colonial era is not regarded favourably by the government of the Second Republic.

'We had to wait until the end of the 1950s for the creation of the first state schools in Burundi and then it was a difficult birth. Pupils in these state schools were considered atheists and their parents risked excommunication. The local clergy did not stand apart from political confrontation but openly supported political parties and opposed UPRONA which was fighting for independence. UPRONA militants were branded as communist agents.'<sup>4</sup>

This is a highly exaggerated version of the role of the Catholic Church, one with a partly ethnic explanation which will be more fully developed in Part II.

As has already been suggested, the assassination of Prince Rwagasore enabled *Mwami* Mwambutsa to profit from divisions within UPRONA and increase his political power in the years immediately after independence in July 1962. This was made abundantly clear by his reaction to the overwhelming Hutu victory in the legislative elections of May 1965. He appointed a well-known *ganwa*, Leopold Biha, as prime minister in September 1965, underlining his stated refusal to 'subscribe to a subterfuge of

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\* For footnotes to Part I see page 6

# BURUNDI

40 mls



language that would deprive (him) of all control, of all authority, and of all possibilities to extend (to his people) the benefit of his protection.<sup>5</sup> A mutiny of Hutu military officers in October 1965 was defeated and Mwambutsa fled to Switzerland, never to return. Reprisals by the government involved the execution of more than one hundred prominent Hutu government officials and officers, which resulted in some Hutu fleeing to Rwanda. Apparent continuity was restored by the proclamation of Mwambutsa's second son, Prince Charles, as head of state in July and *Mwami* Ntare in September 1966. The monarchy in Burundi did not survive the year for Ntare was overthrown in a military coup by his prime minister, Captain Micombero, in November.

Although Micombero's first government represented an attempt at satisfying the various ethnic factions, appointing Hutu to five ministries and sharing the balance of eight between Tutsi-Hima and Tutsi-Banyaruguru, politics came soon to warrant the analysis of an increasing trend towards ethnic supremacy. In this development the president was heavily influenced by a small clique of Hima politicians, notably Arthémon Simbabaniye. In July 1968 eight Belgian military officers, acting as technical assistants to the armed forces, were suddenly removed. This made possible a reshuffle of senior military appointments and the introduction of new recruiting policies along thinly-veiled lines of ethnic discrimination. The discovery of a Hutu-planned coup in September 1969 provided the government with the opportunity to undertake a new set of purges. About thirty prominent Hutu, including one minister and two former ministers, were arrested, of whom twenty were summarily executed. Hutu students found it almost impossible to obtain permits to study abroad. In July 1971 it was the turn of the Tutsi-Banyaruguru: three former foreign ministers were found guilty of conspiracy and executed while nine other death sentences were commuted to life imprisonment as a result of international pressure. Ominously, the legal proceedings throughout were given extensive media coverage by the government which had the effect of raising the political tensions in the country only months before the start of massacres on an enormous scale.

#### The events of 1972<sup>6</sup>

President Micombero, apparently trying to reassert his authority over his ministers, dismissed his entire cabinet on 29 April 1972. The same evening, a Hutu rebellion erupted in Bujumbura and the southern districts of Rumonge, Nyanza Lac and Bururi.<sup>7</sup> This was no coincidence since Tutsi-Hima supremacy was particularly marked in these areas. Local Hutu were joined by Hutu exiles in Tanzania and by 'Mulelists' from Zaire.<sup>8</sup> An estimated 10,000 Hutu indulged in the indiscriminate killings of Tutsi in the southern provinces. The rebellion was especially intense in Bururi where the dead included the provincial governor (Micombero's brother-in-law) and forty local administrators. In Bujumbura, attacks on the radio station and the military were easily repulsed. The subsequent despatch of a Zairian contingent of troops to Bujumbura sent in support of the government by President Mobutu Sese Seko meant that the authorities could devote their attention to the provinces. It is thought that the Hutu rebellion cost as many as 2000 lives. According to one school of thought, it is incorrect to refer to a rebellion by the Hutu and is appropriate to stress acts of provocation by a few Tutsi collaborators in the pay of the government.

The reprisals of the government were systematic by contrast and many times more severe. One of the first casualties was ex-*Mwami* Ntare who had been in Uganda on business. Micombero provided a guarantee for his safety in a communication of 28 March to Ugandan President Idi Amin. 'Just like you, I believe in God. . . Your Excellency can be assured that as soon as Mr Charles Ndizeye returns back to my country he will be considered as an ordinary citizen and that as such his life and security will be assured.'<sup>9</sup> This did not put Ntare's mind at rest since he was called to Amin's palace under false pretences and flown to Bujumbura in the presidential aircraft on 30 March against his will. Taken to Gitega and placed under house arrest, he was executed on the night of 29 April although the government claimed initially that he died during a rebel attack on his residence. The government still maintains that Ntare was plotting insurrection. This effectively eliminated the monarchy as a political force since Mwambutsa's two sons were now dead.

On 30 April the government imposed martial law and a dawn-to-dusk curfew. The armed forces and party youth, the JRR (*Jeunesse*

*Révolutionnaire Rwagasore*), appeared to lead government reprisals after the Hutu rebellion. 'The JRR took the lead in what is widely described as arbitrary arrests and killings. These were aggravated by personal acts of revenge, with people being denounced as plotters because of disputes over land or a cow.'<sup>10</sup> The reprisals, as the original rebellion, were most violent in Bururi where the army attacked Hutu without discrimination.

Elsewhere there was a clearly discernible pattern of killings of Hutu with money, education and/or government employment. The best chronicled case is that of Martin Ndayahoze, formerly general secretary of UPRONA and Minister of the Economy.<sup>11</sup> The government exacted its revenge with extreme cruelty. Observers in the country at the time have testified to Hutu students being pulled out of their classes and beaten to death, and to Hutu functionaries being selected arbitrarily from lists and killed without even the pretence of a trial. A Tutsi witness in Bujumbura reported that they 'picked up almost all the Hutu intellectuals above the secondary school level'.<sup>12</sup> The scale of killings at school and universities can reliably be assessed from the registration rolls. At the *Université Officielle* in Bujumbura, almost one third of the students (about 120 people) were killed or disappeared. At the *Athénée* (secondary school) in the capital, the corresponding figure was a minimum of 300 out of 700 pupils enrolled.

The churches also suffered during the reprisals. This was, regrettably, not a surprise, given their unpopularity with the Tutsi-Hima who by this stage had secured their hold over the country. Proportionately the Protestant churches were the worst affected, losing as many as 60% of their pastors in 1972. This is explained by the practice of many Protestant missionaries, most of whom came from North America, the United Kingdom and Denmark, of recommending Hutu candidates to their congregations at election times. By contrast, the Catholic priests tended to suggest tactfully that the faithful support the 'best' candidate. Religious schools received the same attention from JRR militants as secular institutions.

The victims of the reprisals were predominantly although not exclusively Hutu. There is evidence to show that the killings provided an opportunity for the settlement of old intra-Tutsi disputes. An estimated 100 Tutsi were executed at Gitega on 6 May. This is one of the few instances of the killing of Tutsi. It seems reasonable to conclude that the Hima at Gitega were resolving their differences with the Banyaruguru. By the end of June, the height of the reprisals had passed. Conservative estimates point to 80,000-100,000 deaths, including the initial Hutu rebellion. By no means fanciful reports have suggested that the figure was closer to 150,000 casualties or almost 5% of the population. In addition, about 150,000 others, again overwhelmingly Hutu, left Burundi for refuge in Rwanda, Zaire and Tanzania. A number of the refugees have since returned and the current magnitude of the problem, with its implications for domestic politics and regional stability, will be examined in Part II.

What may be literally termed as genocide was largely ignored outside the country. The UN only became involved when its services were required to assist with the enormous refugee problem. The Organization of African Unity (OAU), meeting in Morocco in May, expressed no opinion of the killings: its former administrative general secretary, Diallo Telli, passed through Bujumbura at the time, accepted the official position that the government had responded quite legitimately to the Hutu rebellion and to a supposed call to arms from the ex-*mwami*, and repeated this version of events as the established facts of the case. This has made it that much more difficult for the OAU to respond now to the call for a proper investigation of the killings. Sadly the anglophone world has little interest in the small countries of francophone Africa. The role of France was not surprising to outside observers. The French government provided military assistance during and after the killings. The countries still operate a military training agreement. Belgium did at least terminate its military cooperation pact with Burundi in protest at the killings. The Catholic Church responded with a series of platitudes which denounced legalized injustice and anticipated a violent reaction. Given that the five bishops in Burundi in 1972 (two Tutsi, two Hutu and one European) would most likely have given different emphasis of the events to their superiors, the Church's rather insipid reply was predictable. The apparent indifference of the international community, especially that of Western governments, may be explained by a deeply-rooted and guilt-based fear of censuring the

conduct of nations in the developing world. This is no less the case today. The virtual absence of international protest at the time surely encouraged the government to pursue its discriminatory policies. While the official version is barely plausible to impartial observers, Burundi's bilateral and multilateral relations have not been affected.

The immediate result was that the structure of society altered more dramatically in a few months in 1972 than in the decade of independence and the more than sixty years of colonial rule that had preceded them. The domination of the Tutsi, and particularly by the Hima, was now nearly complete. The conclusion that the few Hutu in prominent positions have served only as window dressing for the outside world has been inescapable. It is an especially unfortunate irony that the rulers of Burundi, while denying the existence of ethnic differences, clearly felt those very divisions had to be exhibited as a public relations exercise. The surviving educated people in Hutu society were almost entirely excluded from influence in the armed forces, civil service, public sector companies and institutions of higher education. With the devastating and genocidal assault on the Hutu community in 1972 from which they have never recovered, it is understandable that the Church's prediction of a violent reaction is yet to be fulfilled.

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## FOOTNOTES TO PART I

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<sup>1</sup> Part I is drawn heavily from Professor Rene Lemarchand's contribution to the MRG's report No 20 of July 1974, *Selective Genocide in Burundi*. To this authoritative account of the events of 1972 the present author has added information and insights made available to him. Part I serves as a starting point for an analysis of more recent developments in Burundi. Part II will examine the political record of the Second Republic, the policy to reduce the influence of the Catholic Church and the condition of the Burundian refugees in neighbouring countries.

<sup>2</sup> The World Bank's *World Development Report (1985)* shows Burundi as the tenth poorest nation in the world with Gross National Product per capita of \$240 in 1983.

<sup>3</sup> The World Bank's *World Bank Atlas (1974)* provides the population figures but not, of course, the ethnic composition.

<sup>4</sup> This is a translation from the text of a public statement issued by the Burundian ambassador in Brussels on 27 August 1985, *Mise au point de l'ambassade de Burundi à Bruxelles au sujet des relations entre l'église et l'état du Burundi*.

<sup>5</sup> Rene Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (London and New York), 1970, page 414.

<sup>6</sup> Official pronouncements under the Second Republic refer only to 'les événements'.

<sup>7</sup> The 8 provinces of the Republic were increased to 15, and the 78 communes to 118 in July 1984. A governor is responsible for the administration of a province.

<sup>8</sup> The term is used to denote followers of Pierre Mulele, the revolutionary leader of the rural uprising in Kwilu in western Zaire in 1963. He was lured back to Kinshasa from exile in 1968 by a promise of an amnesty, accused of high treason and executed. For a partisan and orthodox Marxist evaluation of Mulele, readers should consult C. N'Dom, *P. Mulele assassiné – la révolution Congolaise étranglée* (CEP, Brussels, 1984). In this context, the Zairian contingent supporting the Hutu were incorrectly labelled by the official media in Bujumbura. They were from the Bembe tribe across Lake Tanganyika whereas Mulele was based at the opposite end of Zaire. It has been suggested that the inaccurate description was a deliberate ruse by President Micombero to secure military support from the Zairian government.

<sup>9</sup> *Uganda Argus*, 5 April 1972.

<sup>10</sup> Marvin Howe, 'Slaughter in Burundi – how ethnic conflict erupted', *New York Times*, 11 June 1972.

<sup>11</sup> His case has been publicized by his widow, Rose Ndayahoze Karambizi. A Rwandan Tutsi, she recalls the arrest of prominent Hutu at the time in her *Open letter to the Right Reverend Michael Ntuyahaga, Bishop of Bujumbura* (Montreal, 24 November 1985).

<sup>12</sup> Marvin Howe, op. cit.

## PROVINCIAL BORDERS AS REDRAWN 1984



## Part II: SINCE 1972 – THE CONSOLIDATION OF POWER BY THE MINORITY

### The political record of the Second Republic

After the events of 1972 it was to be expected that the downfall of the Micombero government would be welcomed both inside and outside the country. He was replaced by his cousin, Colonel Jean-Baptiste Bagaza, in a bloodless military coup on 1 November, 1976.\*<sup>1</sup> One of the most favourable reactions to the new government came from the Catholic Church in a pastoral letter from the bishops in December.

‘We would like to pay tribute to the efforts that the Second Republic is making to give the people of Burundi the structure that will enable them to follow the path towards development with dignity for all. We wish the government every success and guarantee our support for its endeavours. The Church has no other calling than to proclaim the vocation of man.’

Initially the grounds for this optimistic response were well founded. Bagaza appeared to attempt a reconciliation among opposing Tutsi groups.<sup>2</sup> He extended an amnesty to all Hutu refugees abroad. Shortly before the first national congress of UPRONA in December 1979, the president announced a limited amnesty for Burundi’s prison population.

The establishment of the Second Republic in 1976 enabled the government to make political capital of a real or supposed new beginning. Bagaza has been able to distance himself personally from the killings since he was out of the country in 1972. Official thinking has tended to lump together the First Republic and the colonial era as one long age of darkness. Further opportunities were presented by a new constitution, adopted by 98.6% of voters in a referendum on 18 November and promulgated on 21 November 1981. This has three aspects which are of particular interest in view of recent developments. It establishes that the Republic is a lay state, a point frequently made by the authorities in defence of its treatment of the Church.<sup>3</sup> Article 16 of the Constitution guarantees freedom of opinion, religion and expression with the proviso that these rights are exercised in ways established by law. This restriction allows the government considerable room for manoeuvre. Article 12 guarantees the right to liberty and security of the person.

The 1981 Constitution confirmed that UPRONA is the only recognized political party. Membership at the time of the second national congress in July 1984 stood at 1.38 million with an annual subscription of FrBu50.<sup>4</sup> Party statutes stipulate that anybody who is 18 years of age can be admitted to membership provided that they have never been found guilty of fraud, speculation or conduct harmful to the national economy, that they can prove their possessions have been legally acquired, and that they are well known for their loyalty to the cause of national independence and their opposition to divisive and bourgeois influences. A measure of democracy has been introduced into the party. The Central Committee, with 33 of its 70 members elected, meets every three months. In the intervening periods, decision-taking by UPRONA is the responsibility of the Political Bureau.

There are, however, justified doubts about the practice of democracy on the thousands of small hills which constitute rural Burundi. These arise because of the dearth of information on the subject and because of the extent of party membership which, according to official figures, amounted to no more than 60-65% of the adult population in 1984. While comparing favourably to other one-party African states, such as Angola and Zambia, these figures, almost certainly overstated, reflect in part the wish of many Burundians to stay out of trouble and their recognition of an obvious means to preferment. Non-Party members do have the right to vote in National Assembly and presidential elections. At the most recent Assembly elections on 22 October 1982, 102 candidates stood for 52 seats. Those elected were joined by 13 deputies nominated by President Bagaza. On 31 August 1984 he was re-elected, unopposed, for a second presidential term.

Workers’, women’s and youth movements are integrated within UPRONA. These groups tend to be the most vocal in their support of the Second Republic and Bagaza, and have an educational role within the party which, along with the language of propaganda, is reminiscent of Eastern Europe. The workers’ movement, the *Union des Travailleurs du Burundi* (UTB), was founded in 1967

and has today perhaps 50,000 members. Its authority is limited by the small base of salaried workers in a country with a predominantly subsistence economy. The women’s movement, the *Union des Femmes Burundaises* (UFB), was also established in 1967. Numerically a very strong organization, it is administered in the same way as the party with a pyramidal structure from a national committee to units on the hills. The youth movement has undergone a change of name from the old JRR, which featured prominently in the killings in 1972, to the *Union de la Jeunesse Révolutionnaire Burundaise* (UJRB). It is represented in all secondary schools and institutions of higher education. It presents itself as the incorruptible, eternally vigilant and militant face of the Second Republic. The three movements make their own separate contributions to national congresses and are guaranteed, along with the armed forces and the provincial administration, representation in the party’s ruling organs.

Burundi is a signatory to some of the international conventions in the field of human rights. In 1977 the government ratified the International Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Racial Discrimination and the following year had no difficulty in signing the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid. It has to date refrained from acceding to the Convention against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, which was adopted by the UN General Assembly in December 1984. Belgium, as the UN trustee for the territory, ratified the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide but this commitment ceased to have any validity after independence and has not since been renewed. Burundi has never signed the UN’s International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and is one of a small minority of African states to have neither signed nor ratified the OAU’s Africa Charter of Human and People’s Rights.

The distribution of power in government, in the legislature and in the provincial administration under the Second Republic, however, is such that the Tutsi-Hima supremacy has evidently been maintained. A precise ethnic categorization is not possible since the government does not acknowledge ethnic distinctions and the mere mention of the country’s glaring divided loyalties could well prompt a charge of incitement to racial hatred. Nonetheless, it appears that the Hutu, who account for roughly 80% of the population, hold only 4 ministries out of 20 in the government, 7 seats out of 65 in the National Assembly and 2 places out of 65 in the Central Committee. Other than the province of Bubanza, they are not represented among the 15 provincial governors.

It can also be concluded from the limited evidence that discrimination in the educational system has become a hallmark of the Second Republic. A steady stream of Hutu secondary school students arrived in neighbouring countries from 1973 to 1980.<sup>5</sup> Limited budgetary resources restrict the access of pupils to secondary education. Of an average of 36,000 who currently complete their primary education every year, about 4000 are admitted to the next level. It is reported that the 7 regional and 15 cantonal inspectors who determine which students pass to the secondary level are currently all Tutsi. Consistently and markedly the Hutu are underrepresented. One explanation is to be found in the reluctance of many Hutu parents, mindful of the pattern of the killings in 1972, to allow their children to submit themselves for the higher level. Other parents optimistically pay the fees for the sixth year at primary school in the hope that their children pass to the secondary stage. Also, the significant number of students from the southern provinces in the secondary schools in the north (and most populated part) of Burundi suggests that Tutsi-Hima parents have an advantage in gaining access to the necessarily limited opportunities. As for higher education, the record of the Second Republic is certainly good in terms of substantially higher allocations from the state budget yet it appears that only one third of the students at the University of Burundi in Bujumbura are Hutu. As a general educational principle, the government has pushed the indigenous language, Kirundi, at the expense of French. The latter has now been almost entirely abandoned in primary schools, which has the disadvantage (for the pupils) of making the population more insular and less informed on events outside the country. Without a knowledge of French, their employment prospects in the modern sector are limited.

The economic policies of the Second Republic are perhaps best characterized by the official enthusiasm for villagization, cooperatives and a dominant role for the state in the economy although the

\* For footnotes to Part II see page 12

government's agreements in August 1986 with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which involve an ordinary standby loan and the first credit under the Fund's new structural adjustment facility, suggest that a change in direction is likely.<sup>6</sup> Villagization, adopted by the first national congress in 1979, means the regrouping of peasants to form new self-sufficient units of production. The government argues that individual farming enterprise in Burundi is no longer appropriate in conditions of substantial demographic growth in an already densely populated country, of soil erosion and of declining yields on overworked agricultural land. It established a special fund which gives priority in lending to those resettling in villages. By the end of 1983, 102 villages, each accommodating between 50 and 200 families, had been created, notably in the south. The development of the programme has since slowed, not least because of the reluctance of some peasants to abandon their traditional habits and of their suspicion that the movement represents another move by the government to regulate their lives.

The government's encouragement of cooperatives has not attracted the same level of unpopularity, ostensibly because it does not require the uprooting of established farming communities. A law of February 1981 defined the general statutes of a cooperative. Soon afterwards the Ministry of Rural Development created a cell to provide appropriate training. By the end of 1984, more than 200 cooperatives had been formed, mostly involved in production or marketing or distribution. The government is anxious to encourage multifunctional cooperatives but is restricted by lack of funding. The system has the advantage of cutting out the middleman since the public agency for the particular commodity buys direct from the cooperative but it could well be argued that the agency takes this factor into account when setting the producer price. The substantial volume of coffee smuggling across the border to Rwanda suggests that the pricing policy is in need of revision.

There is substantial evidence of breaches of Article 12 of the Constitution which guarantees the right to liberty and security of the person. All citizens are required to hold and carry at all times both identity cards and zonal residence papers. In practice the authority of a local district officer is required before anyone can leave their zone of residence. The recently created municipal police are now represented on all hills and are able to enforce these restrictions. Selected usually for their youth, they appear unusually insensitive to the rights of individuals. Public meetings of all descriptions can only take place with the approval of local officials, which sits uncomfortably with the constitutional guarantee of freedom of association. In January 1985 a group of about ten university students from Buhonga in the commune of Ruyaga near the capital were detained for about two months without explanation. As members of the *Cercle culturel de Buhonga*, they had staged plays, obtaining the necessary permit on each occasion, and raised funds for their parish. A favourite ruse of the police is to send a parcel of compromising leaflets from Rwanda or Tanzania to an unsuspecting Burundian who is arrested on presenting himself/herself at the post office to collect. The police authorities follow the movements of exiles abroad even when they have renounced their Burundian citizenship. Beatrice Mirerekano, now a Belgian national and the daughter of a former UPRONA vice-president who was executed in 1965, was held without charges for two and a half months on arriving in Bujumbura in July 1986.

A frequent theme in the questioning of suspects is alleged association with the illegal Burundian Workers' Party (UBU). This group has Marxist policies which makes it unlikely to develop into a mass movement in a predominantly Catholic country where the Church has not embraced 'liberation theology' on the Latin American model. Previously it had a base in Brussels but now issues public statements from a P. O. Box address in North Africa. While some Western diplomats are prone to dismiss UBU as consisting of little more than 'two men and a typewriter', it does seem that the government is overreacting to the threat. Those detained by the government are likely to find themselves housed in disagreeable prison conditions. At Mpimba, the central prison in Bujumbura, political prisoners are frequently obliged to share cells with ordinary criminals but may be unfortunate enough to be held in the special punishment block. The prison itself is built to house 2000 prisoners but is regularly overpopulated. The punishment block has 38 cells, each measuring 2.5 metres square, without a window and with a hole in the ground as a lavatory. The prisons at Rumonge and Muramvya also have cells without natural or electric

light. At the end of November 1985 the government introduced a temporary ban on all prison visits, citing no reason for this clear breach of its own Penal Code.

In view of the muted international reaction to the killings of 1972, it is hardly surprising that the ethnic discrimination and restrictions on basic liberties in all walks of life in Burundi under the small minority in power have attracted little attention. (The series of measures taken against the Church has recently awakened at least one institution and prompted protests, as will become apparent in the next section.) A report, financed by the Carnegie Endowment as a result of the events of 1972, suggested that the Washington government was well placed to apply pressure on Burundi since US companies at that stage purchased 80% of the country's coffee exports.<sup>7</sup> In 1985 West Germany and Finland together accounted for the lion's share of the exports. Yet these countries have limited leverage since Burundi produces a high quality arabica, for which there is worldwide demand, and, short of the introduction of economic sanctions, the importers in the West are private companies that are independent of their governments,

Economic cooperation offers better opportunities for a foreign government to exert pressure on Burundi. In each of the three years to 1984, France was the principal source of development assistance.<sup>8</sup> However, little can be expected from the French government whose African policy under the present Gaullist-led administration, as with its Socialist predecessor, is geared to the extension of its political, economic and military influence in francophone Africa. This policy, which is pursued with particular zest in territories that were formerly Belgian colonies, is clearly seen in the annual conferences that bring together France and the heads of state from francophone Africa.<sup>9</sup> Belgium is an important source of development assistance but takes care to distance itself from too close political cooperation with the Bagaza government and concentrates on projects in agriculture and rural development. There is the possibility that Belgium might make some use of its cooperation as a means of applying pressure if the regular changes in its invariably coalition governments produce a result especially favourable to the Flemish-speaking Catholic party. Burundi has a small Moslem population, representing less than 5% of the total and concentrated in Bujumbura and on Lake Tanganyika, and enjoys good relations with the Arab world. The Gulf states provide support for a number of development projects but are not generally associated with a passionate belief in human rights. So the prospects of donor and lending nations influencing the policies of the Bagaza government are poor.

### **A policy of weakening the Catholic Church**

Under the Second Republic official criticism of the Church has often centred around its colonial beginnings. The failure of the Church to support the victorious UPRONA party at the 1961 elections is sometimes cited by the government which has little difficulty in explaining the catholicization of Burundi.

'We know well that the Belgian administration abandoned important sectors, particularly in the social, economic and cultural fields, to the missionaries in its colony of 'Ruanda-Urundi'. To obtain the essentials of life, whether it was entry to schools, which were then all kept by the missionaries, health care or admission to hospital, it was necessary to be baptised. We can understand how in these circumstances it is that today 70% of the population are Catholic.'<sup>10</sup>

It would be more accurate to say that, in the absence of sufficient action from the Belgian administration, the missionaries helped to develop these sectors. Their work in the education and health sectors in rural areas inevitably brings the greatest benefit to the Hutu and, with it, the suspicion of the minority government. In fact independent sources put the Catholic population at 60-65% of the total and the Protestant community at 5-10%. (As already noted, there is a small Moslem population.) Europeans have traditionally constituted the majority of the priesthood. At the end of 1984, a survey showed 326 active priests, of whom 173 were foreign, in the 7 dioceses. By a policy of non-renewal of visas and expulsions, the government is clearly aiming to prevent the Church from carrying out all its duties.

The pastoral letter of support for the Second Republic from the Catholic bishops in December 1976 was not to be reciprocated by the government. In 1977 Mgr. Martin, who had worked 50 years in Burundi, 25 years as the Bishop of Bururi, was refused a visa to return to the country. The government terminated religious

programmes and the transmission of mass on the radio. The media was a practical starting point for the policy of weakening the power of the Church since the government could gradually reduce information on religious matters towards its ideal point where nothing other than criticism was heard on the subject. At this time, radio commentators started to refer to Sunday as 'le septième jour' (the seventh day) rather than 'le jour du Seigneur' (the day of the Lord). In 1978 the bishops lost their diplomatic passports. Responsibility for primary education was withdrawn from the Church although it was still expected to provide for the upkeep of the school buildings.

By regulations of 9 May 1979 Christians were no longer allowed to hold prayer meetings on their hills of residence but had to assemble in their parish buildings. This was a significant attack on the *sahwanyas*, informal hill-based groups that would meet to discuss matters of local interest, usually under the leadership of the head of the family with the most land: these had existed long before the colonial era but came, with the emergence of Christianity, to incorporate religious subjects. Since a parish covers a number of hills, the new regulations meant that many Christians now had to walk for several hours to reach their prayer meetings. A letter of protest from the bishops to President Bagaza and the circulation of hostile leaflets, which alleged that killings on the pattern of 1972 had restarted, and which were distributed at the Franco-African heads of state summit in Kigali, Rwanda, on 22 May, only led to further measures. The Catholic newspaper, *Ndongezi*, was closed and the transmitter of the Protestant Radio Cordac was confiscated. More than 80 missionaries were told to leave the country in the course of the year. This was the first instance of the government's extreme sensitivity to criticism of its policy on the Church.

A presidential decree of 1980 withdrew the honorary title of the Papal Nuncio in Bujumbura as head of the diplomatic corps. This symbolic gesture was followed by the decision not to replace chaplains to the armed forces on their retirement. The next three years saw a further reduction in the number of missionaries, especially in the diocese of Bururi. The government maintains that decisions on visa renewals for all foreign nationals resident in Burundi are taken on an individual basis by the appropriate department. It considers the presence of missionaries acceptable provided that 'their activities are of use to the country and they respect the law and regulations of the country'.<sup>11</sup> During a visit to West Germany in 1983, President Bagaza said in an interview with *Evangelische Kommentare* that 'we have reduced the influence of the Catholic Church and we shall reduce it further, although the measures we have taken are misunderstood, particularly in Europe'.

Regulations announced by the Ministry of the Interior in February and March 1984 amounted to a draconian set of measures which placed substantial obstacles in the path of Christians. The government was clearly not satisfied with their enforcement since Lieutenant Colonel Charles Kazatsa, Minister of the Interior, felt the need to issue the following circular to the provincial governors on 12 February 1985.

'I have the honour of bringing to your attention the fact that I have repeatedly discovered that the directives laid out in my letters nos 530/155 and 530/177 dated respectively February 24 and March 7, 1984 have not been coherently and satisfactorily applied. That is why, as a reminder, I am repeating them so that in future this measure will be effectively carried out. No public meeting for whatever purpose may take place without previous permission from the appropriate authority which, in turn, must inform its superiors. All religious activities must be confined to Saturday afternoons and Sundays, i.e., activities such as masses, Lenten retreats, religious meetings which bring people together, masses at mission posts, prayer meetings, meetings of youth movements and other religious organizations with activities of a spiritual or social nature. Masses for the celebration of marriage are always to be organized according to a timetable decided by common agreement between the priest and the Communal Administrator.

Funeral masses may continue to be held provided that they are celebrated at the time of death. Funeral prayers may likewise be continued, so long as they accompany a funeral. Masses which are celebrated at a residence on the occasion of 'lifting of mourning' or similar circumstances are forbidden. Home visits to the sick are forbidden unless the patient requests the presence of a priest for the administration of the sacraments of extreme unction and confession. Any church which wishes to introduce a new service whose practice will distract the faithful from their usual occupations must announce it to the Minister of the Interior, at least one month in advance. Any church which wishes to set up in a public place a symbol, sign, object or statue as witness to an act of salvation or consecration, must request authorization from the Governor of the province. The upkeep of the churches remains a voluntary act of the faithful, provided that the work is

carried out on Saturday afternoons. The cemetery continues to be for everyone without distinction of race or religion, and its upkeep continues to be exclusively the responsibility of the parish. Burials at home are forbidden without authorization from the Minister of the Interior.

You are asked from now on to ensure that this letter be distributed as widely as possible and that its provisions are carried out.'<sup>12</sup>

The official explanation for these measures is that regulations covering the hours of work (and therefore of prayer) for the population are essential if a poor country, such as Burundi, is to maximize its production. It has become necessary, the argument continues, to stop the popular morning mass on weekdays since Christians, by virtue of the distance between their homes and their local churches, would not return before midday when work in the field becomes less productive on account of the heat. (This argument overlooks the fact that two obvious solutions, the holding of services on the hills and the building of more chapels and churches, are not permitted.) The government adds, with a keen ear for the international reaction, that 'foreign aid which is allocated to rural development (would) not be well utilized'.<sup>13</sup>

As was the case with the measures of May 1979, criticism of the government policy only served to prompt further restrictions. Mgr. Joachim Ruhuna, Archbishop of Gitega and the country's senior Catholic clergyman who spent several months in 1985 under virtual house arrest, questioned the measures in May in a pastoral letter. 'They say that mass and other prayers distract people from their work. The lazy do not go to mass and do not pray. Those going to mass demonstrate that its celebration fortifies their hearts and gives them great strength to work.' In July an anonymous letter to Mgr. Michel Ntuyahaga, Bishop of Bujumbura since 1959, and a Tutsi, likened the government to 'Satan', called on the bishop to ignore the restrictions on the celebration of mass and cited biblical anecdotes of believers who preferred to die than alter their religious practices. The bishop's reply of 2 August to the priests in his diocese stated that the holding of mass on weekday mornings has no theological basis and advised against provoking the government in defence of a 'secondary liberty'. The response of the government to the anonymous letter was to charge a priest and six laymen with insulting the head of state. Father Gabriel Barakana, formerly the rector of the University of Burundi, was sentenced to four years' imprisonment and four others to sentences ranging from two to five years in December 1985. He was suddenly released on 27 March 1987 in unexplained circumstances which suggest in part a response to external pressure. Also in 1985 the authorities passed responsibility for some secondary schools from the Church to the Ministry of National Education. From some areas it was reported that peasant farmers were obliged to sell their coffee on Sundays.

In April 1986 the remainder of the secondary schools were brought under the control of the Ministry. Then there came the announcement on 13 September that six middle-level Catholic seminaries were to come under the immediate control of the government. This decision, revealed just one day before the start of the new term at the seminaries, was explained in terms of the official policy that all educational institutions should be managed and controlled by UPRONA members. The seven bishops obviously saw the measure in a very different light and prepared a pastoral letter, read to all congregations on 28 September, which termed the move as an act of 'unjust and unacceptable expropriation'. Predictably this challenge did not go unnoticed by the government. André Kameya, a priest from the parish of Munanira in the diocese of Muramvya and reportedly the only priest at the time with a UPRONA membership card, was detained without charge or trial at the beginning of October. He had dutifully read the pastoral letter on 28 September, mentioned some of the other restrictions imposed by the government and asked his congregation to remain loyal to their faith. Kazatsa, the Minister of the Interior, then announced the abolition of catechism schools on 4 October. These, known as the *Yaga Mukama*, were established by the Church to provide very basic formal education, besides religious teaching, for children in isolated areas (mostly without state schools). The next step in what in reality is a programme to reduce the status and influence of the Church, may well be increased rates of taxation on church property and new regulations to threaten the livelihood of the priesthood, perhaps by reducing parishioners' contributions.

A reasoned analysis of the measures against the Church is inevitably fraught with difficulties. The greatest is the limited information. Sometimes reports will carry the occasional factual

error. This allows the government to highlight the mistake and suggest that the entire report is unfounded.<sup>14</sup> Another difficulty lies in the application of the measures in some areas and at some times, and not others. For example a foreign resident at the Hotel Meridien in Bujumbura, hearing the ringing of church bells and observing the celebration of mass on weekdays, could be forgiven for concluding that reports of restrictions are grossly exaggerated. If the same person moved to the diocese of Bururi, he would likely confirm them, and to the northern dioceses, he might well have mixed reactions about them. A third problem is caused by the substantial use of information from one source, namely the missionaries. Nonetheless, it is difficult to accept the official statement that the laws of Burundi are equally applied to all foreign residents, whether involved with the churches or not. In the period from May 1979 to October 1985, about 280 missionaries were obliged to leave the country. Other foreign nationals are not known to have encountered comparable difficulties with visa renewals.

The observer is confronted with government reactions that verge almost on paranoia on occasion. This prompted a diplomatic incident which cut short President Bagaza's visit to Luxembourg in February 1986. He refused to attend an official dinner given in his honour because his host, Robert Goebbels, the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, apparently briefed by a visiting delegation from Amnesty International and other groups, had argued in an open letter that a proposed aid project should be seen to benefit the people and not the government of Burundi. Radio Bujumbura detected the hand of 'revanchist Belgian missionaries'. Another organization currently unpopular with the government is the Brussels-based Committee for the Defence of Human Rights in Burundi, which is in the process of accumulating evidence for a comprehensive review of the killings of 1972.<sup>15</sup>

The media in Bujumbura are in a position to deliver a similar verdict on the work of the Committee whose international membership, chaired by Professor Jean Ziegler of Geneva University, includes a prominent Belgian clergyman. The government is prepared to go to considerable lengths to criticize the former colonial power: one issue of the Bujumbura daily, *Le Renouveau*, in August 1986 launched a vitriolic attack on the flimsy grounds that, according to a European Commission poll, the Belgians are the second most likely people in Europe to spend their holidays at home.

It would probably be wrong to deduce from the programme of measures and from the paranoia that the government is seeking to eradicate the churches. It seems that the authorities are prepared to tolerate the Christian communities if they follow minutely-defined schedules and codes of conduct as laid down by the government. Of course, should the churches allow themselves to be moulded to the design of the government, the point would eventually be reached where they could no longer be considered Catholic or Protestant in anything other than name. Current indications are that the government still feels that the Church is too preoccupied with social and political (a code name for pastoral) affairs. Pierre-Claver Niyurugira, a clergyman in the diocese of Ngozi, was arrested in June 1984 and detained for seven weeks because he sought to arrange financial assistance for the wife of a common law prisoner. In 1985 five missionaries at Gisuru were ordered to leave the country. They had participated in a project that had built five hundred stone houses. It seems that the housing, financed by a Belgian parish that is twinned with Gisuru, compared too favourably with the accommodation of most rural families. Yet in July of the same year, an Italian priest was decorated by the government for his work on agricultural and livestock projects. The only obvious difference between the two projects is that the second was executed in partnership with the government while the first was not.

The government has evidently been more successful in reshaping the Church to its chosen design with the hierarchy of the Church than with the ordinary parishioners. Five of the seven bishops are Tutsi-Hima: the exceptions are the métis Bishop of Ngozi, Mgr. Stanislas Kaburungu, and the *ganwa* Bishop of Muyinga, Mgr. Roger Mpungu. This could provide one reason why virtually no missionaries have had to leave Muyinga while none remain in Bururi whose Bishop, Mgr. Bernard Bududira, is understood to have protested to President Bagaza about the expulsions. Although it would be a mistake to see ethnic groups as having an identical position on all issues, it was surprising that the bishops waited nine years before reacting angrily to the attacks on the Church and

protesting about the nationalization of the seminaries in September 1986. The government has apparently found understanding with the leaders of other denominations, which given their small and divided followings constitute a much lesser threat to the government than the Catholic Church. Rose Ndayahoze, widow of the Hutu minister murdered in 1972 and now living in Canada, is seeking financial reparations on behalf of her late husband and tens of thousands of other victims but was advised by the Anglican Archbishop of Burundi, Rwanda and Mboga-Zaire, Justin Ndandali, not to press her case in public.<sup>16</sup> It could be argued that the senior clergymen are showing common sense in the belief that they can slow the pace of the programme by maintaining calm. This approach is unlikely to satisfy the overwhelmingly Hutu believers on the hills since the programme has, if anything, accelerated in the 1980s. New restrictions are steadily introduced, whether the bishops protest or not.

Undoubtedly one factor that influences the policy of the Tutsi-Hima minority government in Burundi is the knowledge that the Hutu majority have ruled Rwanda since independence. Moreover the network of *sahwanyas* throughout the country was of crucial importance in the Hutu victory in bloody fighting in 1959 and after the elections of 1961. An estimated 150,000 Rwandan Tutsi fled their country, some arriving in Burundi. The Church remains powerful in Rwanda. The senior clergyman, the Archbishop of Kigali, Mgr. Vincent Nsengiyumva, was for many years a member of the Central Committee of the ruling party. The Church owns two printing presses and manages a large farming cooperative in each diocese. It runs about a third of the primary schools and more than half of the secondary establishments. A fanciful argument would be that the government in Burundi has weakened the Church in precisely those areas where it is visibly well established in Rwanda. The Bagaza government has certainly noted the relationship between the Hutu majority, the Church and power in its neighbour. That is a combination that can only provoke unease in Bujumbura.

### The condition of the Burundian refugees

The events of 1972 led to a substantial emigration, predominantly of Hutu, from Burundi. There had been an earlier movement of refugees after the Hutu-led attempted coup of October 1965 but the mass killings of 1972 increased the Burundian population in neighbouring Rwanda, Zaire and Tanzania perhaps fivefold to an estimated 150,000. General amnesties for Hutu abroad from Presidents Micombero and Bagaza in 1974 and 1976 respectively may have persuaded 10,000 to 20,000 Burundians to return home.

Rwanda absorbed relatively few refugees in 1972. About 6000 had arrived by mid-1973 but about half of these left, mostly for Tanzania, within three years because of the virtual absence of uncultivated land in this densely populated country. In Zaire perhaps 35,000 Burundian people had crossed the common frontier by the summer of 1973. Numbers are thought to have fallen to about 11,000 by 1980 although this would exclude those who had moved well away from the refugee areas. The farmers tended to settle on the Ruzizi plain while the educated and semi-educated, such as teachers, students and government officials, sought work with some success in the towns of Uvira and Bukavu. Relief services were patchy and irregular. Characteristically, relief for one year would be followed by three years of only marginal assistance. The Zairian government did not consider the possibility of issuing residence permits to the refugees until 1976.

It appears that President Bagaza's amnesty of 1976 met with a better response in Zaire than in Rwanda or Tanzania. Nonetheless, the remaining population and the Zairian community in Burundi have proved a source of regional instability in the past three years with at times poor relations between the two governments. In May 1985 the Libyan leader, Colonel Qadhafi, when on an official visit to Bujumbura, urged Zairians to overthrow President Mobutu and offered the alluring prospect of Islamic martyrdom for the successful assassin. The following month a short-lived rebel attack on the Zairian garrison town of Moba on Lake Tanganyika was, according to the Kinshasa government, supported by dissidents based in Burundi and Tanzania. In September 1986 400 Zairians arrived in Bukavu after being expelled from Burundi as illegal immigrants without recognized employment. The two governments then imposed a series of diplomatic restrictions on each other. These were withdrawn after one month but serve to illustrate the possibility of recurring tension along this border.

The overwhelming majority of refugees in 1972 made their way to Tanzania. This was to be expected, given that the repression had been at its most intense in the southern province of Bururi. There was already a sizeable Burundian population in Tanzania where the large Ha ethnic group speak a language with distinct similarities to Kirundi. The country is sparsely populated in comparison with Burundi and had already become the adopted home of refugees from several African countries. By the end of 1973 as many as 40,000 Burundians had crossed the border and, twelve months later, the numbers had more than doubled. The Tanzanian government designated Ulyankulu, an area of forest and swamp in Tabora region, for a refugee settlement in August 1972. Within five years the area was transformed and housed an estimated 60,000 refugees. Other settlements were established at Katumba and Mishoma in Kigoma region.

The settlements quickly established their own civic structures. At Ulyankulu the Settlement Assembly, meeting annually and involving all adults in the community, elects the village councils which are responsible for local administration. The settlements were subject to the ultimate control of national and international agencies until 1980 when sole authority passed to the Tanzanian government. A letter of 19 March 1986 to the UNHCR representative in Dar-es-Salaam, signed 'on behalf of all the Hutu refugees from Burundi', points to dissatisfaction with the Tanzanian administrators at the Katumba and Mishoma camps. The authors claimed that the levy of development tax, contributions to transport services and the community centre, and other charges required annual payments per family of 1500 Tanzanian shillings when the average annual income of a peasant household in the settlements in 1985 was only 750 shillings. They also raised the issue of apparent Tanzanian interference in the election for one of the village chairmen at Mishoma in early 1986. It seems that the Settlement Commandant sought to have his own candidate elected and had soldiers called from the nearby town of Mpanda when the villagers would not abandon their own choice for the post. The most vociferous of the refugees were detained for several days at local police stations.

Dissatisfaction with Tanzanian administration of the settlements does not mean that the refugees are planning to return to Burundi. A poll of 125 households by Christensen in 1980 revealed that 100 sought repatriation as their first priority.<sup>17</sup> A further 15, clearly pessimistic about the prospects of a change of environment in Burundi, chose to remain at Ulyankulu while a further 7, identified by Christensen as among the wealthier households in the settlement, wanted to integrate into Tanzanian society and 3 were unsure of their intentions. Of the 100 who favoured repatriation as their first preference, as many as 93 indicated that they wanted to stay at Ulyankulu as their second. Given that the refugees have now been together for more than a decade in Ulyankulu, it is likely that their Burundian identity has been further strengthened since the poll and that the vast majority would choose to stay put if they feel unable to return to Burundi.

A radio connection links the settlements with each other and with Dar-es-Salaam, which allows the refugees to keep themselves reasonably informed on political developments in Burundi although they are forbidden from participating in Tanzanian politics. They are unlikely to have heard much lately to encourage the belief that they can soon return and re-start their lives after an interruption of fifteen years. The Burundian population in Tanzania is not expected to fall substantially in the medium term. The appointment of the new Tanzanian President, Ali Hassan Mwinyi, has not affected the good relations between the two governments, so there is no reason to suppose that the Burundian settlements, established well away from the common frontier and under the watchful eye of their host government, will become a source of regional instability.

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## CONCLUSION

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The Bagaza government is fond of arguing that the Second Republic and the new constitution mark a new era which distinguish it from the Micombero government and the colonial period. In some respects, their argument carries weight. The opportunities for higher education at the University of Burundi have multiplied, the network for the supply of electricity has been substantially increased and there has been a major road building

programme. Yet much has happened that points to continuity with the previous regime. UPRONA, the ruling (and only) political party, although democratic in some respects, operates dubious membership rules. The womens', union and youth movements see themselves as eternally vigilant defenders of the Second Republic but in reality are guardians of the Tutsi-Hima minority supremacy that has marked Burundian politics since November 1966. The Bagaza government has consolidated its power, introducing its supporters at the highest levels of the executive, the legislature and the armed forces. Convincing evidence points to widespread educational discrimination which is designed to extend the power of the minority government far into the future. At the same time, the systematic reduction in the authority of the Church has the effect of weakening an alternative voice. Catholic newspapers and radio programmes have been suppressed while the religious role in education has been ended. The government is placing increasing obstacles in the way of religious worship and prayer. The most recent case announced by Interior Minister Charles Kazatsa on 22 April 1987 was the abolition of the Catholic Parish Councils. Its argument that its measures are not discriminatory is valid only in the literal sense that all Burundians must carry identity cards at all times, and obtain permission to leave their zones of residence and hold public meetings. Of course, regulations can be enforced with varying degrees of severity.

Prospects of a change in government, or at least of policies, are currently slight. The Hutu majority have been intimidated by the killings of 1972. The apparent reluctance of some Hutu parents to send their children to secondary schools, assuming places were available, is explained by their recollection that the educated were the first targets of the party youth and the army in 1972. A Tutsi-Banyaruguru faction who might provide alternative policies cannot categorically be identified while UBU, although an evident source of worry to the government, has the thankless task of advancing Marxist arguments to a predominantly Catholic population who lack any tradition of 'liberation theology'. The policy towards the Church seems certain to be extended, whether the Church hierarchy adopts a critical or an accommodating position. The official line that the Church should not involve itself in social or political matters (as defined by the government) leaves adequate room for further restrictive measures. Ideally the government would prefer that the Church was not established in Burundi but it has decided to reshape it to its own design. This was confirmed when President Bagaza addressed the fifth ordinary session of UPRONA on the subject on 23 December 1986. He said that eleven religious groups were authorized to operate in Burundi and warned that they must always uphold the laws of the country or, like the Jehovah's Witnesses and the Seventh Day Adventists, they would be banned.<sup>18</sup>

To date, the government has not been influenced by external pressure. The UN and the OAU have not so far even acknowledged the truth about the mass killings of 1972. It is most unlikely, in the light of their track record, that they will now react to subtle restrictions on basic freedoms, educational and career discrimination, and interference with religious worship. Burundi's principal external partners, France and Belgium, have not publicly censured the government, although the latter has withdrawn from links that identify it too closely with the Bagaza regime. The IMF will push for – and is likely to secure – changes to a more liberal economic policy but has no plans and no mandate to seek political change. The policies of Micombero and Bagaza have not prompted differences between the superpowers that would have focussed attention on Burundi. This is particularly unfortunate since the economy is dependent on external support for the balance of payments and the development programmes. Although it is barely possible that the argument of Adolfo Perez Esquivel (a member of the Burundi Committee and the Argentine winner of the Nobel Peace Prize), that documented cases of genocide should be met with international economic sanctions, will be accepted by the leading governments of the world, one sign of possible measures against the Bagaza regime has recently emerged from the state parliament of Baden-Württemberg in West Germany. In January 1987 the leader of the Christian Democratic majority in the parliament demanded that its president cancel its aid programme to Burundi if he did not receive guarantees that the 'persecution of Christians' would end. While one criticism of its policy may lead the government to react only with a hysterical statement and an acceleration of its criticized policy, there is a far stronger likelihood that coordinated criticism from its external partners would prompt it to think again.

## FOOTNOTES TO PART II

- <sup>1</sup> The two men were apparently watching a football match in Bujumbura when Bagaza informed Micombero that the large contingent of armed troops outside the stadium had transferred their loyalty to him and that he was therefore the new head of state. Micombero left the country for exile soon afterwards.
- <sup>2</sup> See W. Weinstein, *The Burundi Coup in Africa Report*, Vol XXII, No 1, (African-American Institute, Washington, D.C., 1977).
- <sup>3</sup> 'Mise au point de l'ambassade du Burundi à Bruxelles', op.cit. In fact the number of theocratic states in the world can be counted on two hands. The creation of a lay state does not absolve the government of its duties in the way of the liberty of worship.
- <sup>4</sup> In July 1986 the national currency, the Burundi franc (BuFr), was devalued by 15% in relation to the Special Drawing Right (SDR) with which it has been linked since November 1983. The average exchange rate in the third quarter of 1986 was \$1=BuFr117.9.
- <sup>5</sup> This was the conclusion of interviews with educated Burundians in Tanzania, undertaken by Hanne Christensen, author of *Refugees and Pioneers: History and field study of a Burundian Settlement in Tanzania* (United Nations Research Institute for Social Development, Geneva, 1985).
- <sup>6</sup> If implemented, the government's agreement with the Fund on a structural adjustment programme points to privatization of some state industries and agencies, liberalization of interest rates, trade regulations and producer prices, the reduction in the level of subsidies and public spending targets.
- <sup>7</sup> 'Passing by: the United States and Genocide in Burundi in 1972', a special report by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

	Gross Official Development Assistance (\$millions)		
	1982	1983	1984
Bilateral	81.2	77.4	69.5
of which, France	25.8	21.1	17.7
Belgium	20.6	16.2	15.6
W. Germany	14.3	19.8	14.2
Multilateral	45.8	65.6	71.0
of which, IDA	18.3	28.5	26.5
EC	7.2	12.5	10.0
UNDP	7.7	7.8	6.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>127.1</b>	<b>142.9</b>	<b>140.5</b>
of which, grants	79.5	89.8	87.5

Source: OECD Development Assistance Committee

- <sup>8</sup> It was Burundi's turn to host this conference in Bujumbura in December 1984. The summit is best remembered for the Carrefour scandal that involved the misuse of French government funds. When the new French cooperation minister, Michel Aurillac, took office after the general elections of March 1986, he unearthed irregularities in the use of Fr50 million allocated for the summit to *Carrefour de Développement*, a non-governmental organization. The then head of the French military mission in Bujumbura was brought to trial on corruption charges, involving false invoicing on a massive scale by a French transport company. The *chef de cabinet* of the former cooperation minister established himself for a while in the safe haven of Paraguay and gave a number of interviews to the French press. One of the stories in circulation is that an armoured Renault vehicle, valued at Fr1 million, was offered as a gift to President Bagaza. The Bujumbura daily, *Le Renouveau*, ridiculed the Renault story, denied any involvement in the scandal and pointed out with some justification that the French government is in the practice of financing these summits.
- <sup>9</sup> 'Burundi, une nouvelle page de l'histoire d'un peuple', *Afrique-Asie*, No.208, 3-16 March, 1980. Although apparently an independent publication, the authors of this special report largely confine themselves to quoting almost verbatim from official bulletins and congress resolutions. Thus the verdict on the origins of the Church can safely be taken as government thinking.
- <sup>10</sup> 'Mise au point de l'ambassade du Burundi à Bruxelles', op.cit.

- <sup>11</sup> The translation of the minister's letter to the provincial governors was published in 'Burundi: the will to silence', an article in *Index on Censorship*, April 1985. The author of the article, Ephraim Radner, an Anglican missionary in Burundi, was expelled from the country in January 1985, apparently because the authorities did not appreciate an article he had written on the same subject the previous November for *Christian Century*, an American Protestant publication.
- <sup>12</sup> 'Mise au point de l'ambassade du Burundi à Bruxelles', op.cit. The document adds in this connection that 'contrary to what the Bible teaches, the miracles of the multiplication of bread are rare'.
- <sup>13</sup> A good example was provided by the Amnesty International report on those detained and subsequently convicted after the affair of the anonymous letter to the Bishop of Bujumbura in July 1985. It said that Cyprien Ndamukenanye, one of the accused, had died in prison. Subsequently it found its information to be incorrect and publicly admitted as such yet the government still sought to dismiss the entire report on the grounds of the unfortunate error.
- <sup>14</sup> The Committee publishes a quarterly bulletin, *Icabona-Le Témoin*, available from B.P. 1716, 1000 Bruxelles 1, Belgium.
- <sup>15</sup> 'Charging genocide, Burundi family seeks reparation', *The Gazette*, Montreal, 19 April 1986.
- <sup>16</sup> *Refugees and Pioneers: History and Field Study of a Burundian Settlement in Tanzania*, op.cit.
- <sup>17</sup> For information on the treatment of Jehovah's Witnesses elsewhere in Africa, including Malawi, see MRG Report no 29, *Jehovah's Witnesses in Africa* (1985 edition).

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