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In 1966 he went to Burundi under the auspices of Voluntary Service Overseas to teach at the Ecole Secondaire de Matana, a former mission school. He became temporary headmaster and subsequently teacher of languages. After a three year period in Britain during which he taught English language to foreign students at the Centre of Economic and Political Studies, he returned to Burundi to take up the appointment of Director of Studies at Ecole Normale de Kilamba. He taught French and helped to run the teacher-training department. He also visited schools and colleges in neighbouring African countries.

Jeremy Greenland has contributed many articles to leading journals including New Blackfriars, Comparative Education, African Affairs and Revue Française d'Etudes Politiques Africaines.
The killing of tens of thousands of Tutsi in Rwanda between 1959 and 1964 and of more than one hundred thousand Hutu in Burundi in 1972— not to mention the vast number of refugees to have fled both countries, well over 300,000 in total, — are events of such appalling magnitude that the 'blood' of the victims literally 'calls from the ground' for inclusion in any world-wide survey of discriminatory practices. Regrettably it is important to give representative and fully authenticated examples of the atrocities, partly because they have received such little attention in the forum of world politics, but also because some in authority, particularly in Burundi, have attempted to give a completely false picture of the situation. Those interested primarily in the gruesome details of the violence and the practical forms which discrimination has taken since then will find them in Sections V, VI and VII. However, there is the danger that such 'reportage', read on its own, merely serves to reinforce an already stereotyped view of what western mass media like to refer to as 'tribesmen' and their one main problem which is said to be 'tribalism.' The attempt must therefore be made to put these events in a perspective which takes account both of ethnographic information and the historical evidence of the colonial experience.

I wish to thank Professor René Lemarchand for permission to consult his valuable collection of documents. I have also drawn extensively on his Rwanda and Burundi (Pall Mall Press, 1970), the standard work on the political development of the two countries, but he is in no way responsible for the use I have made of his facts.
I. Contested Definitions of ‘Discrimination’ and ‘Ethnic’

First, however, both elements of the deceptively simple title, ‘ethnic’ and ‘discrimination’ require comment. ‘Discrimination’ in the basic sense of ‘being able to make distinctions’ is considered a desirable human quality. Less desirable is “the act . . . of discriminating categorically rather than individually,” the fourth definition in Webster’s Third New International Dictionary. Western assumptions that the value of the individual surpasses that of the group or category suffuse the original United Nations Declaration of Human Rights and the subsequent International Conventions adopted in 1966. Paradoxically it is the countries of the Third World – whose own cultures in general approve discrimination on a group rather than individual basis – who have succeeded at the United Nations, in making human rights a world-wide political issue, to the point where the violation of such rights has even become ‘justiciable’ and not merely a topic for debate. This is because the Human Rights Declarations were invoked primarily as a stick with which to belabour the white supremacist régimes of southern Africa, and although ‘self-determination’ is claimed for all peoples under colonial rule, as Rupert Emerson points out, it is far from clear who defines the ‘self.’

The original concern for civil and political rights has been supplemented by a concern for what are termed economic, social and cultural rights, and this conjunction leads to a further paradox: whereas the protection of the individual’s civil and political rights usually has the effect of restraining the powers of a central government, the implementation of economic, social and cultural rights demands that governments be released from their restrictive commitment to individuals to take the often drastic action which is needed. What appears to have happened in most Third World countries is that the elites who claimed and won independence now define themselves as the ‘self’ entitled to decide what form ‘self-government’ should take; they argue in addition that it is the more tangible economic, social and cultural needs of their peoples which demand priority treatment. In the familiar scenario which results, the violation of civil and political rights is almost universally attested but is removed from international agendas as being ‘an internal matter.’ Hence the sharp and lonely contrast which Nyerere has consistently provided, for example in 1973 when he urged the OAU not to let the principle of non-intervention block mediation in what he called ‘Burundi’s racial conflict.’

The fact is therefore that the term ‘discrimination’ with its basically western, individualistic connotations, has not achieved full recognition as a politically potent concept, valid the whole world over. This half-baked state of affairs is reflected in the clumsy and still evolving United Nations procedures for dealing with allegations of violation of human rights. When the Commission on Human Rights and the Sub-Commission on the Prevention of Discrimination and the Protection of Minorities were first set up in 1946 by the Economic and Social Council of the UN, they explicitly disclaimed “power to take any action in regard to complaints concerning human rights.” The significant change occurred in 1966 as a result of pressure from Third World delegations that the régimes of southern Africa be arraigned for their white supremacist policies. Under ECOSOC Resolution 1235 the Commission on Human Rights and its Sub-Commission were authorised to undertake a “thorough study and investigation of situations that reveal a ‘consistent pattern’ of violations of human rights, and to report with accompanying recommendations concerning them.” The fact that the African delegations have only accepted public debate on southern Africa, the Israeli-occupied territories, and latterly on Chile, lays them open to the charge of maintaining double standards. The OAU’s explicit commitment to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, noted in the Charter and reiterated on the OAU’s 10th anniversary, and the commitment to set up an African Commission on Human Rights have largely remained empty rhetoric. Despite this and despite the fact that the procedures established for reviewing allegations of violation of human rights are cumbersome and those testifying are pledged to secrecy unless the Commission decides otherwise, there is hope in some quarters that the double standard will gradually be resolved.

The massacre of Hutus in Burundi was reportedly discussed by the Sub-Commission but has now disappeared from the agenda without the Burundi régime receiving any public censure. Violation of human rights by at least two other African governments is thought to be under discussion at present. The crucial paragraph which the lawyers must pick over is:

In time of public emergency which threatens the life of the nation and the existence of which is officially proclaimed, the States Parties to the present Convention may take measures derogating from their obligations under the
present Covenant to the extent strictly required by the exigencies of the situation, provided that such measures are not inconsistent with their other obligations under international law and do not involve discrimination solely on the ground of race, colour, sex, language, religion or social origin.\(^7\)

Although those African governments arraigned so far have evaded conviction, the recent successful prosecution of the Chilean junta may later prove to have been a most significant step forward.

This apparent trend towards the ‘universalisation’ of terms such as discrimination is now being vehemently resisted by what might be called the ‘authenticity’ campaigns of some African régimes. Certain concepts implanted by the colonialists are said to be inapplicable to a given culture and should be replaced by truly authentic ones. The revival of traditional literature, art and music, which are patently unique to an individual or group of African cultures, serves as a cover for far less defensible assertions about pre-colonial judicial, economic and social structures. President Micombero may legitimately claim that “International Women’s Year does not mean the same thing for the American woman, the European woman, and the Murundi woman .... In French you can say that ‘such a girl married such a boy’ ... in Kirundi that is not possible since it is the boy who asks for the girl in marriage and marries her.”\(^8\) On the other hand, the spokesman dealing with Belgian journalists anxious to discover the roots of the Hutu revolt in 1972 concealed the real issues by laying the following smokescreen: “Burundi has its own mentality and structures which are peculiar to itself .... The concept of democracy or at least the application of this notion must be understood differently, depending on whether one is in Africa or Europe.”\(^9\) He was really saying that the Burundi régime rejects the concept of democracy because it fears what J. S. Mill called ‘the tyranny of the majority.’

When in 1972 foreign journalists took up the Belgian Foreign Minister’s use of the word ‘genocide’ in interviews with Micombero, the President was quick to reply that whereas the initial Hutu attack clearly qualified as genocide – the leaflets found on the rebels urging them to kill every Tutsi man, woman and child, being conclusive evidence – the government action against the Hutu was certainly not genocide, merely the punishment of the guilty.\(^10\) When ex-Foreign Minister Simbananiye informed the diplomatic corps in Bujumbura that peace had been fully restored, he contemptuously added that as foreigners they could not begin to appreciate the depth of meaning conveyed by the Kirundi word amahoro, crudely translated as ‘peace.’ But when in reality the restoration of peace signifies the prevention of aid from reaching orphans and widows, and discrimination against Hutu in the courts, in employment and in access to education, the term ‘authenticity’ has surely been corrupted to excess. The setting up of a Ministry of National Orientation in Burundi (12 November 1974) combining the former Ministries of Information and the Party, and the leading rank given to the Minister concerned, suggest that the present régime is determined to resist the inroads made by such foreign concepts as ‘discrimination’ which, if they once gained currency among the population at large, would threaten the legitimacy of their own position.

Since ethnic discrimination in Rwanda and Burundi has been selected as the most salient form of discrimination, and not, say, discrimination against women, or against protesters during the colonial era, it is essential to try and define ‘ethnic.’ The first fundamental is to reject utterly the definition of ethnicity made on the basis of genetic or biological characteristics alone. Kenneth Kirkwood notes that Huxley, Haddon and Carr-Saunders take this view and trace its honourable pedigree back as far as Herodotus who “comes to the sensible conclusion that a group such as the Greeks is marked off from other groups by complex factors of which kinship is one, but that at least as important are language, religion culture or tradition.”\(^11\) Kirkwood further quotes Ashley Montagu’s “Man’s most dangerous myth: the fallacy of race as support for his contention that “the term ‘race’ ... can best be restricted to denote genetically transmitted characteristics alone.”\(^12\) This then clears the ground for the fundamental contention that ethnicity is ‘in the eye of the beholder.’ According to Edmund Leach, “there is no class of material ‘thing’ in the world-out-there to which it can readily be attached as a means of identification.”\(^13\) Recent studies emphasise that even such entities as populations, at first sight supremely fitted for statistical, ‘objectifiable’ analysis, are in fact “recognised according to some particular component which is of interest”\(^14\) Edwin Ardener writes that “the population ... is not merely subject to a statistical determination on the part of the observer, it is dependent on the subjective definition of that population by the human beings concerned.”\(^15\) Thus we are not concerned with the analysis of the population of Burundi and Rwanda on genetic criteria, and its division into the three categories of Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa (Pygmies), despite the existence of eminent scientific monographs on the subject.\(^16\) What is of concern is
first the fact that Barundi and Banyarwanda themselves categorise the population of both countries as Tutsi, Hutu and Twa, and secondly that this particular mode of categorisation has superceded other modes, for example on a clanic basis, and has done so at certain times rather than others in the history of the two countries. This approach must be stressed since the Burundi regime appears to have an answer to the ‘geneticsists’: the Barundi are no longer ethnically divided, if ever they were, says Térence Nsanze,17 former Burundi ambassador to the UN, because there has been so much intermarriage between Tutsi and Hutu. Romain Forsher deals succinctly with this argument:

Certainly morphology does not permit certain distinction between a Tutsi and a Hutu, but that does not prevent every Murundi from knowing in practice to which ethnic group he belongs and it is at this level, that of ethnic consciousness that the problem lies . . . . Tribalism is therefore not the result of a racial fatality, it is a more or less conscious political choice. (His italics.)18

The fact that descent is traced patrilineally in both Burundi and Rwanda leads logically-minded outsiders to the mistaken assumption that in a mixed marriage the children’s ethnic identity is determined by that of the father. A record of the Hutu killed in 1972 shows how little difference such subtle distinctions made. When the army and gendarmerie were purged in 1972 it is reliably alleged that those with even one Hutu grandparent were eliminated.

If the major part of this study deals with discrimination opposing Tutsi and Hutu in both Burundi and Rwanda, this is because of the extent of the atrocities and because the whole population of both countries was ‘conscientised.’ However, ‘ethnic’ as here defined allows for the description of discrimination by the Hutu and Tutsi together against the Twa, and also of discrimination practised between groups of Hutu in Rwanda and between groups of Tutsi in Burundi since independence, etc.

If the definition of an individual as Tutsi, Hutu or Twa is essentially a question of categorisation, a ‘more or less conscious political choice,’ it is all the more important to ask how this situation has arisen. Our investigation deals first with traditional concepts of ethnicity, as far as these are ascertainable; secondly with the impact on Burundi and Rwanda society of European concepts of ethnicity; and thirdly with the interaction between these two strands through the era of Belgian rule up to the present day.

II. Linguistic and Anthropological Contributions

There is abundant linguistic evidence (Kirundi and Kinyarwanda being considered variations of the same basic language) that a primary distinction was made between Tutsi, Hutu and Twa. The Kirundi word commonly used for ‘sort’ or ‘kind’ as is amoko y’udukokogori ni menshi, or ‘there are lots of kinds of basket-work’ is used in the context ‘ubwoko bw’Abahutu,’ ‘the kind/sort/caste of the Hutu,’ and F. M. Rodegem19 cites this sentence from an informant: Abakora iyo gikora buvari ubwoko bumwe bw’Abarundi muri ya moka atatu y’abantu, ‘those who did that sort of work only belonged to one caste of Rundi among the three castes of people.’ The identification of ‘separateness’ with specialised occupations will be referred to again later. It is true that the unity between the three groups is stressed in certain contexts: the public buildings used by native administrators in Rwanda in the Belgian era bore the traditional motto Imbaga ‘Inyabutatu ijiya mbera’20 or ‘a triple alliance makes progress.’ The weight of the linguistic evidence, however, is on the unequal status of these three groups and on the animosity existing between them. Legend speaks of the three sons of the original inhabitant of Rwanda (or Burundi), who were left to guard a bowl of milk overnight. Gatwa the pygmy could not restrain his greed and drank the milk; Gahutu clumsily knocked it over; Gatutsi diligently kept watch all night and was therefore rewarded with the right to exercise authority over his brothers. Well-known proverbs attest the Tutsi’s disdain for the Hutu: ‘Teach a Hutu to use a bow and without fail he will fire an arrow into your stomach,’ and Umututsi umuwura ameny ojo akayakurisha, ‘if you cure a Tutsi’s teeth for him, as soon as he is better he will bite you!’ Significantly Rodegem goes on to cite a proverb showing that the present manifestation of acute rivalry between two broad groups of Tutsi in Burundi, Tutsi-Hima and Tutsi-Nyaruguru, has its origins far in the past: Umuhima umuwura amaso bwaca akayakamurira, ‘if you cure a Hima’s eyes for him, as soon as he is cured, he will look down on you!’22 The Twa, or pygmies, are not even classed as abantu, ‘people’: when I once asked who lived in a
particular group of houses I was told, 'They are not people (abantu), they are pygmies (batwa).'

Anthropological descriptions of 'traditional' Burundi and Rwanda society commonly highlight four features: the occupational specialisation of the Tutsi (herdmen), the Hutu (agriculturalists), and the Twa (hunters and potters); their overwhelming preference for endogamy; their relative positions in a hierarchy under a monarch; and their distinctive physical appearance and associated personality stereotypes. The cohesion of these 'caste' societies, according to the 'classic' anthropological texts, was assured by the institution of clientship, a vast network of reciprocal, 'feudal' ties between patrons and their clients. Under the clientship system, known as ubuhake in Rwanda and ubugabire in Burundi, the client, usually a Hutu, offered goods and/or services to a patron, usually a Tutsi, in return for the latter's protection and the loan of a cow, the offspring of which became the client's property. Seen as a whole, the system was shaped like a pyramid with the king at the apex; all cattle belonged ultimately to him, and he exercised his rule by making and receiving gifts of cattle from his subjects. If any patron abused his client, the client could break the tie and seek a more congenial master elsewhere. This functionalist interpretation of the clientship system has come under attack from a younger generation of scholars, for example Claudine Vidal. Her research into oral records of nineteenth century land and cattle transactions in Rwanda leads her to conclude that the structure of pastoral clientship did not apply to all members of society and involved not so much individuals as family groups. In reality the theoretical liberty of choice of a shebujja (patron) was considerably restricted. Finally, the network formed by the ubuhake did not determine the general circulation of cattle and the Tutsi did not prevent the Hutu from having cows of their own.

Anthropologists, she continues, have been guilty of making a fetish of the cow. It was through their gradual control of the land rather than through their possession of beautiful long-horned cattle that the Tutsi came to achieve their hegemony; the leasing out of cattle was a consequence of dependency ties already based on land, and not the prior cause of such dependency. The colonial administration's rationalisation of the land-tenure system had the unintended effect of giving the cattle ties progressively greater importance. Thus, so the argument runs, the anthropologist's description of traditional society, relying often on the testimony of Tutsi informants, seized on the cow as the 'cause of in-

equality' and unwittingly served the purposes of the dominant group.

The anthropologists have also contributed indirectly to the development of ethnic stereotypes and subsequent discrimination by their technical use of the 'anthropological present.' Ethel Albert's account of the 'culture patterning of speech behaviour' in Burundi is a particularly relevant example. Burundi might take offence at such undifferentiated comments as 'There are no reservations about the desirability of flattery, untruths . . . Whatever works is good,' but the assertion that "boys in the upper social strata are given formal speech training" and "girls in the upper castes are also carefully trained" has the effect of sharpening the ethnic self-perceptions of the uninitiated Burundi reader today. He or she may not have the stamina to read through to the concluding pages where Albert admits that: "The potential for misunderstanding Burundi verbal behaviour is obviously high."28

III. The Evolution of Ethnic Stereotypes

If the professional anthropologists of the 1950s and 1960s are to be charged with unintentionally reinforcing patterns of discrimination already present in traditional society, the infinitely larger number of amateur anthropologists who as travellers, administrators and missionaries, have given their own account of these societies have wrought far greater damage.

The first Europeans to explore, evangelise and administer Rwanda and Burundi were predisposed by their academic training and their practical experience on the long march from the coast to emphasise the distinguishing physical features of the population groups they encountered and to speculate on their separate origins. When the Duke of Mecklenburg entered Rwanda he remarked that the only thing which the Negroes and the Tutsi had in common was their dark skin. K. Roehl hypothesised that glottal stops in Kinyarwanda were of Tutsi origin since they were not to be heard in the outlying areas which the Tutsi had not yet penetrated.27 What is far less pardonable is that this style of analysis should have been pursued for so long and carried to such fanciful lengths. As late as 1948 a Belgian doctor, Jules Sasserath wrote:

In reality (the Tutsi) are Hamites, probably of semitic origin, or according to certain hypotheses can trace their origin back to Ham, even to Adam . . . .
They are 1.90m. tall. They have slenderer, have a thin nose, high forehead, thin lips .... The rest of the population is Bantu. These are the Hutu, negroes who have all the characteristics of the negro: wide nose, thick lips .... They retain a childlike character .... The Hamites came down from the North, doubtless from the Nile valley. Perhaps from Abyssinia. People link them with the Gallus and with the Tuareg peoples.

A chapter sub-heading in Rwanda Volume I by Louis de Lacger reads: “The Tutsi, a branch of the Cushites, Ethiopians, or Hamites,” and the text contains the memorable phrase, best savoured in French: “Avant d’être nigritisés, ces hommes étaient bronzés ....”

This ‘mythology’ has certain serious consequences. First, the folk myths have acquired the status of historical fact to people who have had no time to do their own research. Thus mission literature, aimed at informing supporters at home, blithely says that, “About three hundred years ago the wave of migration of a mass of Ethiopian tribesmen arrived in Burundi and set themselves up as feudal lords over the Batwa (Pygmies) and the Bahutu.” ... “The Hutu probably originate from the Congo .... The Tutsi probably came from Ethiopia some time before the fifteenth century.”

Children in school in Burundi and Rwanda, fed on such ‘facts’ in their history lessons, naturally identify themselves with the feudal lords or see themselves as serfs. In an oral history exam the question was asked, “Which people in Burundi today do the Hamites correspond to?” This was only days after the Hutu teachers in the school had been taken away and killed; the examiner was himself a Rwandese Tutsi. Significantly, the Tutsi pupils, interrogated separately, replied that the Hamites were Tutsi, but the Hutu pupils who had learned the same ‘answer’ by heart from the same notes, claimed that they did not know; they preferred to lose a point rather than risk real trouble by saying ‘Tutsi’ which was for them a taboo word. Teachers are just as much affected as the pupils. European teachers in Burundi and Rwanda fall into two categories: those who unquestioningly assume that the Tutsi are somehow ‘more intelligent,’ and those who under the influence of research findings on ‘race and intelligence’ elsewhere in the world try and exorcise the assumption of Tutsi superiority.

Another harmful consequence of this folk mythology is that later generations of Europeans have been predisposed to ask certain questions and expect certain answers. If one knows that Roehl back in 1914 reported that the Tutsi do not need food and milk but can live on beer and tobacco, and a Tutsi guest declines a meal in your house, it is all too easy to draw the totally unjustified conclusion that Roehl was correct. The cliché that the Tutsi are herdsmen and the Hutu are agriculturists can blind the foreigner arriving in Burundi to the evidence of his eyes that some Tutsi hoe and some Hutu own cattle.

In discussing the evolution of these stereotypes, the difficulty is to balance what we know to be the European’s fondness for making distinctions with the Africans’ keenness that such distinctions should be made. The current vogue for castigating the foibles of the white man overlooks how much Tutsi and Hutu alike have stood to gain and still stand to gain by the impression the white man receives. Here again the anthropologists are not immune from criticism. That Jacques Maquet’s account of clientship in Rwanda should highlight the reciprocal obligations of patron and client may be due to the fact that his informants were mainly Tutsi. Similarly, Helen Codere’s insistence on the ‘guaranteed Rwandese’ origins of the 1959 revolution, is understandable when one recalls that her research was being conducted with Hutu when the revolution in question was going on around them. It is impossible to escape the same traps today. The Belgian journalists who promote the justness of the Burundi Hutu’s cause reject the claim that a successful Hutu coup would be followed by the massacre of the Burundi Tutsi, but on what grounds do they reject it? Their convictions derive from the ‘reasonableness’ of the educated Hutu on whom they rely for information.

The other half of the equation — that ethnic perceptions which serve to strengthen discrimination may be reinforced by European categorisation, but have their own independent, truly authentic existence — is much harder to demonstrate. This is partly because so few Barundi or Banyarwanda have made written accounts of their traditional culture and made them available to foreigners, and because even fewer have tried to shrug off a European approach to the subject. Here, however, is one example: in a strikingly unselfconscious passage Michel Ntuyuhaga, now Bishop of Bujumbura, discusses the difference between a kraal with cows and one without:

Is not this what made a Mututsi laugh when he came across some Bahutu who had no cows? He found them talking together, smiling and laughing merrily. He withdrew from them and said to his friends: “These Bahutu are not even sad! They have no cows and yet they can find something to laugh about!” For a Mututsi the only thing of real value is the cow ....

I.e. Ntuyuhaga, who must know that many Hutu actually have cows of their own, particularly since the suppression of clientage ties, chooses
rather to promote the stereotype that it is the Tutsi who own cattle and that the Hutu are stupid unless they make their envy obvious.

The ethnic violence of recent years in both countries has thrown up remarkable examples of the degree to which stereotyped views control behaviour. Elderly Hutu in Rwanda who, even after masses of Hutu had risen against the Tutsi, said, “The Tutsi will always be the dominant race and the Hutu the dominated race,” a belief demonstrated by many Hutu who followed their Tutsi masters as refugees into Tanzania and Uganda. The repression of the Hutu in Burundi in 1972 had already claimed several victims when a Hutu teacher at our school was called in for questioning; he had in fact openly expressed anger at the death of another Hutu colleague; and this ‘provocative remark’ had been reported by Tutsi pupils. He drove to the police post, was told to take the car back since he would not be needing it, and to return on foot. He meekly did so and came to bid us all good-bye, saying that there was no alternative but to go to his death!

The persistence of visual stereotypes is further evidence of underlying ethnic discrimination. The distinctive hairstyles of the Rwandese, amasunza, were a Tutsi prerogative. A tall European missionary teacher with an aquiline nose once overheard two Barundi women discussing whether she was a Tutsi! A very short friend of mine brushed his hair according to the amount of taxes they exacted from the population and had to organise forced labour for road-building etc. The Hutu peasant, who traditionally been ruled by local Hutu lineages; the overall number of chiefs was drastically reduced; chiefs were forbidden to retain clients outside their own chiefdom, which made it much more difficult for an exploited client to seek a new patron; and “the balance of forces between cattle chiefs, land chiefs and army chiefs” was destroyed. Moreover once chiefs became mere administrative officials their reciprocal obligations to their clients were dissolved; they were paid according to the amount of taxes they exacted from the population and had to organise forced labour for road-building etc. The Hutu peasantry had little redress against inevitable abuses by the chiefs of their authority. Similarly, the institution of ‘native tribunals’ where ‘native’ disputes would be settled by ‘native’ custom, thus keeping the native in his traditional environment, had the unintended effect of empowering the Tutsi magistrates to enhance their personal power. Jean-Pierre Chrétien summarises these administrative ‘improvements’ as “an almost general downgrading of the population in relation to a minority of chiefs integrated into the European circuit.”

A corollary of this administrative reorganisation was that since the Tutsi were deemed to be the only legitimate rulers, it was Tutsi boys who were selected for training as chiefs. Indeed the enrolment statistics at the Groupe Scolaire, which opened at Astrida in 1929, make this abundantly clear:

Meanwhile as part of the policy to bring ‘civilisation’ to these ‘dark’ lands, the Belgian government was subsidising the educational enterprise of the missionaries. They were opening primary schools everywhere and promoting the ablest children into their seminaries and

IV. BELGIAN RULE AND ETHNIC CONSCIOUSNESS

As certain aspects of Belgian colonial policy in Burundi and Rwanda are reviewed, the purpose is to point out the link between these policies and the development of ethnic tension. Each department of policy cited reveals a basic paradox: policies designed to ‘civilise’ what was seen as a backward society and bring it to a level where some measure of self-government could be entertained, unwittingly fostered the development of ethnic consciousness and tension.

Indirect rule was the cornerstone of Belgian administrative policy. Pierre Ryckmans, Belgium’s first Resident in Burundi wrote in 1925: “The only smoothly functioning organ between us and the masses is the legitimate chiefs. They alone, because they are legitimate, can induce acceptance of necessary innovations.” However, it was precisely those measures which were designed to limit the ‘excessive’ powers of the chiefs and to tidy up what seemed to be inefficiencies and anomalies in the native administration which in fact had the effect of consolidating the power of a small cadre of chiefs. Tutsi chiefs from central and southern Rwanda were imposed on the northern regions which had traditionally been ruled by local Hutu lineages; the overall number of chiefdoms was drastically reduced; chiefs were forbidden to retain clients outside their own chiefdom, which made it much more difficult for an exploited client to seek a new patron; and “the balance of forces between cattle chiefs, land chiefs and army chiefs” was destroyed. Moreover once chiefs became mere administrative officials their reciprocal obligations to their clients were dissolved; they were paid according to the amount of taxes they exacted from the population and had to organise forced labour for road-building etc. The Hutu peasantry had little redress against inevitable abuses by the chiefs of their authority. Similarly, the institution of ‘native tribunals’ where ‘native’ disputes would be settled by ‘native’ custom, thus keeping the native in his traditional environment, had the unintended effect of empowering the Tutsi magistrates to enhance their personal power. Jean-Pierre Chrétien summarises these administrative ‘improvements’ as “an almost general downgrading of the population in relation to a minority of chiefs integrated into the European circuit.”

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Meanwhile as part of the policy to bring ‘civilisation’ to these ‘dark’ lands, the Belgian government was subsidising the educational enterprise of the missionaries. They were opening primary schools everywhere and promoting the ablest children into their seminaries and
higher seminaries on the basis of academic merit, regardless of ethnic identity. Thus by the mid-1950s a ‘counter-elite’ had emerged, educated in these seminaries, and composed mainly of disenchanted Hutu. They protested that the Belgian authorities discriminated against them in favour of less highly qualified Tutsi. Lemarchand cites the case of one Hutu, Anastase Makuza, who returned to Rwanda as a university graduate in 1955 but was forced to accept the post of typist because all other openings were barred to him.

A similar paradox characterises the missionary enterprise. The European religious hierarchy, until World War II at least, was adamant that the Belgian administration should not attempt to ‘eliminate the Tutsi class.’ Mgr. Classe advised his powers temporal that Generally speaking, we have no chiefs who are better qualified, more intelligent, more active, more capable of appreciating progress and more fully accepted by the people than the Tutsi.

The conversion of leading chiefs was seen as the crucial step in winning the whole population; hence the church’s recommendation that the administration should depose Musinga, the anti-Christian king of Rwanda, in 1931. When his more promising successor, Mutara, requested baptism, he was told to wait until he had fathered a son, lest he be forced to reject his first wife in order to do so, and thus bring the Christian religion into disrepute. Meanwhile the message that ‘God requireth all men to repent and believe the gospel’ was making its inroads into traditional society and values. Hymn No. 281 in the protestant hymnbook *Indirimbo* mentions specifically that the gospel is for Tutsi Ganwa, Hutu and Twa, – this verse is always omitted now –, and yet concern over injustices perpetrated against the Tutsi has been uneasily reconciled with the doctrine that ‘the powers that be are ordained of God.’ Lemarchand notes that “during the terminal phase of the Belgian trusteeship (in Rwanda), – unlike the Catholics, Anglican missionaries continued to give unrelenting moral and material support to the ‘Tutsi group.’”

A final paradox concerns the Belgians’ belated attempts to modernise political institutions in Burundi and Rwanda, and indeed it was only as a result of intense pressure from the United Nations and developments elsewhere in Africa that anything was done at all. When A.A. van Bilsen first published his plan in 1955 by which the Belgian territories overseas would achieve self-government within thirty years, howls of protest arose from nearly all sections of the Belgian community. It was pointed out that so few Africans had become ‘immatured,’ the procedure introduced in 1952 by which Africans could climb the final rung on the ladder to ‘Europeanness.’ The paradox is that those whom the Belgian administration planned to bring into government in Burundi and Rwanda were almost exclusively Tutsi, in addition to their being ‘civilised,’ while other powerful forces at work the Belgian trades unions notably among them, were campaigning for the introduction of adult male suffrage and consequently political rights for the Hutu. While the administration still retained its idealised goal of a competent African civil service, the emerging political parties, often with the encouragement of their European supporters, were busily recruiting members on a mainly ethnic basis.

In summary the charge brought against the Belgian administration is that their policies, carefully conceived and philosophically buttressed as they were, brought into being two opposed groups of educated people in Burundi and Rwanda, the one designated as rulers, the other excluded from positions of authority; and secondly that even those who were to rule were denied the opportunity of taking genuine administrative responsibility. If the deliberate policies of colonisation are said to have exacerbated pre-existing ethnic antagonisms, the completely unintended and sudden manner of the Belgian withdrawal from Africa or ‘decolonisation process’ made matters even worse. Burundi and Rwanda at independence were political vacuums. At least in the Congo the large private industrial sector was an attractive alternative employer, but in Burundi and Rwanda power lay only in government.
The hurried and undignified Belgian withdrawal had created a void in which ethnic tension was bound to flourish.

V. VIOLENT DISCRIMINATION AGAINST TUTSI IN RWANDA

Although violence directed against the Tutsi in Rwanda from 1959 to 1964, and subsequent civil discrimination, appear to be 'mirrored' by the fate of the Hutu in Burundi in 1972, what follows is an attempt to avoid easy generalisations and to make certain important distinctions between the ethnic discrimination practised to such excess in both countries.

An attack by young Tutsi militants on a Hutu sub-chief was the spark which started the violence against the Tutsi in all parts of Rwanda in November 1959. Hundreds of Tutsi were killed, thousands of homesteads burned, and the goods plundered. Two events provide significant background information to this situation. The sudden installation of King Kigeri immediately after Mutara's death earlier in 1959 symbolised to the Hutu the determination of the Tutsi hierarchy to preserve the ethnic basis of its privileges and to resist what it saw as Belgian treachery. A letter written by a dozen Tutsi chiefs to the Grand Council of Rwanda in 1958 had declared: "Since our kings conquered the Hutu's country, by killing their little kings, and thereby enslaved the Hutu, how can the latter now claim to be our brothers?" The other crucial factor is that the Belgian administration had indeed determined to tolerate and even facilitate what it judged to be conquest.

The violence assumed even greater proportions in the months of November 1959 as 'evidence' of nationwide sporadic violence. The Belgian administration threw the full weight of its propaganda behind the Hutu candidates in the communal elections of June-July 1960. When as a result the Belgians were faced with the unwelcome prospect of Hutu elected officials and a bureaucracy which was still entirely Tutsi, they set about replacing Tutsi civil servants by Hutu. The 'Gitarama coup' of 28 January 1961, at which the newly elected councillors and burgomasters heard the Hutu leadership announce the abolition of the monarchy and call on Kayibanda to form a government, could not possibly have taken place without the active connivance of the Belgian authorities. The Special Resident of Rwandan Posts, Colonel Logiest, told his staff on 11 January 1960:

What is our goal? It is to accelerate the politicisation of Rwanda . . . . People must go to the polls in full freedom and in full political awareness. Thus we must undertake an action in favour of the Hutu, who live in a state of ignorance and under oppressive influences. By virtue of the situation we are obliged to take sides. We cannot stay neutral and sit.

The legislative elections held under United Nations supervision in September 1961 merely confirmed the de facto advent to power of the Hutu. The UN Commission for Rwanda-Burundi had boldly set out their view in March of that year:

A racial dictatorship of one party has been set up in Rwanda, and the developments of the last eighteen months have consisted in the transition from one type of repressive régime to another. Extremism is rewarded and there is a danger that the (Tutsi) minority find itself defenceless in the face of abuses . . . .

This extract from a missionary doctor's letters gives some indication of what these abuses were:

While I was doing the ward round, a tall Tutsi rushed into the ward and besought me to save him. He was followed by a gang of Hutu. I drove them out and took the man into the prayer room while a huge crowd collected outside. I refused to allow them to enter, but later Belgian soldiers came and took the poor man away. By afternoon the whole countryside was on fire. The refugees began pouring in . . . . News came that Timoteyo, our pastor, had been attacked. The gang went right through the burnings and on the road where Timoteyo's house and met him being carried out, speared through the upper thigh. Then they came down this side of the hill and burned out our next-door neighbour: the refugees began pouring in . . . . News came that Timoteyo, our pastor, had been attacked. The gang went right through the burnings and on the road where Timoteyo's house and met him being carried out, speared through the upper thigh. Then they came down this side of the hill and burned our next-door neighbour and he has been beaten up and one ear is hanging . . . . It is now midnight and from my window I can now seven kraals burning. The gang has said if any of us missionaries are seen off the mission hill we shall be killed.

It was against this background that the supposedly 'democratic' legislative elections were held.

The violence assumed even greater proportions in the months of December 1963 and January 1964, following the abortive invasion of Tutsi refugees from Burundi, known as inyenzi 'cockroaches.' These Tutsi were halted only a few kilometers south of the capital Kigali, and in the resulting panic and turmoil which swept Rwanda, some ten to fourteen thousand Tutsi were massacred in incidents of the utmost brutality. Several cases were attested of Tutsi having their feet chopped off so that they would be 'short like the Hutu'; a missionary reported that a group of Hutu "hacked the breasts off a Tutsi woman, and as she
lay dying forced the dismembered parts down the throats of her children before her eyes. The number of Tutsi refugees who then and earlier had fled for their lives to Uganda, Tanzania, Zaire and Burundi, may be put at at least 200,000.

One completely unintended result of this Tutsi invasion was to convince the Hutu régime of the need to close up incipient divisions in their own ranks. Intra-Hutu divisions were evident both in the north among the peasantry at large, and in the centre-south among the educated elite. The northern dispute was between those whose claim to land was based on pre-colonial rights and those Hutu who had been installed on the same land more recently as clients to the imposed Tutsi chiefs (now expelled); the second rift involved the small number of Hutu fortunate enough to have been educated at the government school at Astrida and the Hutu ex-seminarists, because despite similar formal qualifications the former were given preferential access to employment.

Now that the very bloody phase was over, Rwanda’s ethnic problems seemed ‘solved’ – by contrast with the situation in Burundi which is discussed below. The provision made before independence by the visiting UN mission that the Tutsi should have a minority voice in the Rwanda government was soon abandoned. The Hutu obtained a complete monopoly of local and central government posts and created an entirely Hutu army.

The recrudescence of ethnic violence in Rwanda in late 1972 and early 1973 may be attributed to several factors. One indication of Rwanda’s lowly position in the league table of the world’s poorest countries is the scarcity of new jobs in the already tiny private sector. Most clerical and supervisory positions were occupied at independence by Tutsi because of the educational advantages they had received during the colonial era. The frustration felt by unemployed school-leavers was exacerbated by the fact that, a whole decade after independence, many of these scarce jobs were still in the hands of Tutsi. Furthermore, the esteem of the Tutsi for formal education, fostered by colonial discrimination at the expense of the Hutu, has resulted in a disproportionate number of Tutsi schoolchildren surviving the very competitive scramble for places in the higher grades and at the tertiary level; the fact that many Hutu with intermediate qualifications were able to leave and enter ‘middle-ranking’ employment heightened the impression that the university of Butare in Rwanda, for example, had become a Tutsi preserve in the centre of a Hutu state. A third factor has been the predominance of Tutsi in the Rwandan church hierarchy, the reason again being that the church was one obvious avenue open to the Tutsi when the public and private sector were discriminating so ardently in favour of the Hutu. So when the church strongly resisted the decision of the state to ‘nationalise’ mission education, this opposition was interpreted by Hutu as Tutsi antipathy to the ‘democratising’ policies of the Hutu régime.

The frustration felt by Rwandese Hutu in 1972 at their inability to intervene in support of the Hutu in Burundi undoubtedly found its expression in renewed outbreaks of violence against the Tutsi in Rwanda. At the university, in banks and offices, lists of Tutsi students and employees were posted up with the demand that they be dismissed. According to press reports, up to five hundred Tutsi were killed in the countryside and thousands more fled as refugees. It seems clear that President Kayibanda allowed this ‘popular movement’ to develop as a means of deflecting the mounting criticism directed against his own nepotistical, regionalist policies; for example, seven of the fifteen government ministers came from his own prefecture of Gitarama. This criticism had mainly been voiced by the Hutu northerners who felt discriminated against. The head of the army, General Habyalimana, himself a northerner, having survived an attempt on his life on 5 July 1974, assumed power in a bloodless coup d’état the very same day.

VI. The Growth of Ethnic Tension in Burundi from Independence to 1972

Until 1972 any discussion of Burundi politics of the period since independence tended to ask why Burundi, although apparently so similar to Rwanda, had not experienced the same violent ethnic strife. With at least 100,000 Hutu slaughtered in 1972 and a further 100,000 made refugees, the question has been reframed; it now asks why there was a delay of more than ten years, and secondly why the violence claimed such distressingly large numbers of victims.

Pre-1972 explanations emphasized differences in the structure of the two traditional societies and differences in the political evolution of each territory under Belgian rule. The first Europeans to enter Rwanda encountered an absolute monarch presiding over a centralised kingdom (apart from certain areas in the north) and distributing power through a hierarchy of Tutsi chiefs dependent on his every word. By comparison the kingdom of Urundi was in disarray with the king disputing his
supremacy with at least two powerful rivals. In Rwanda there was no equivalent to the *Gamwa* of Burundi, princes of the blood descended from earlier kings, and who considered themselves separate from and superior to the ranks of ordinary Tutsi. *Gamwa*, and not ‘ordinary’ chiefs as in Rwanda, were traditionally nominated to the powerful regional chiefdoms and used their independence to challenge the right of every new successor to the throne. There are good grounds for believing that King Mwambutsa is of Hutu extraction, having been substituted for the real son of King Mutaga who was killed by his rival uncles at birth. However, regardless of such biological considerations, the *Gamwa* were at pains to convince the early Europeans in Burundi that they were not Tutsi. 54 The cleavage between Tutsi and Hutu which widened in Rwanda in the 1950s was indeed present in Burundi but was overshadowed by the struggle between two parties, based essentially on the two main *Gamwa* families, the Bezi and the Batare.

The Belgians had consistently supported the Christian, cultured, pro-European Batere chief Baranyanka, and made clear their displeasure with the unco-operative King Mwambutsa, whose close relatives formed the Bezi leadership. The UPRONA (Bezi) party, with the king’s son Rwagasore at its head, campaigned for immediate independence on a traditionalist, anti-Belgian ‘ticket’ against the pro-Belgian Parti Democratique Chretien of the Batare and Chief Baranyanka. This situation was thus very different from the one in Rwanda where from his installation in 1931 to the late 1950s King Mutara was the ally of the Belgians, and where Belgian approval of the monarch and his traditional authority was extended much more visibly to the Tutsi administrative chiefs as a group than was ever the case in Burundi. Moreover in Burundi certain Hutu clans had traditionally occupied privileged positions at the royal court, and also there had always been many more Hutu sub-chiefs in Burundi than in Rwanda. The enrolment figures at Astrida, already quoted, show clearly that more Hutu were admitted to secondary education from Burundi than from Rwanda. Lastly, the general impression conveyed by foreigners with experience of both countries is that the clientage ties between Tutsi and Hutu or between Tutsi chief and Hutu subject involved greater oppression of the Hutu in Rwanda than in Burundi.

The next question is to ask how ethnic perceptions came to dominate political life in Burundi in so short a space of time. The ethnic composition of the UPRONA leadership at independence and that of the first few governments thereafter show a remarkable balance between Tutsi, Hutu and Ganwa elements. Just as the Tutsi refugee invasion of Rwanda shored up the Hutu regime, the assassination of the UPRONA leader Rwagasore by members of the opposing Batare faction had the effect of temporarily uniting Hutu and Tutsi politicians around the UPRONA leadership. However, analysis of the upper echelons of the civil service in 1965 show that, just as in Rwanda, so too in Burundi the superior educational advantages of the Tutsi under Belgian rule had given them the lion’s share of appointments, no matter how carefully the actual cabinet might be ‘ethnically balanced’; 55

### Table

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Several of the Hutu then governing Rwanda were former classmates in school of the Burundi Hutu who were smarting under unequal competition with the Tutsi, and from a comparison of the two situations a self-fulfilling prophecy was born:

By identifying their political aims and aspirations with those of PARMEHUTU (the governing Hutu party in Rwanda), they (Hutu leaders in Burundi) imputed to the Tutsi of Burundi motives which they (the Tutsi) at first did not possess but to which they eventually gave a substance of truth. 56

The precedent for comparing Rwanda and Burundi was well established under the Belgian administration; civil servants and missionaries alike had consistently minimised or overlooked the essential structural differences between the two countries, with the result that foreign businessmen taking investment decisions in Burundi in the 1960s always bore in mind ‘an eventual Rwanda-type revolution’. A Hutu and not a similarly qualified Tutsi was selected as first African bishop of the Anglican church in Burundi, because it was felt that a Hutu leader would have undoubted advantages politically, once the revolution had taken place.

The events in Rwanda not only affected the aspirations of Hutu in Burundi but prompted certain Burundi Tutsi, encouraged by Tutsi refugees from Rwanda, to take ‘pre-emptive measures’; such incidents as the beating up of leading Hutu by Tutsi members of the Jeunesse
Nationale Rwagasore in Bujumbura in January 1962 had the effect of giving the spiralling ethnic tension a further twist. The assassination of Prime Minister Ngendandumwe, a Hutu and a known moderate, in January 1965 – allegedly the work of Rwandese Tutsi refugees – and the legislative elections of May 1965 finally brought into the open the fact that ethnic perceptions were now the dominant factor in all political matters. When the election result was known, the Hutu members occupying 22 of the 33 seats in the new parliament, the king abandoned his 'balancing act.' He recalled the Ganwa old guard to form a government and entrusted two Tutsi known to be 'hardliners,' Micombero and Butera, with control of the army and justice respectively; as secretaries of state they took their orders from the king and bypassed the authority of the elected parliament. The Hutu immediately realised that they had been manoeuvred out of their electoral gains. The mounting frustration broke out in the form of an abortive attack on the king’s palace, and attacks on Tutsi in the interior, mainly in Murambvya province, the latter claiming approximately five hundred victims. Eighty-six leading Hutu politicians and officers were shot in reprisal. The king restored his Ganwa government but then left for what became permanent exile in Switzerland, abandoning his country to its increasingly threatening fate.

With the menace of the Hutu temporarily removed, however, the struggle for power now focussed on the radical and conservative Tutsi politicians who were attempting to control Ntare, the teenage son whom Mwambutsa had left to replace him. After only eight months, in November 1966, a group of army officers under Micombero stepped in and declared Burundi a republic. The Ganwa politicians were removed, as were some of the Tutsi ‘young Turks’ formerly prominent in the republican camp. The apparent return to an ‘ethnically balanced’ government in November 1967 (five Tutsi, five Hutu, and two Ganwa) masks the fact that the cabinet itself had little power, effective decisions being taken by the National Revolutionary Council composed solely of army officers who were, in Lemarchand's words, 'a ruling caste.' The disclosure of an alleged Hutu plot in 1969 and the immediate execution of some thirty leading Hutu confirmed the trend towards Tutsi supremacy. Of the 27 army officers making up the Supreme Council of the Republic, which was set up in October 1971 to supersede the National Revolutionary Council, only two were Hutu. Practically no Hutu received scholarships to study abroad after 1968, while a most bizarre 'girth by height' requirement was introduced as a patent pretext for excluding unwanted Hutu recruits from the army.

The ethnic identity of the participants doubtless influenced the outcome of a rural court case over land or cattle rights, but the statement is surely true that “racism was not born on the hills, it came from the capital.”57 The absence of remunerative employment outside the government sector, and the stark contrast between the lowest teacher’s salary and that of a manual worker (about eight times) are pointers to this contention. The words of Martin Ndahayoze, a leading Hutu cabinet minister and army officer killed in 1972, are particularly worthy of quotation:

We can affirm that it is in the leisure class that the virus of tribalism is to be found. What happens is that the evil comes down from the top. It is the underserving administrative staff who, in order to maintain their rank or to rise to a post they covet, need 'connections,' craftiness, and guile. It is the insatiable people in responsible positions who make a political strategy out of ethnic division in order to further their shameful ambitions. Thus if they are Tutsi they denounce a Hutu peril which must be countered. If they are Hutu they unveil a Tutsi apartheid which must be combated.58

The allegation that as early as 1968 Arthémon Simbananiye, Foreign Minister in 1972, circulated a secret memorandum among Tutsi civil servants calling for a 'final solution' to the 'Hutu problem' becomes almost credible.

The 'judicial parody'59 of 1971 is evidence of intra-Tutsi group discrimination. The Tutsi close to Micombero and in control of the army, mainly belonging to Hima clans and from Bururi province, wished to remove the suspected challenge posed by a group of Tutsi from more aristocratic clans in central and northern Burundi. The latter were suspected of only lukewarm support for republican government and of holding more conciliatory views on power-sharing with the Hutu. At the trial no credible evidence was forthcoming, and the prosecutor for the government, himself a Tutsi from Bururi, resigned and demanded that the case be dismissed. Then in a most dramatic turn of events nine of the accused were sentenced to death and seven to life imprisonment. This deep split in the Tutsi ranks raised tension to danger point all over the country, and the government finally bowed to this internal threat and to intense international pressure by quashing the original sentences. However, the Hutu revolt of April 1972 provides the unhappy sequel to these events: the all-out attack on the Hutu gave the Bururi Tutsi the 'cover' they needed to avenge this earlier setback, and several
Tutsi, among them the recently returned ex-King Ntare, were the first to be eliminated in the repression of May 1972.60

VII. The Violence of 1972 in Burundi and Its Aftermath

Crucial aspects of the 1972 ‘events’ remain shrouded in mystery. However, certain facts are beyond dispute.61 On the evening of 29 April, bands of Hutu, supported by Mulelist rebels from Zaire, attacked army posts in eastern and southern Burundi, while other Hutu attempted to seize the radio station in Bujumbura. Having gained control of arms supplies at Nyanza Lac and Rumonge, the rebels established their ‘people’s republic,’ which lasted only one week before they were completely routed by government troops. Leading Hutu all over Burundi were arrested immediately, accused of complicity, and shot. After the first week of May, that is when the military situation was under full government control again, a wave of repression was unleashed against all educated Hutu and Hutu in paid employment, on a scale unparalleled even at the height of the violence in Rwanda. There had been almost no movement on the part of the Hutu population (other than in the far south of Burundi), certainly not in the provinces of Ngozi and Gitega where the proportion of Hutu is some 90%. The ‘attacks,’ claimed by the government to have occurred at Gitega, were merely a pretext for executing ex-King Ntare who was held under house-arrest there since being tricked into returning to Burundi ‘as a private citizen.’ The government radio broadcasts encouraged the population to ‘hunt down the python in the grass,’ an order which was interpreted by Tutsi in the interior as licence to exterminate all educated Hutu, down to the level of secondary and in some cases even primary school children. Army units commandeered merchants’ lorries and mission vehicles, and drove up to schools, removing whole batches of children at a time. Tutsi pupils prepared lists of their Hutu classmates to make identification by officials more straightforward.

Two separate incidents based on the reports of eye witnesses known personally to me may be taken as representative of countless similar incidents which occurred during May, June and July 1972.

On 8 May 1972, ten days after the Hutu rebellion broke out, President Micombero announced on the radio that order had been restored throughout the country. What was meant by ‘order’ will be clear from this and the following incidents, representative of countless others during the repression of the Hutu from May 1972 onwards.

Six boys from the secondary school at Kibima who had fled in early May returned and were detained in the cells of the local police-post, together with the school secretary and his father who had been arrested. Foreign staff at the school were allowed to take them food twice daily. On 22 May they had gone. It subsequently emerged that the lorry transporting the prisoners had converged with three others on Gitega gaol at the precise moment when there was an attempted break-out inside the prison. The soldiers opened fire, tossing grenades into the prison courtyard. The prisoners in the lorries outside were liquidated on the spot, including a Murundi nun for whom a presidential reprieve had been signed. Sixteen prisoners escaped in the confusion. One, a teenage boy, returned to his school at the mission in Gitega and told his story. In a cell measuring 2m × 2m there had been about sixty prisoners, heaped up in layers. They had broken down the cell door by concerted brute force. This particular boy was later recaptured and killed. His headmaster, who left Burundi at the end of that school year, said that the boy could not have continued studying anyway since his experience had left him mentally deranged.

In mid-June 1972 teachers who had not collected their salaries for April and May were told by radio that if they had not done so by the end of June they would be considered either dead or to have fled the country. The surviving Hutu teachers suspected that this was a plot to identify and eliminate them. Two of the three remaining Hutu staff at Kibimba secondary school left for Bujumbura on 21 June in the company of a European teacher. The car was stopped at the military checkpoint at Muramvya and the two Hutu teachers taken out. Thirty minutes later they reappeared from the guardroom, their valuables gone, and themselves looking badly beaten. The European was escorted to the provincial governor and informed that his two colleagues were rebels. They were never seen again.

The Tutsi in power during those months of May, June and July 1972 admitted their prior knowledge of an impending Hutu attack, and it is surely significant that Micombero dismissed his ministers the very day before the attack was actually launched. It is also known that Shibura, a noted Tutsi ‘hardliner,’ was in southern Burundi the day before, distributing arms to local officials and warning “Tutsi to be on the watch.” What is unclear is whether the extent of the repression should be attributed principally to the panic which gripped the Tutsi at the news of the atrocities perpetrated by the Hutu rebels, or whether more cold-blooded machiavellian tactics may have prevailed.

There is abundant evidence that the Hutu in Burundi have continued to suffer discrimination since 1972. An attempted invasion by Hutu refugees from Tanzania in October 1973 resulted in a further wave of killing of Hutu and devastation of their property. Although an
amnesty has now been declared and all refugees urged to return, there are justifiable grounds for the fear that they will be treated as 'rebels.' In May 1972 a certain Hutu teacher was arrested late at night, and subsequently killed; a Tutsi friend accompanied his wife to the bank when it opened the next morning to draw out the family's savings, only to find the account already closed and the money gone. In countless cases the furniture was removed from the homes of arrested Hutu, with the widows and orphans left sitting on the bare floor. The cars and lorries of wealthier Hutu became the property of those who arrested them. A considerable sum of money was raised by private subscription for 'victims of the events,' but I know of no Hutu widow or orphan who ever received a franc of that money; only the Tutsi along Lake Tanganyika who had suffered in the original Hutu attack benefited.

Discrimination in access to education, to employment and to the army since 1972 clearly operates. Blatant in 1972-73, it is gradually becoming less obvious. In September 1972 the local inspector came to our primary school, looked at the list of children requesting entry to Standard I and erased a number of names because the children were the sons or daughters of 'rebels.' The church leaders were told that their candidate for appointment as primary school headmaster – to replace one who had been killed – was unsuitable because he was a Hutu. If the academic year of 1975-76 may have seen one or two Hutu students admitted to the university, such cases are isolated exceptions, and even at secondary school level the Hutu are few and far between.

There appear to be no Hutu officers in the army, and after the recruitment drive to strengthen the army after its 1972 losses had taken place, the few Hutu rash enough to volunteer were sent home. Micombero has found two Hutu ministers to convey the impression to the world outside that his government has no ethnic bias, but below them in the 12,000 civil servant posts all Hutu have been eliminated. The leadership of the church shows a similar pattern: two Hutu bishops out of six in the catholic church, but a clergy composed almost entirely of Tutsi. The Hutu priests in training at the Grand Séminaire in Bujumbura fled en masse when their bishop, Mgr. Ntuyuhaga, told them that they had no right to expect his protection in the event of future ethnic strife.

However, the more subtle way in which discrimination operates is that many Hutu voluntarily refuse to compete for places in school; those who are at school take a basic qualification rather than go on to higher education; they seek employment in humble capacities in the missions rather than compete for government jobs. It may be true that some Tutsi in central government actively encourage the Hutu to apply for jobs – as countless official statements would lead one to believe – but once appointed, such Hutu are at the mercy of unscrupulous Tutsi; one hears, for example, of Hutu clerks not being allowed to use the office typewriter.

There is clear evidence of discrimination in the economy. Hutu peasant farmers bringing their coffee or cotton to market discover that they must buy a party card before their crops can be sold or are deceived into accepting a lower price per kilo for their goods than the official one. The result, which is currently of concern to Burundi's foreign economic advisers, is that many Hutu are reverting to subsistence agriculture only, deeming it not worth the extra work of producing cash-crops, only to be cheated out of their profit.

There is equally hard evidence that the international aid organisations who in general are disturbed at the ethnic discrimination obtaining in Burundi and wish somehow to guard against their aid being used to perpetuate it, are blocked at every turn by the Burundi government. Those foreigners impudent enough to ask who will benefit from a particular development project are told unceremoniously to mind their own business.

Some Hutu who fled in 1972 have indeed returned, for example to the plain along Lake Tanganyika. According to very recent reports, however, a number of these people have been rounded up and are in Mpinga prison. One source claims to have seen a list with nineteen names on it. Also in May 1975 an army unit sent to patrol the border with Tanzania killed a whole group of returning refugees. Practically none of the educated Hutu who fled in 1972 or who were already abroad have responded to the President's appeal to return. They are understandably discouraged by the case of Vunuste Ntahondereye, a Burundi Hutu who was removed from a Sabena flight to Rwanda when it was diverted to Bujumbura airport; the man was never seen alive again.

Spokesmen for the Burundi régime since 1972 have constantly reiterated that ethnic discrimination does not exist. However, their argument has rested on the assertion that the Barundi are one tribe, evidence of which is the language, religion and culture which all Barundi share. Our initial discussion tried to make clear that although this linguistic, religious and cultural unity may exist – though with
important qualifications which government spokesmen conveniently pass over — what matters is the subjective recognition of differences within the society. President Micombero is right in contrasting the linguistic diversity of Zambia with the linguistic unity of Burundi, but this does not alter the fact that some 85% of the population unanimously class Micombero as a Tutsi, someone apart from them, while the minority include him in their own ranks, as 'one of themselves.'

There are three main reasons for believing that Burundi government assertions about 'no tribalism' are a smokescreen destined to deceive foreigners and to induce ordinary Burundi to alter their perception of themselves. In the first place, while denying the existence of ethnic discrimination, the recently drafted Constitution is soaked in references to tribal or ethnic discrimination. Under Titre II ('Of Public Liberties and the Human Person'), it is stated that:

No law, no administrative decision can establish, in the rights and duties of the Burundi, distinctions based on race.

All ethnic propaganda, all manifestations of racial discrimination are punished by the law.

No grouping of whatever kind can make as its aim the defence of the interest of a race, nor make the nomination of its leaders of the recruitment of its members depend on belonging to a particular race. (Article 5.)

Such emphasis makes it evident that the régime knows ethnic distinctions are perceived by the population at large; it is merely hoping to guard against the constant threat of a successful Hutu coup which would consciously introduce a Hutu tribal government, as happened in Rwanda under the First Republic.

The second point is that the President's oft-repeated three objectives for his new seven-year term of office are: social justice, national defence, and improvements to the habitat. The priority given to social justice make it evident that the régime knows ethnic distinctions are perceived by the population at large; it is merely hoping to guard against the constant threat of a successful Hutu coup which would consciously introduce a Hutu tribal government, as happened in Rwanda under the First Republic.

The third point of significance is the use made by the régime of the vogue for 'authenticity' now popular throughout Africa. The emphasis in Burundi is not so much on dancing and music as on the 'fact' that

'Burundi has its own mentality' which foreigners can never fully comprehend.

Instead of allowing any open debate on crucial political matters, the régime invokes 'authenticity' of Burundi tradition as a cloak to cover the totally dictatorial, undemocratic nature of its own authority. Thus, although the decision to extend the use of Kirundi as the medium of instruction throughout primary education is to be commended on general psychological and pedagogical grounds, the promoters of such policies are likely to be suspected of wanting to cut off the broad mass of the population from outside influences prejudicial to the régime's own survival. In this connection it is significant that Simbananiye, at present Minister of Education tried in 1975 to bring the yama mukama literacy classes organised by the catholic church under government control. Many Hutu parents prefer sending their children to these 'safe' schools, despite the limited academic prospects offered there, but those in power are clearly concerned that these schools should not be allowed to foment dissent.

The other thrust of the authenticity campaign is to blame the Belgians for all the evils of tribalism:

The ditch in question (between the ethnic groups) was dug by the coloniser. Very simply and from earliest youth. The whole school system was marked by segregation. The children had to tell the 'good fathers' to which ethnie group they belonged — that is if they knew it, the poor kids. The very rare centres of higher education were exclusively reserved for the settlers' children to be sure, and for those of the royal family and for very rare Tutsi. No Hutu was admitted. And now there is astonishment that the percentage of employees in the administration does not resemble that of the population in general.

It is suggested that Barundi and Banyarwanda were unaware of their ethnic identity until the Belgians forced them to write it on their passcards. The outside world is told, for example by Térence Nsanze, that the number of Barundi of 'mixed' blood is very high, though everybody knows this not to be the case and confirms that the number of Hutu-Tutsi marriages has declined rapidly since the colonial era and has dwindled to zero since 1972. Hutu and Tutsi are said to have lived in a state of perfect symbiosis before the white man came to disturb them. Researchers who, like Rodegem, uncover such uncomfortable facts as the extermination of whole clans are therefore not popular, while other foreigners who appear to bolster the régime's view of Burundi history are fêted. A recent publication of beautiful photographs
aimed to stimulate Burundi's tourist industry makes a claim which typifies this approach to the past: there were migrations of Twa, Hutu and Tutsi to Burundi in the distant past, but anyone who claims to know more about it than that is almost certainly telling untruths.

VIII. Discrimination in Contemporary Rwanda

One would expect the publicly stated attitude of the new Rwanda government on ethnic discrimination to be radically different from that of the Burundi régime. It is also different from that of the last Rwanda government. Kayibanda was preoccupied with the task of legitimising the authority of his Hutu, republican, régime, and an effective way of doing this was subtly to rehabilitate 'traditional' customs. The Rwandese President, like the Burundi President, allowed the trappings of the monarchy, to be transferred to them: the former royal titles were gradually introduced in their honour; those summoned for an audience with Mme. Kayibanda found that they had to wait in an ante-room just as was the custom at the royal court at Nyanza; Habyalimana's frank speaking on ethnic matters is a reaction to the veiled but pervasive influence which ethnic factors came to have under the Kayibanda régime. He justified his seizure of power on the grounds that these divisions had to be closed. His position is a strong one, not only because of his military background, but because he is a northerner.

The 'premise of inequality,' to borrow Jacques Maquet's title, which the Kayibanda circle could not escape yet felt to be so humiliating, was not shared by the independent Hutu of the north. From his position of strength Habyalimana can attempt to 'exorcise' the latent ethnic factor and even go so far as to advise his 'brother President' Micombero on the subject:

'We are lucky (in Rwanda) that the majority is now in command, but I must take into account the fact that all Rwandans are equal both in rights and duties. Burundi also has its problems; ... the Tutsi ethnic group is in power, but I am always telling my brother Micombero that he must see to it that he is not President of the Tutsi, but of the Burundi, and that therefore the Tutsi, the Hutu and the Twa must have the same rights and the same duties. I told him that when I went to Kitega recently.'

Recent visitors to both Burundi and Rwanda unanimously contrast the feeling of tension in Burundi, the cowed attitude of the Hutu peasantry and the suspicion manifested by the Tutsi, to the freer, more outgoing atmosphere pertaining in Rwanda. Leading Tutsi in Burundi now admit that 1972 was a terrible error and that by allowing the repression against the Hutu to assume such proportions they were digging their own grandchildren's graves. This awareness, however, also has the effect of encouraging the Tutsi in wage-earning positions to make their money while there is time; foreign advisers report that development projects essential to the long-term health of the economy, for example reductions in the cattle stock, are given no encouragement. In Rwanda, by contrast, where the problems of population growth and shortage of arable land are even more pressing than in Burundi, there is far more optimism. The difference can be summarised crudely by saying that the Rwandese Hutu believe that economic development could lead to the successful integration of the Tutsi minority in a unified polity, whereas the Burundi Tutsi fear that ethnic violence is far from over and that they will lose, possibly not the next round, but the final one.

IX. Discrimination against Foreigners

Evidence of a hitherto unknown form of discrimination has arisen in recent months in both countries. In Burundi it is directed against Tutsi refugees from Rwanda, and in Rwanda it affects Hutu refugees from Burundi. Many Tutsi who fled from Rwanda in the early 1960s or who returned to Burundi rather than Rwanda after studying in Europe have risen to positions of authority in their adopted country (as is the case in Uganda and Zaire). For example, several secondary schools, particularly in the interior of Burundi would collapse overnight without their Rwandese staff; at the two protestant church schools where I taught, Rwandese teachers outnumbered their Burundi counterparts by four to one. The university students and secondary school children who fled to escape the new wave of persecution in Rwanda in 1973 were admitted immediately to Burundi educational institutions, and in the case of university students, were given bursaries on a par with those given to Burundi students. Since then, however, the constantly increasing competition for a state number of employment openings has led to a deterioration in the situation. At least one school had to deal with a serious riot between Burundi and Rwandese Tutsi children during 1974-75. Then in August 1975 it was announced that the maxi-
mum number of foreigners allowed in any one school was to be cut from 20% to 5% as from the start of the new school year; also, foreign children had to reach 60% in the secondary school entrance exam to be admitted, whereas Burundi children only needed 45%. Ironically, such measures increase rather than dissolve the tension, because the Rwandese children remaining tend to come top of their class, a situation which is then attributed to favouritism on the part of the Rwandese teachers. There are even reports of Rwandese Tutsi leaving Burundi for home, an unprecedented phenomenon.

A very similar situation has arisen in Rwanda where the Hutu refugees from Burundi have discovered that their short honeymoon is over. In Burundi, the slaughter of so many Hutu students and government officials in 1972 left spaces, into which the incoming Tutsi refugees from Rwanda could easily be absorbed, but in Rwanda the vast Hutu influx merely increased the already severe pressure on educational and employment places. A condition of the tripartite agreement between Presidents Mobutu, Habyalimana and Micombero was that refugees should be removed to at least 100 km from the border of their country of origin. For Burundi refugees in Rwanda this meant the inhospitable swamps of the Bugesera or the arid plains of the north-east. One of the ways to avoid being sent there was to gain recognition as a student, and so the ranks of those besieging Rwanda's schools have swollen accordingly.

**X. Discrimination against the Twa**

The Twa have been omitted altogether from the discussion so far, and indeed in many articles on Burundi and Rwanda they only receive a one-line mention when the population figures are given. In the absence of any reliable statistics they are always said to number 1% of the total population. However, in a study whose title is discrimination, the Twa demand detailed treatment.

All other Barundi and Banyarwanda claim to be able to recognise the Twa on sight and to identify them by their accent. When asked why the Twa are despised, a whole host of reasons are given, and it is virtually impossible today to verify which of the customs the Twa genuinely practise and what is merely attributed to them out of prejudice. What follows, therefore, is a collation of what a wide variety of informants in different parts of Burundi and Rwanda told me. Twa children are brought up without training in modesty and respect for their parents. The Twa will simply let their daughters be carried off without exacting the *inkwano* or 'bride-wealth.' It is the women who rule the household, the Twa men wander around the hill or go off hunting in a band for days at a time. They are greedy, they eat meat which other Barundi would never touch - rats, moles, sheep - and they prefer food to francs, they do not understand what money is for. The corpses of their dead are just thrown away in a deserted spot, whereas the Hutu and Tutsi are careful to bury their dead. They are inordinately fearful and smoke hemp to gain courage. They file their teeth and have a childish weakness for beads and ornaments; you will still find Twa women wearing copper wire rings on their legs. It would be defilement for other Barundi to eat, drink, or sit under the same roof as a Twa, and hence a Hutu or Tutsi would never take a Twa to court over a grievance. Just as gypsies in Europe are often reputed to be very rich, the Twa are said to have wealth - even to own cows.

The fate of the Twa has grown steadily worse since the abolition of the monarchy and the earlier abolition of feudal institutions in both countries. The majority of Twa scraped a bare living from making pottery or hunting, but a minority occupied traditional and specialised positions at the royal court, particularly in Rwanda, as jesters, executioners, undertakers, builders of the king's huts, etc., and at the courts of leading chiefs. The only instances I heard of where privileged positions had survived the change to modern political institutions were of a Twa deputy in Rwanda in 1961 and a Twa policeman in central Burundi in 1972. Sometimes Twa servants were rewarded with freehold land, or were allowed temporary rights on their masters' property; the Twa community adjacent to the Kibimba mission in Burundi had received their land as a gift from King Mwambutsa, while another group had received land after presenting a local chief with leopard skins. More commonly a group of Twa families would build very simple grass huts on an unoccupied piece of land and move on after a few months, partly to avoid paying the poll-tax, and partly according to custom if a child died while they were there.

Their story is one of continuous exploitation by the rest of Burundi and Rwanda society. Most of them have lost control of their own land, the group near Kibimba having been 'bought out' by local Hutu who then employed them as labourers on what had been their own land. The Twa women produce clay pots with great skill and at great speed, but the price the pots fetch at the local market indicates clearly who
controls the transaction. An indication that their status is becoming increasingly 'marginal' in both societies, is that in the Rwanda violence of 1959–63 many Twa fought for their Tutsi patrons and in many cases accompanied them into exile, whereas the Burundi Twa played almost no part in the ethnic violence of 1972.

Discrimination against the Twa summarised in the earlier quotation "They are not people, they are Twa," is described in this extract from a missionary's letters in the 1930s:

The Vatwa, or Pygmies, mingle with the others only when selling pots, mats, etc. They do not come to our services or school, because they know the feeling against them on the part of the other classes ... The Vatwa are the 'scum' and the other tribes will not intermarry with them.70

An astonishing passage later in the same book shows that 'Twa' was a term of abuse, and secondly highlights the protestant-catholic discrimination practised at the time which this article does not cover:

The Catholic opposition is stronger .... The padre told the folks we do not know God; that he is not here; that we are Pygmies.71

A missionary told me that the best way for protestant Barundi to refute these charges was to tell the Catholics that King Mwambutsa had eaten lunch with the protestant missionaries, that the houseboys had seen this take place, and therefore that the missionaries could not possibly be Twa since the King would never eat with Pygmies!

The forty years since the above quotations have seen significant changes in ecumenical understanding between protestants and catholics, but the assessment of discrimination against the Twa remains just as valid. One hears of the occasional Mutwa in a seminary somehow, but the few who start attendance in the primary schools rarely survive that far; they are driven out on the flimsiest of pretexts, for example that no other child will sit next to them and share their book, or that they smell badly and are unclean. When a Twa woman attended the crowded church at Kibimba, she was given a whole bench to herself. In northern Burundi, the decision of a catholic priest to live in a Twa community and teach them modern techniques of pottery and help them find markets for their products, was met with deep suspicion on the part of the local authorities. Rare efforts by other Barundi to 'civilise' the Twa have not met with success either; a catholic government official paid for a Twa boy and girl to be educated in Bujumbura in the hope that they would marry and produce a 'progressive' family, but once educated the boy said "I am a man now, I am not going to marry a Twa!"

The Twa huts at Kibimba actually adjoin the hospital compound, but hardly ever does a Twa come for treatment, and they go right down into the valley for water rather than use the tap in front of the hospital door. Their distinctive vocabulary and accent, substituting 'sh' for 's' and 'z' for 'j,' and their fondness for wearing charms causes great merriment among other Barundi. When formal encounters take place, for example when groups of children were taken to watch the Twa women making pots, or when individual Twa come begging at foreigners' houses, they readily conform to the stereotype which the rest of the community has of them, shouting, singing, and dancing in the uncontrolled manner which 'proper' Burundi and Rwanda culture so much despises.

Notes

1. Burundi and Rwanda each has a population variously estimated at between three and four millions. The inhabitants, known respectively as Barundi and Banyarwanda, categorise themselves as belonging to one of three ethnic groups, Tutsi, Hutu and Twa. To be fully consistent, the forms 'Batutsi', 'Bahutu', and 'Batwa' should be used, but the Bantu prefix 'ba' has been dropped, in accordance with the prevailing usage. Censuses conducted under Belgian rule included a question on ethnic group identity, and the following figures generally emerged: Tutsi (14%), Hutu (85%), and Twa (1%), the proportions being approximately the same in both countries. The languages spoken, Kirundi in Burundi and Kinyarwanda in Rwanda, are considered to be varieties of the same basic language.

The present government of Burundi, which has President Micombero at its head, is recognised to be predominantly Tutsi, while the present government of Rwanda, under President Habyalimana, is predominantly Hutu.


8. Flash-Infer (Bujumbura), No. 1281, 8 Feb. 1975.


10. Ibid., No. 472, 3 June 1972.
a girl from a Hima clan, considered very inferior by the aristocratic Nyaruguru clans, and in defiance of traditional custom, further improved his image as "a man for all the Barundi." However, after his assassination his wife was cruelly humiliated by her more illustrious rivals.

38. Quoted in Lemarchand, René, op. cit., p. 66.

39. Ibid., p. 119.


41. Table quoted in Lemarchand, R., op. cit., p. 138.

42. Ibid., p. 139.

43. Quoted by De Lacger, op. cit., p. 522.

44. Lemarchand, R., op. cit., p. 133.


46. Cyimana, G., op. cit., p. 245.

47. Lemarchand, R., op. cit., p. 142.

48. Quoted by Lemarchand, R., op. cit., p. 175.

49. Ibid., p. 194.


56. Lemarchand, R., op. cit., p. 344.

57. Forscher, Romain, art., op. cit., p. 129.

58. Ibid., p. 131.


64. Libracozione, art., op. cit.


71. Ibid., p. 136.