

"Tribal" Conflicts in Africa: A Case Study of Rwanda and Burundi

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Abstract: This paper demonstrably dispels the assumption that ethnic conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi are a chronic phenomenon. It emphasizes the consolidation of the caste system during the colonial era, intra-regional disparities within the two communities, high population densities, very weak economic bases, poverty and international interference as some of the dynamics of the current deadly contentions within the two states. An analysis of the genocidal tendencies in the two countries is well given, with special emphasis on the Rwandese tragedy of 1994, as well as its parallels and divergences with the Nazi Holocaust. The effects of the conflict in the two countries such as the proliferation of a gigantic refugee problem and the role of the Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and globalization are critically assessed.

The reason for writing this paper was inspired by a question in the African History Affairs Paper at the Advanced School Certificate level by the now defunct East African Examinations Council in 1976, which asked why Rwanda and Burundi had frequently fallen prey to "tribal" wars. It is quite obvious that the situation in Rwanda and Burundi in 1976 was by any stretch of imagination "more tame" than the one in 1996. Nevertheless, this examination question of 1976 was timely in that by that year, Rwanda had experienced its first full-fledged postcolonial military coup that had taken place in 1973, while Burundi had undergone its first mass scale pogroms directed against the majority-Hutu population, which had left up to 250,000 of them dead in 1972.

Upon reflection, the events that have taken place in both countries since 1976 may make it easier in answering this question which is germane to the ongoing conflict between the so-called "two distinct ethnic groups," notably the Tutsi and Hutu. Why should we

concern ourselves with "ethnic" conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi? After all, have not other African countries such as Uganda, Somalia, Angola, Congo-Kinshasa, Mozambique, Liberia, Sierra Leone and many others undergone similar traumas in their post-colonial history?

The "ethnic" conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi, however tragic they may seem, are very interesting to analyze because the two ethnic groups in both countries have virtually identical culture, language, names, religions and so forth, in addition to having almost the same percentage composition of the two groups in both countries, whereby the Hutu are the majority [85 percent] while the Tutsi are a minority [14 percent] (Kuper 1977, 170; U.S. Department of State 1998; U.S. Department of State 2000). Other minorities such as the Twa, Asians and Europeans constitute one percent of the populace in both countries. Rwanda and Burundi are small states, the former being about 10,170 square miles, while the latter is about 10,745 square miles. Both of these "twin" countries are densely populated. Prior to the 1994 Genocide, Rwanda had a population of 8.1 million, with a density of over 796 per square mile, while Burundi is home to some 6 million, with a density of 558 (Eller 1999, 197). Understandably, these estimates are uncertain and subject to error due to the political upheavals and subsequent refugee migrations over the past decade.

One of the reasons why conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi are more intriguing than other contemporary conflicts on the continent is not only because of similar ethnic compositions in the two countries, but that the tussles in the two states have had their class as well as caste dimensions. Contrary to popular perception, conflicts between the two ethnic groups have never been consistent. The current ethnic polarization between the two ethnic groups within the two countries is neither historic nor incorrigible. Hence, the violence this polarization engenders is largely a recent phenomenon perpetuated by vested interests, within and outside of these two countries. To cast this conflict in terms of "tribal warfare" or "ancestral enmities" is to miss its underlying causes. At times one conflict between the two ethnic groups in one country has often been accompanied by a reaction in the other country. For example, the 1959 Hutu uprising that toppled the Tutsi establishment in Rwanda occurred against the backdrop of "peace and tranquility" in Burundi. Nevertheless, inspired by the events in their northern sisterly neighbor, unrest in Burundi culminated in the infamous 1972 pogroms against the Hutu majority, in which up to 250,000 of them are believed to have been massacred by their Tutsi

overlords.

While the conflict in Burundi has been built more on the Tutsi-Hutu continuum, that of Rwanda has, until recently, been more of an intra-Hutu, rather than a Hutu-Tutsi contention, in the post-colonial era. For example, the military coup that toppled the first Rwandese postcolonial civilian government in 1973 was led by General Juvenal Habyarimana, a northern Hutu, against the southern-based Hutu president, Gregoire Kayibanda. The reason why the conflict in Rwanda has been an intra-Hutu affair was that between 1959 and 1994, the Hutu ruled supreme [like any other social group, being in power for this long tends to create political, social as well as economic cleavages within a seemingly monolithic ethnic entity], while in Burundi, most of this time, power had often been in the hands of the minority Tutsi [with the exception of 1993-1996, when three Hutu presidents governed, but even then, the Tutsi called the shots, since they controlled the military], which explains the civil strife between the "politically disenfranchised" Hutu majority and the ruling "privileged" Tutsi minority.

In discussing the current conflicts in the two countries, we first need to look at social stratification in the two countries, the economy and better still, the two countries' history.

One pertinent question we need to address is why ethnic conflicts of this nature take place in countries such as Rwanda and Burundi. Why are some periods of history in such ethnic configurations marked by ethnic strife, while in other instances, relative calm prevails?

Various studies, such as those of Rene Lemarchand, Jacques Maquet, Pierre Van den Berghe and Warren Weinstein have continued to base their reasons for ethnic strife in the two countries on countenances such as language barriers in the two countries, skin pigmentation, cultural characteristics and modes of productivity. These schools of thought base their assumptions on factors that militate against well-established ethnic boundaries.

Before we proceed to discuss the conflicts in Rwanda and Burundi, we need to elucidate on the terms "ethnic solidarity" and "ethnic collectivization." "Ethnic solidarity" is defined as the strength or density of ethnic social interaction. Exploited ethnic populations do not automatically organize as cultural groups, although dispossessed and socioeconomically "assimilated" ethnic populations do on occasions correlate as "ethnics." This can

demonstrably be seen within the Hutu-Tutsi dichotomy which, until the nineteenth century, did not produce clearly delineated boundaries of ethnicity vis-a-vis competition for resources. This was because until the emergence of the colonial regime and the subsequent capitalist system, pre-colonial Rwanda and Burundi were not societies based on economic class distinctions. It is within this context that we need to look at "ethnic enclaves." An ethnic enclave is a structure in which members of an ethnic population exploit an occupational niche, participate in common ethnic institutions and organizations as well as the formation of a dense interaction of network communication, socialization and marital endogamy. Consideration of the organizational base of ethnic enclaves presupposes that two types of boundaries are relevant. One set of boundaries is drawn around cultural markers, where typical criteria for membership are language, nationality, or other common characteristics. The second set of boundaries is drawn around productive activities, defined by occupations, sectors of the economy, or industry. When the two boundaries coincide considerably, ethnic solidarity is doubly reinforced and maintained by economic links that are also familial and personal (Olzak & Nagel 1986, 20-21).

Of course, the relationship between ethnicity and class has been the subject of great bafflement. This confusion arises out of attempts in trying to demarcate boundaries between the two. This distinction is as fundamental as it is neglected, for if ethnic groups are ordered in a hierarchy, with one superordinate and another subordinate, ethnic conflict moves in one direction, yet if the same two groups are rather equal in importance, conflict takes a different course. Thus, in an attempt to come to grips with the attributes that differentiate ethnic groups, we need to contend with the fact that ethnicity may be attributed to birth or blood, yet exceptions could be made. Ethnic identity is relatively difficult for an individual to change, though at times, changes occur. Consequently, ethnicity is based on facts as well as myths of collective ancestry, which often carries with it, traits believed to be innate. Culturally ascribed roles in a society are one of the ways of defining ethnicity. Ethnicity embraces groups that may have been one ethnic entity once, but may have split in the course of centuries into "races," "tribes," "nationalities," and "castes (Horowitz 1985, 22-54).

Accordingly, Tutsi and Hutu differentiations in Rwanda and Burundi appear to be based on these divisions. Furthermore, ethnic

enclaves can create resource bases for collective action. Whether they do so depends on several factors, including the number and kind of organizations in existence. A second property of ethnic enclaves relevant to collective action is the extent to which the cultural and economic boundaries of ethnic populations coincide. This has oftentimes been the case in Rwanda and Burundi, where in cultural terms, the Tutsi are stereotyped as cattle herders, while their counterparts, the Hutu, are typecasted as peasants.

At this point, we need to demarcate the boundaries between class and caste, a facet that has loomed very large in Rwandese and Burundian social history. It has often been argued that the Tutsi in both countries are the "upper class," while the Hutu are the "lower class." However, this presumption has its own narrow premises. In the Marxian context, classes exist wherever an identifiable category of persons in society appropriates the surplus produced by another and uses that surplus to ensure its own subsistence, without itself necessarily being involved in production. However, that relationship may be disguised either in the way surplus is extracted between two diametrically opposed classes, in the form of "primitive communism" by which any surplus produced is communally appropriated.

In certain kinds of lineage-based societies such as those of Rwanda and Burundi, one can not speak of the presence of class in the Marxian terms inasmuch as no single category in that society appropriates surplus at the expense of another, leaving aside the universal element of communal appropriation of surplus by a chiefly-predisposed class and by an intermediate class of stewards, although this may be dressed up in terms of kingship or justified as periodical redistribution. Such distribution has its own logic in a society where wealth cannot be stored for long periods. In this context, one could argue to some extent that Rwandese and Burundian societies were class-based, since the chiefs who controlled most of the wealth in pre-colonial days were Tutsi, while the Hutu were virtually "serviles."

In pre-colonial times, this unequal relationship in both kingdoms was maintained through an ethos of ethnic superiority and the pervasive system of social and economic contracts that provided payoffs for most members of the society (Gelfand & Lee 1973, 54). As we have already pointed out, the two groups have often been stereotyped as follows: the Tutsi being predominantly cattle herders, while the Hutu are basically peasants. However, as Linden and Linden point out, this characterization oversimplifies the roles of the two

groups. In fact, many wealthy Hutu owned large herds of cattle, while many impoverished Tutsi remained agriculturists (Linden & Linden 1977, 226). It was common for anyone that owned a lot of cattle even "physiologically" resembling a Hutu to be labeled "Tutsi," while the poor agricultural peasants, regardless of their Tutsi or Hutu caste origins, were classified as "Hutu." Therefore, having failed to achieve absolute division in the Rwandese society, according to their artificially-produced racial classifications, the Belgians started basing their categorizations in society on the amount of cattle one owned. For example, if you owned less than 10 cows, you were a Hutu and if you owned 10 or more of them, you were a Tutsi (Berry & Berry 1999, 62).

Therefore, given this low level of differentiation, the standards of living between the two groups were basically the same. However, being a Tutsi was a passport to certain privileges. For example, the Tutsi provided the colonial establishment with warriors, cattle and in general terms, enjoyed a more favored position than the Hutu in this type of clientele system. This total monopoly of power by Tutsi privilege and wealth was seen by the Hutu as uniform. It soon became apparent that a Hutu could never expect to reap the same socioeconomic dividends as his counterpart Tutsi. One can therefore argue that ethnic stratification in the two countries was a mixture of class as well as caste relations. It is in this context that a low-level Tutsi still considered himself/herself superior to a very wealthy Hutu.

Let us now draw up a historical sketch of the modern history of the two states, for it is through the past that we can get a better perception of the contemporary era as well as its attendant problems.

There is no consensus as to the origins of the two major ethnic groups Hutu and Tutsi. Nevertheless, the general consensus is that the small minority Twa people were the earliest known inhabitants of the region. The Hutu are believed to have arrived in the region shortly before the fourteenth century during the great Bantu migration into the area. The Tutsi, a Nilo-Hamitic pastoral people, migrated from northeast Africa around the early fifteenth century from the direction of Ethiopia. Indications are that Tutsi intrusion in this region was what Jacques Maquet (1961, 170) described as a "peaceful conquest" whereby over time, this ethnic group gradually came to dominate the area in political as well as economic terms, which eventually was to evolve into the current caste system in the two countries. It still

remains a mystery as to how the Tutsi managed to exercise their hegemony over the large Hutu masses for a long time.

Nonetheless, Rwanda and Burundi began as monarchical states. Regardless, the two kingdoms differed from each other. For example, in Burundi, the kingdom did not develop strong unitary features as was the case with Rwanda. In Burundi, the king did not have as much supreme power over the Tutsi chiefs as was the case with Rwanda. The despotic character of the Kinyarwanda monarchy was nowhere more evident than in its bureaucratization of subordinate political roles and the precarious tenure of its occupants. The political system was one in which a triple hierarchy of army chiefs, land chiefs and cattle chiefs were all recruited from the dominant stratum, whose powers radiated from the provinces to the districts. Each province was entrusted to an army chief and each district to a land chief [who was also the cattle chief] that was responsible for the collection of tithes in produce and cattle. The powers of the chiefs were dependent on the blessings of the *mwami* [king]. Indeed, we can confidently suggest that they were "bureaucrats" in a sense that they did not claim their position by right or inheritance or by virtue of any prior connection with the area to which they were appointed.

In contrast, Burundi looked like a cluster of warring principalities. The king's absolute powers were at best very superficial in that the *baganwa* [royal chiefs] were the actual power behind the throne. In both kingdoms, the ties of client-ships ran like a seamless tenure of its occupants, linking men and women in a relationship of mutual dependence. In fact, there has been speculation that at the time of colonial contact, the Tutsi and Hutu were on the way to resembling a sub-homogenous ethnic entity. What German and subsequent Belgian colonial rule did was to reverse this process of amalgamation through the pre-existing system of kingship into a "neo-feudal" state, founded on a rigid dichotomy between "Tutsi lords" and "Hutu serfs," which in turn lent legitimacy to an imaginary distinction between a so-called superior race of immigrant "Hamites" of either Egyptian or Ethiopian origins [Tutsi] and the so-called "primitive indigenous Negroes" [Hutu and Twa] (Lemarchand 1970, 26-28, 36, 47).

The German colonial era in Rwanda and Burundi could be epitomized in three phases, notably, [1] from 1899-1903 as a period of "non-intervention," although interrupted in 1903 when German military expeditions were launched against insubordinate chiefs, [2] 1903-

1908 as the period of consolidation in which German colonial rule firmly established itself in the two territories through the curtailment of the powers of the chiefs, while the [3] 1908-1915 period was an era of "divide and rule" in which the monarchies in the two colonies were prevented from gaining a permanent ascendancy over the chiefs and vice-versa. German rule in Rwanda and Burundi was terminated with the end of World War I, when all its colonies were taken over by other European powers, first, under the League of Nations and later as the United Nations [U.N.] Trusteeship. By 1918, the Belgians who were prominent in the region had managed to drive the Germans out of the Ruanda-Urundi colony (Lemarchand 1970, 48-79).

Belgian colonial rule in Ruanda-Urundi in a way resembled British "indirect rule," for with the assistance of the colonial government, the two Tutsi kings in this joint colonial kingdom consolidated their rule in the region. Although domestic slavery was abolished in 1923, the kings in both territories claimed not only "ownership" of the land, but also the Hutu who tilled it, thus reducing them to a form of a landless peasantry.

During the early colonial era, the Belgian authorities compelled every chief as well as sub-chiefs to enforce mandatory coffee-growing, which was to result in the reduction in the amount of arable land available for food cultivation. The Ruanda-Urundi colony also became a labor reserve for the Belgian Congo, especially for the mines of Katanga. These Belgian colonial policies resulted in the emigration of Banyarwanda and Barundi from their colonies to others, such as Uganda in search of better living conditions.

Colonial society was organized on an ethnic hierarchy based on the Belgian Tutsi-Hutu continuum. The internationally renowned cattle-herding Tutsi were Belgium's "noble savages," in contrast with the Hutu who were frowned upon and loathed as peasants unwilling to toil for low labor wages.

Despite efforts by the Tutsi kings to discourage the education of their Hutu subjects, it was the numerous sedentary Hutu rather than the transient and transparent Tutsi cattle keepers who reaped the benefits of mission schools, since many of them had converted to Catholicism, which had become an open sesame to acquiring education as well as health services manned by the church. In 1941, there were more than 3,600 mission schools in the Ruanda-Urundi colony, most of which were Catholic-based. It is these institutions that were to become the basis of an emergent Hutu intelligentsia (Uvin 1996, 7-15).

Moreover, in a divide-and-rule policy, the Belgians promoted the concept of a "rich Hutu" versus a "poor Tutsi" bifurcation, whereby under the guise of "democratic majority rule" on one side and "immediate independence" on the other, pitted the Hutu counter-elite, with the assistance of the church, against the older neo-traditionalist Tutsi elite, which the colonial authorities had hitherto promoted since the 1920s (Prunier 1995, 50).

The Catholic church's support of the Hutu during the late colonial era needs to be put in its proper historical perspective. Until the outbreak of World War II, the church as well as the government had propped up the myth of Tutsi superiority in many aspects of Ruanda-Urundi public life. As everywhere in the colonial world, World War II witnessed what is known as the "colonial awakening" in which the war de-mystified the supposed supremacy of the colonial order. The post-war situation witnessed the proliferation of a cash economy in which the Hutu majority prospered. With this development, a Hutu elite emerged. Another parallel development was the rapid Africanization of the Catholic church in which, by 1950 was dominated by a highly political and sensitive Tutsi elite which not only believed in the superiority of its people, but also interpreted this form of primacy as a stepping stone in its struggle with the colonial order for more equality (Prunier 1995, 41-42). In order to counter this threat, the church threw its weight behind the emerging Hutu elite as an antidote against this supposed "Tutsi threat." Since church and state ideology often overlapped, the former had warmed up to that Hamitic hypothesis in the early colonial days that equated the Tutsi, a Nilo-Hamitic group with having "quasi-Caucasian [read, "white"] attributes (Nyankanzi 1998, 107-126, Taylor 1999, 58), therefore, giving it an ambience of supremacy to other ethnic groups in the region. In light of the threat posed by an increasingly powerful and articulate Tutsi elite for more political power and equality in the late colonial era, the church and state started nurturing Hutu nationalism as a panacea to this threat. Since all religions are essentially philosophies as well as ideologies, the turnabout of the church from supporting the theory of the Tutsi being "noble savages" to being nothing short of villains was strongly implanted in the Hutu psyche between the early 1950s and 1994.

This was the situation in both countries at the time of their independence on July 1, 1962. While recent analysis of the Hutu-Tutsi conflict is often seen in purely ethnic lenses, little attempts have been employed to look at the difference within the two ethnic

groups. For example, in Rwanda, there were differences between the southern Hutu and their northern counterparts. For instance, the first president of Rwanda, Gregoire Kayibanda was a southern Hutu. The 1973 military coup which brought General Juvenal Habyarimana was seen as an attempt by the northern Hutu to dominate their southern correlates (Berry & Berry 1999, 50). In a similar manner, the Tutsi were divided amongst the Tutsi-Banyaruguru, who thought of themselves as being superior to the Tutsi-Hima. Consequently, a situation was created where regional differences affected and complicated the pattern of ethnic group relations as a result of these subunits within each society.

Nevertheless, despite these differences within each ethnic group, Hutu-Tutsi conflicts within the two countries did not subside. On the contrary, they intensified. A case in point, after a series of abortive *Inyenzi* [guerilla incursions] from all surrounding countries, the Tutsi refugees in collaboration with some Tutsi chiefs within Rwanda managed to stage a full-scale invasion from Burundi in concert with an uprising in the northern part of the country, resulting in a retaliatory massacre of up to 20,000 Tutsi by the Hutu-dominated Rwandese government between 1963 and 1964 (Lemarchand 1970, 198-227).

Events in Rwanda sparked off an abortive Hutu-led coup in Burundi, which led to bloody reprisals against the Hutu by the Tutsi-dominated Burundian government in 1965. Therefore, the stage was set for a military coup led by a young Tutsi Captain by the name of Michel Micombero in 1966 under the pretext that the monarchy had failed to contain the political situation. The Micombero military putsch was not simply Tutsi-dominated, but it was dictated to by the southern Tutsi-Hima clan [which was treated with disdain by the northern Tutsi-Banyaruguru, as we have already pointed out]. Although the 1966 military coup in Burundi still reinforced Tutsi dominance in the country, it was the southern Tutsi who were to be the main beneficiaries, thus setting a precedence of intra-Tutsi contentions, in addition to the Tutsi-Hutu conflict (Lemarchand 1970, 295-300).

In Rwanda, independence created a new and ambiguous situation. The political system became inverted, with a small Hutu elite dominating the political power structure. Many of the hundreds of thousands of Tutsi who remained after the 1959 upheavals were wealthy and educated. In order to contain their influence, the new ruling Hutu elite developed a policy of systematic discrimination,

especially in arenas that permitted upward mobility, namely, modern education, jobs and politics. So a quota system was installed that limited Tutsi access to higher education as well as state jobs. The post-colonial regime in Rwanda even retained the Identity Card policy [which has since been formally abolished by the current Rwandese Patriotic Front (RPF) government] that had been introduced by the colonial authorities as a way of identifying Africans by their ethnic origins [the Tutsi had been the main beneficiaries of this practice, because of their social status in society during the colonial era]. In addition to identifying one's ethnicity, the government also forbade the return of more than 100,000 Tutsi refugees under the pretext that there was no more room for them in the country.

Another problem the ruling Hutu elite faced in Rwanda was its justification to rule *vis-a-vis* the large mass of Hutu peasants, whose lives had remained unchanged following the 1959 Revolution. Eventually, the regime's main source of power came from the Hutu elite as well as the army. Control of the state enabled the ruling Hutu elite to enrich itself, in collaboration with its major foreign benefactors, notably Belgium and France.

As far as Burundi's post-colonial history is concerned, there have been marked efforts on the part of Tutsi factions to strengthen their control over the state and armed forces and to transform them into increasingly effective agents for the perpetuation and expansion of Tutsi hegemony over all aspects of Burundian society. There have been repeated attempts by Hutu factions, usually in the form of abortive coups or uncoordinated uprisings, to combat these Tutsi efforts. It is this conflict that has given rise to the various rounds of political and ethnic violence which Burundi has witnessed since independence.

The first major round of post-colonial violence occurred between 1965 and 1966 when an abortive coup by Hutu military officers met with violent suppression by Tutsi forces. This led to the purging of numerous Hutu army officers and the execution of thousands of Hutu, including virtually every significant Hutu leader in Burundi. The Tutsi-Hima-led government again carried out another bloody purge of the Hutu when another Hutu-led coup attempt was foiled in 1969.

The violence that broke out in 1972 represented a dramatic escalation of the conflict. In the wake of deepening intra-Tutsi tensions and increasing anti-Hutu provocation by local Tutsi officials, Hutu uprisings broke out in the capital and parts of the countryside. These

uprisings, which were assisted by Tanzanian-based Hutu refugees, were quickly crushed by the armed forces. The insecure Tutsi-Hima regime in Bujumbura, however, used the opportunity to embark on a widespread and brutal slaughter not only of the rebels, but also of almost the entire Hutu as well as royal Tutsi elite. Aided by Tutsi civilians and youth militias, the army is estimated to have massacred up to 250,000 Hutu and having driven an estimated 150,000 of them out of the country (Abrams 1995, 147-148). The events of 1972 consolidated Tutsi political, social and economic hegemony in Burundi and left the Hutu community traumatized and leaderless for quite sometime. Another series of pogroms based on the same lines as the 1972 version again occurred in Burundi in 1988 (Lemarchand 1994, 118-130).

The 1972 Burundi massacres and the subsequent flight of Hutu refugees was the chief catalyst for the military coup of 1973 in neighboring Rwanda. Then defence minister, General Juvenal Habyarimana, a northern Hutu from Gisenyi, justified the coup d'etat by arguing that the PARMEHUTU government of Gregoire Kayibanda was unable to protect the Hutu from a possible Tutsi political resurgence in the country.

At first, the Habyarimana regime achieved much in the economic arena in the 1970s and 1980s. A case in point, infrastructure and housing underwent great improvement, the civil service was modernized and a new clean water supply system was installed in the country. His government's policies attracted foreign aid, although much of it was spent on ill-advised, insecure and short-sighted projects which were at times imposed by the aid donors.

The government also faced another problem that food production was failing to keep up with population growth. As in other countries in Africa, Rwanda and Burundi faced land fragmentation, whereby a man left land to his sons upon his death, who in turn divided it up into smaller patches. This resulted in soil exhaustion.

As a result of such factors, the mid-1980s saw an increase in poverty. A decade-long decline in coffee prices, the country's major export, paralleled the devaluation of the Rwandese franc by 40 percent in 1989. Coffee exports fell from \$144 million in 1985 to \$30 million in 1993. Aggregate GDP per capita decreased from \$355 in 1983 to \$260 in 1990. These declines substantially reduced the earnings of the state as well as the purchasing power of most rural households. In

urban areas, wage stagnation and a dearth in employment opportunities was accompanied by a rise in food prices. Faced with such mounting economic crisis, as well as increasing dependence on foreign finance, the Habyarimana regime saw no alternative but to accept an International Monetary Fund [IMF] Structural Program, that would freeze government salaries and devalue the Rwandese franc by 67 percent (Uvin 1996, 11, Uvin 1998, 53-69, <http://kanga.ifrc.org/utv/main1.html>).

The Rwanda of the 1990s has been associated with genocidal disposition. Before we discuss the events of 1990s, we need to define and conceptualize the word "genocide."

Given the great variety of socio-historical contexts of acts of genocide, it would hardly seem possible to develop a theory on the subject. With the exception of studies, such as those of Leo Kuper, Alain Destexhe and Gerard Prunier and Rene Lemarchand, there has been very little theoretical analysis on the topic in relation to the two countries. The paucity of theoretical speculation about genocide in general may be due to the fact that it is seen as an extreme manifestation of a broader phenomenon of violence, destruction and aggression. This may also explain why the more focused theories tend to deal with specific types of genocide. Though animals do also engage in intra-species killing, genocide is essentially a human crime. Nevertheless, this does not automatically suggest that it is rooted in human nature. On the contrary, conflict of a potentially genocidal nature is not the normal pattern of interaction between social groups. Even in our contemporary world, ravaged as it is by genocidal-prone conflicts, most societies develop and relate to each other without being interrupted by mob-annihilating destruction. A case in point is Rwanda and Burundi. Contrary to the international media's assertion at the time of the Rwandese Genocide, the Hutu-Tutsi conflict is not an "age long" discord. Oral as well as written historical accounts do not support this assertion. Although the Tutsi overlords had exercised political hegemony over the Hutu for generations, which may have created a few tensions between the two, both groups had coexisted with each other through intermarriage. In fact, it has been argued that several Banyarwanda and Barundi are actually "Hutsi," a euphemism for people born as a result of the miscegenation between the Hutu and Tutsi (Taylor 1999, 32). We may agree with Christopher Taylor (1969, 68) that not all inequalities and ethnic discrimination in Rwanda [and Burundi] emanate from colonialism. Nonetheless, it is imperative

to note that while the two countries had lived with these inequalities for centuries, it is the colonial order as well as the church which created grandiloquent myths about them to the extent of sensitizing the populace to these divisions in day-to-day existence and transactions, which in turn played a big part in the current problems prevalent between and among these ethnic groups.

Since genocide is a crime against a collectivity, be it ethnic, religious or political, the potentiality of polarizing sections of the populace along these lines increases the propensity toward this type of monstrosity. Few governments engage in large-scale genocidal massacres against racial, ethnic and religious groups. Regardless, the involvement of governments and its ruling elites in many genocidal orgies is a reminder that human actors make choices and decisions that could lead to genocide. The strategies and goals of elites may be a crucial factor in genocide. Accordingly, genocide takes the form of a direct attack on contending elites and the groups from which they draw support, as in the Tutsi genocidal onslaught against the Hutu in Burundi in 1972 and 1988 as well as that of the Hutu against the Tutsi in 1994. Nonetheless, genocide is not an inevitable consequence of certain social conditions within a society. On the contrary, there could be extreme pluralism in a society with highly antagonistic polarizing ideologies and divisions based on a long history of religious, social, economic as well as political antagonisms with a long tradition of reciprocal violence.

Since issues of contention tend to be conducive to genocidal conflict in places such as Rwanda and Burundi, a small minor fray, for example, could easily set off a chain of reactions such as reciprocal terrorism as well as political confrontation at the national level. This was the case in Burundi in 1988 when clashes between the Tutsi-dominated UPRONA party local officials and Hutu peasants over spoils from illicit coffee smuggling into Rwanda led to a bloody confrontation in northern Burundi in which about 500 Tutsi are known to have perished. Under the pretext of trying to restore "law and order," the Tutsi-controlled Burundi army moved in, inflicting a series of massacres, resulting in about 20,000 Hutu deaths and driving tens of thousands of them into exile in neighboring Rwanda (Dorward 1994, 34, Abrams 1995, 148). Burundi and Rwanda are therefore, classic examples whereby a long history of protracted struggle, violent repression and its resultant memories for subordinate groups of past injustice and atrocity are most likely to translate such emotional

impulses into destructive violence.

The post-1985 economic crisis that affected most Rwandese also played a crucial role in promoting the rapid spread of genocidal tendencies [just as the Nazi had done so in Germany and its subsequent conquered portion of Europe, half a century earlier]. In the face of an economic depression, almost all socio-professional groups were suffering in economic terms. High as well as low-paying jobs were rapidly disappearing. Rural employment opportunities also vanished. This was compounded by the shortage of land. Hatred of "the other" [depending on whether one was a Hutu or Tutsi], provided a buttress for the low self-esteem stemming from chronic unemployment as well as frustrated aspirations (Uvin 1999, 53-69).

It was during this time that the colonial racial ideology with regard to the origins of each ethnic group was whipped up at an intensity as never seen before as a means of justifying the impending genocidal proclivities. The colonial ethno-racial ideology had argued that the first inhabitants of the Ruanda-Urundi territory were the "primitive" Twa, who were predominantly hunters and gatherers. The "genetically better" Hutu descended upon the scene as creators of some fledgling political organizations. The last arrivals on the scene were the conquering but "clever" minority Tutsi from Ethiopia, whose "superior intelligence" enabled them to become excellent pastoralists. The nineteenth century saw the coming of the Europeans, who according to this ideology, were far better than the three African ethnic groups. Therefore, the polemic took on an evolutionary racial dimension, in that the darker Twa were supplanted by the slightly darker Hutu, who in turn were replaced by the brown-skinned Tutsi, who in turn were replaced by the lighter-skinned Europeans. Hence, the predication of this argument was that the lighter-skinned you were the better you were. This argument conveniently ignored facts that they were many brown-skinned Hutu, just as they were many dark-skinned Tutsi and that historical records had shown that most social institutions, rituals, customs and so forth, in these kingdoms had been Hutu-inspired rather than Tutsi-inspired. This type of historical interpretation was a means by which the colonial socio-political order had to be maintained. The Europeans who participated in this analysis included colonial administrators, scholars as well as missionaries, as we have already seen.

At the beginning of the 1990s, three striking factors confronted the Habyarimana government in Rwanda, emanating mainly

from the disgruntled Hutu elite. The regime had adopted increasingly harsh measures against its political opponents through ruthless means such as politically-motivated assassinations. Political opposition came mostly from the south and central regions, since most positions of power in the government were monopolized by people from the president's district in the north, which had also received a lion's share in public spending investment. Widespread corruption, geographical exclusion and disappointment, coupled with the slow pace of development [especially after the Structural Adjustment Program had reduced the efficiency of the state] fueled this discontent (Uvin 1999, 53-69).

Another cardinal problem the Habyarimana government faced was the refugee problem, especially that of the Tutsi Diaspora that had fled the 1959 Revolution. The government's reluctance to permit these refugees back was in itself a problem. This had to do with Tutsi lands that had been confiscated by the Hutu-led administrations. In this regards, the government was very apprehensive of returning these refugees home, lest they started claiming property such as land that had previously been seized during the 1959 tumult. Nonetheless, since the Tutsi diaspora in places such as Uganda faced consistent resentment and persecution in their host countries, the only alternative was to return to Rwanda by any means necessary. It is against this background that on October 1, 1990, the Tutsi refugees in Uganda [who had also been active in the country's Uganda National Resistance Army (NRA) during the 1980s civil war in that country], decided to invade Rwanda en masse under the newly reconstituted Rwandese Patriotic Front [RPF]. It is noteworthy that this had not been the first time that Tutsi refugees had launched invasions from neighboring countries after independence, for they had impelled abortive ones from Burundi and other surrounding countries between 1963 and 1964 as we have already noted. Yet, the 1990 invasion appears to have been better coordinated, taking into account the fact that many of the Tutsi fighters had acquired experience as military combatants in Uganda's NRA. As in the invasion of 1963/1964, the Rwandese government retaliated by detaining around 9000 Tutsi, while massacring around 2000 of them (Berry & Berry 1999, xvii-xx). For the time being, the Tutsi invasion united the southern, central and northern Hutu who saw the invasion as a serious threat to Hutu political dominance. Despite this apparent display of unity, the RPF invasion proved to be very formidable

In response to the "RPF menace," the ruling Hutu authorities began contemplating genocide as the most viable solution to the Tutsi threat. In 1992, two death squads were formed by the names of *Interahamwe* ["those who attack together"] and *Impuzamugambi* ["those with a single purpose"] (Adelman & Suhrke 1999, 370, Uvin 1999, 64). The civil war went on unabated with degrees of atrocity committed by both sides. Despite the Arusha Peace Accords between the two antagonistic forces on August 4 1993, the bloodletting between the two sides continued with undiminished ferocity (Berry & Berry 1999, Adelman & Suhrke 1999, 143, Uvin 1999, 61-69). The assassination of the Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, in neighboring Burundi increased the urge for genocide against the Tutsi as well as the Hutu opposition.

Aside from the events in neighboring Burundi, the Arusha Peace Accords in 1993 may have been the real catalyst for the genocide that was to erupt in Rwanda the following year. The civil war which erupted in Rwanda following the Tutsi-led RPF invasion from Uganda had left the Habyarimana regime almost in shambles by February 1993, despite overt French military support. It was under these circumstances that the government was forced to sign the Arusha Peace Accord in 1993. Under the Accord, Habyarimana agreed to a transitional government that would include his archenemies, the RPF. Although the agreement had superficially attempted to resolve the three-year-old political impasse in the country, it in effect polarized Rwanda amongst the external backers of both antagonists. It came to light that the Rwandese government was being militarily supported by its national guard, militias, France, then Apartheid South Africa and Egypt while on the other hand, the RPF was being supported by the United States, Britain, Belgium [which had by this time switched its allegiance to the RPF], the United Nations, the IMF, World Bank as well as most of the international [Western] media. Consequently, the Accords tied the Rwandese government's hands. For instance, it alienated itself from the Hutu extremist militias that were still bent on finding a final solution to the Tutsi-led RPF "menace," while on the other hand it became more globally estranged as many of its international backers, including France, abandoned it at the "last minute" (Adelman & Suhrke 1999, 131-251, Berry & Berry 1999).

So on April 6, 1994, when the plane carrying Presidents Juvenal Habyarimana of Rwanda and Cyprian Ntaryamira of Burundi was mysteriously shot down over Kigali after their return from a second

round of Arusha Peace Talks, the instruments of genocide that had been years in the making were implemented. The Rwandese Genocide has often been compared to the Jewish Holocaust under the Nazi. There are similarities as well as differences between the two instances. Like the Germans and Jews, the Hutu and Tutsi had lived together for half a millennium. However, unlike the German Jews and the Germans "Proper," the Hutu and Tutsi were far more intertwined with each other in political, cultural, social as well as in economic terms. This probably made it a little easier for the Hutu extremists to carry out their form of genocide in a far more organized methodic manner than had their Nazi predecessors, which explains why they could have managed to kill more than a million people in just three months as opposed to the Nazi slaughter of six million Jews which took 12 years to be realized. Mobilizing thousands of Rwandese to slaughter tens of thousands of their own required effective organization.

Unlike other African "failed states," the Rwandese state had been successful in maintaining political as well as relative economic stability until 1990 when the current upheavals commenced. Thus, it is least surprising that Hutu extremists used its administrative machinery, its military as well as its party organizations to carry out a coterminous genocidal policy which reached all levels of the population. Those with state power coerced even those that were reluctant to kill to carry out their dastardly deeds. They also offered attractive incentives to an already impoverished Hutu-majority populace a green light to the "final solution" of the "Tutsi Threat" by promising them land, houses and other properties of their victims. Despite these incentives, the Hutu ruling class in Rwanda could not have succeeded so well in their genocidal blueprint had it not been for the fallacious history that had long been propounded by the colonial system and accepted by both Hutu and Tutsi alike. Like the identity card that had guaranteed privileges to the Tutsi during the colonial period and then served to identify them as victims of the genocide, the history that had once legitimized their rule was now being turned against them in order to justify their liquidation. One delusive theory that was put in practice during the genocide was that of Tutsi purported origins in Ethiopia. According to the political architectures of the Rwandese Genocide, the only way to "repatriate" the Tutsi back to Ethiopia (Berry & Berry 1999) was to kill them, dump them into the River Kagera, whereby they could go back to that country via the River Nile. This explains why many bodies washed off the

shores of Lake Victoria to the consternation of many Ugandan fishermen who had the thankless task of re-burying them. It was not until July 1994 when the Tutsi-led RPF seized power in Rwanda that the genocide was halted (Adelman & Suhrke 1999, 324, Berry & Berry 1999). Just as the Holocaust redefined Jewish identity, so had the Rwandese Genocide, which has left a profound impact on the subconsciousness of both Tutsi and Hutu.

While these events were unfolding in Rwanda, Burundi was also moving, but at a much slower pace, towards its own genocidal agenda. It is possible to argue that polarization in Rwanda and its fearful expressions were intimately related to the process of polarization in Burundi. Yet the social appendages as well as the infrastructure of group relations were very different from those of Rwanda and seemed to offer real possibilities for national integration, but in the end, an even more massive holocaust seemed to await the Hutu majority [as opposed to the Tutsi minority in Rwanda] in Burundi. We have already looked at the Hutu pogroms of 1972 and 1988. As a result of international outcry and condemnation of the 1988 bloodbath, the Tutsi-led military government of Major Pierre Buyoya [who had seized power in September 1987] was compelled to initiate political reforms that would usher in the first democratically-elected government in Burundi in June 1993 under President Melchior Ndadaye, a Hutu. However, hopes for everlasting peace were dashed when Ndadaye was assassinated by hardline Tutsi elements within the army on October 21, 1993, which resurrected Hutu-Tutsi acrimony in the country. The two succeeding Hutu presidents, Cyprian Ntaryamira [who died in the same plane crash as the Rwandese president in 1994] and Sylvestre Ntibantuganya could neither control the unruly Tutsi-led army nor the Hutu guerilla rebel militias. This prompted Major Pierre Buyoya to stage his second military coup on July 25, 1996 (Nyankanzi 1998, 44-48). The reaction to this coup was very swift. Many surrounding countries imposed economic sanctions on the new regime. However, they do not seem to have weakened Buyoya and his "mono-ethnic" Tutsi-led army's rein on power. Meanwhile, the Hutu guerilla militias have intensified their struggle with the government, creating about 350,000 internal refugees as of March 2000, who are now plagued by cholera (Nutt 2000, *The Monitor* March 13, 2001) and by March 2001, the war was being fought within meters of the presidential palace in the capital city, Bujumbura. Nevertheless, as of writing, the situation in Burundi remains very fluid and there are

still fears that the country could degenerate into the same genocidal holocaust as that in Rwanda.

In assessing the conflict in the two countries, we may ask ourselves as to what the solutions will be to the current "tribal warfare" in the two states. The answers are not that easy to come across. One proposition has been the partition of Rwanda and Burundi, whereby one country is awarded to the Hutu, while the other one goes to the Tutsi. However, this type of denouement is impractical for the simple reason that the Hutu and Tutsi have been living in these two interlocking entities for generations and neither of the two ethnic groups would be willing to relocate from their ancestral lands. Partition is not often the best solution for the simple reason that animosities between the two groups could intensify and crystallize into hard feelings on both sides, if the Indian subcontinent dispensation of 1947 and 1948 is any indication to refer to in this instance (Kuper 1977, 1981).

The other problem that has been one of the key reasons behind the intensification of ethnic animosities within the two countries has been poverty as well as significant population densities in the two countries. At the time of the Rwandese Genocide of 1994, Rwanda was the fifteenth poorest country in the world, while Burundi was the eighth, according to World Bank statistics (International Bank for Reconstruction and Development 1994, 154-156).

Indices since then suggest that the economic situation has deteriorated as a result of the ongoing civil strife in both countries. Land is a very important problem in Rwanda and Burundi. For example, Rwanda is the most densely populated country in Africa. Each square kilometer of agricultural land supports more than 400 people. Eighty-five percent of the people live below the poverty line and a third of the children suffer from malnutrition. There is no doubt that the war and the subsequent genocide, resulting in massive loss of life and population, have only aggravated this problem. As a result, agricultural production in 1995-96 was only 66 percent of the 1990 level, while in 1996-1997 it was still only 78 percent. Population displacement in general has resulted in de-capitalization, due to lack of maintenance of terraces as well as a decline in soil fertility, due to lack of investments and deconstruction as a result of poor credit availability. The composition of production units has also changed, with a 61 percent increase in the number of female-headed households [from 21 percent of the total in 1992 to 34 percent in 1996] and a 25 percent

reduction of males between the ages of 15 and 64 over the 1990-1996 period (*Living Marxism* 1995, 24-27, Hoyweghen 1999, 353-372).

While these are clear signs of structural problems, admittedly, with hindsight, the Rwandan agrarian sector has proved remarkably resilient. Luckily, the much anticipated large-scale famine has not materialized [in part due to food aid provisions].

The outcome of the so-called "Tutsi-Hutu" conflict in the 1990s has been the creation of one of the worst refugee crisis in recent history. About two million refugees were scattered to places such as Goma [on the Rwanda-Congo border], which turned them into virtual "metropolitan cities" overnight. The refugees have been both Hutu and Tutsi alike, fleeing the 1994 Genocide and subsequent RPF reprisals. Food and water shortages and the spread of disease combined to create intolerable conditions. For example, cholera immediately claimed as many as 20,000 lives, while the logistics of arranging the daily supply and distribution of 30 million liters of drinking and 1,000 tons of food became most daunting (Oppenheim 1997, 38). This refugee crisis has brought into light a critical appraisal of the role of non-governmental organizations [NGOs]. While these days, NGOs are applauded for having rushed to the aid of the millions of refugees fleeing the aftermath of the 1994 Genocide, some criticize their role in having failed to prevent the gruesome events of that year since NGOs are renown as "grassroots" organizations in constant touch with rural folks in most of Sub-Saharan Africa. Many reasons have been advanced for this quandary. First, Rwanda is a very poor landlocked country with no minerals of strategic and economic importance, such as oil. Therefore, with the exception of France, Rwanda was not an important country to most of the permanent members of the United Nations Security Council. The second reason was the "Somali fatigue," whereby the U.N. and the U.S. had suffered some military humiliations in Somalia. Consequently, there was the reluctance at the U.N. to intervene in the impending Rwandese crisis (Mackintosh 1997, 468).

In the wake of the Goma experience, NGOs have been criticized for competing for favorable international media attention. Accordingly, a critical assessment of the performance of aid agencies and NGOs is pertinent, especially in light of some of the more shameful spectacles witnessed during the Rwandese crisis. It is true that being "grassroots" organizations, NGOs and other aid agencies have been

primary sources of information, especially in regard to whom or what factions in the conflict committed genocidal as well as other heinous crimes. The refusal of the NGOs to examine the conflict in its totality created a biased, partial and duplicitous presentation of events. For instance, the most ridiculous portrayal of the war as totally being "genocidal" resulted in the reluctance and in many cases, refusal of the NGOs and other aid agencies in recognizing the two million people that had fled their homes and ended up in refugee camps as *bona fide* refugees. This was because since the refugees were overwhelmingly Hutu, the NGOs did not regard them as victims of ethnic hatred. Most reports about RPF's counter-atrocities against the Hutu were dismissed outright as "malicious." It was not until Amnesty International lent credence to a report put out by the United Nations commission that even the RPF government was forced to acknowledge that "some of" its soldiers had participated in revenge killings against several of the Hutu that had attempted to return home. Nevertheless, despite these retributive acts, 500,000 of these refugees had returned to Rwanda by late 1996 (*The Monitor* February 15, 2001). The genocide has also produced an inevitable orphan problem, whereby it is not surprising these days to find children as young as 11 years old as heads of households in Rwanda (National Public Radio 1998).

The Rwandese civil strife has made Burundi a haven of refugees, Tutsi and Hutu analogously, despite its "stumpy-scale" civil war. Burundi's case is being handled rather differently by the international community, thanks to a greater awareness of the volatile nature of the situation. There was a determination within the international community of not "replicating another Rwanda."

Nonetheless, the current concern over Burundi in important and influential circles hardly constitutes *conflict-prevention*. As recent events suggest, the explosion has already taken place. As already pointed out, it was back in October 1993 that Burundi's first democratically-elected President, Ndadaye, was assassinated by hardline Tutsi army officers, after barely four months in power. Since then, up to 200,000 Burundians, Hutu and Tutsi akin, have died in the violence that has ensued and 700,000 refugees have fled to countries such as Tanzania, Congo-Kinshasa and Rwanda. This has forced humanitarian agencies, already struggling with people displaced by the civil strife in Rwanda and the Kivu Province in eastern Congo, to open up operations on yet another front. Despite assurances that

returning refugees would not be harmed, human rights abuses have been inflicted on several of them, according to an Amnesty International Report (Amnesty International 1996, Mackintosh 1997, 468)

The international dimension to the ethnic conflict in the two countries has often been conveniently ignored and the whole issue has often been presented as that of "innate hatred" between the two ethnic groups. As we have already seen, the colonial powers in the two countries, Germany and subsequently Belgium, had deliberately created a carefully crafted but distorted historical account of the evolution of the three premier ethnic groups [Twa, Hutu and Tutsi] in both countries that would pit one ethnic group against the other as a means by which their "divide-and-control" strategy would be maintained. In the 1960s, countries such as China became interested in the two countries. For instance, China's attempt at penetrating a country such as Burundi was a means of checking the Soviet Union at the height of the Sino-Soviet rift. Countries such as Zaire [since renamed the Democratic Republic of Congo (Congo-Kinshasa)], Uganda, Tanzania and Kenya have at one time or the other supported one faction against the other one in the two countries for political and/or economic reasons.

Regardless, the most powerful foreign involvement in the two countries has been mainly from Western countries and their international economic organizations such as the International Monetary Fund [IMF], World Bank and the European Economic Community. We have already noted the colonial roles of Germany and Belgium. After independence, cashing on its Francophone culture, as natured by the Belgians, France supported the Hutu post colonial regimes of Kayibanda, Habyarimana as well as the "genocide regime" of 1994. Meanwhile, the U.S., which had always wanted to penetrate the area for geopolitical as well as geo-economic reasons, has often supported the Tutsi factions in these conflicts as an antidote to French support of the Hutu-led governments. In the first three years of the 1990s, France doubled its aid to the Rwandese government and through *Operations Panda* and *Noroit*, it intervened militarily in order to prevent Habyarimana's government from falling into the hands of the "Anglophone" Tutsi-led RPF. France defended its intervention on the premise that the RPF was a stooge of Uganda, which was in turn seen as an appendage of the U.S. The French and U.S. conflicts of interest came to a head during the Rwandese Genocide when France backed the Hutu-led "genocide regime," while the U.S. backed the

Tutsi-led RPF. Shortly after the genocide, France implemented *Operation Turquoise*, which not only sheltered the Hutu from the RPF forces, but also allowed key perpetrators in the genocide, such as soldiers and militia members, to escape to then Zaire with their weapons. The RPF victory provoked strong reactions in France, since many government officials in Paris felt that Rwanda was "lost" and that it would be a matter of time before Burundi and Zaire also fell to the "Anglosaxons," which explains France's attempts to ostracize the current Rwandese RPF government as indicated during the eighteenth Franco-African Summit held in Biarritz in November 1994 and beyond (Lemarchand 1970, 387-388 & 1994, 68-69, *Newsweek* 1996, 46, Huliaras 1998, 594-595, Lederer 2000, 8).

As we have already noted in passing, international economic organizations have exacerbated the conflicts within the two countries. The 1990-1994 civil war in Rwanda also coincided with the "shock therapy" administered by the IMF and World Bank's Structural Adjustment Program, which produced more misery through massive cuts in the health and educational sectors. Consequently, it is least surprising that when neighbor-killed-neighbor in Rwanda, many did so as much in a desperate struggle for land and resources (Sibomana 1997, 69-70) as in the struggle for political power, an aspect that has been de-emphasized in analyzing one of the root causes of the Rwandese Genocide. The civil wars in Rwanda and Burundi have been politically barbaric, but so have been the conditions in which their populace are forced to live in, circumstances exacerbated by the very international powers-that-be and their international economic institutions which now sit in judgement of these people.

The Hutu-Tutsi conflict in the two countries is likely to have regional as well as international ramifications. Uganda, as we have already noted, has been sucked into the conflict by virtue of having had numerous Rwandese refugees over the decades. It is imperative to note that the Hutu-Tutsi conflict in the two countries spilled into the Congolese civil strife of 1996 and 1997, because the Banyamulenge ethnic group, which was on the verge of being politically and economically disenfranchised by the crumbling Mobutu regime, is ethnically affiliated to the Tutsi. In a show of ethnic solidarity, the current Tutsi-led governments in the two countries decided to back their brethren in their struggle against the then Zairean government, but not before inflicting severe retributory acts on the Hutu refugees that had fled Rwanda after the 1994 Genocide. Therefore, what had

began as a Hutu-Tutsi conflict in the two countries eventually turned into a nationwide rebellion in neighboring Congo [formerly Zaire], in part, causing the collapse of the longtime Mobutu regime.

There is no doubt that there will be an attempt to bring the perpetrators of genocide in Rwanda as well as in Burundi to justice. However, this aspect misses the point of trying to redress the historical, political and economic root causes of this bloody feud, many of which this paper has sought to address.

There is no outright win-win situation in this conflict. A negotiated settlement between the two adversaries that should involve the surrounding regional countries as well as some major international powers [that have been taking sides in this crisis for a very long time] should be one of the panaceas to this seemingly internecine disharmony.

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