

## **The New World Order and Multipartyism in Africa: The Case of Rwanda 1990 - 1994**

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**Abstract:** *The New World Order is phraseology resonant with the abrupt end of the Cold War in 1989. Apart from the collapse of the Soviet Union as an experiment in statecraft, another major fallout of the end of the Cold War was the insistence on political pluralism in hitherto single party dictatorial political environments in the international system. In Africa, Rwanda was one such single-party bastion that needed to rapidly transit to a multiparty democratic order. Our intention here is to interrogate the forces that made for, and resisted this move; and with what consequences for the emergence of a democratic Rwandese society. Relying heavily on secondary sources; and using the instrumentalist model in analyzing conflicts in plural societies, we further seek to determine what role the structure of society played in ensuring that the situation rapidly deteriorated to a genocidal bedlam. The paper concludes on the premise that statecraft in post -independent Africa must deliberately adopt inclusive strategies that will accommodate the various elements and groups to avoid the cataclysm that usually results from group tyranny.*

**Keywords:** *New World Order, Rwanda, Multipartyism, Statecraft, Group Tyranny.*

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### **1. INTRODUCTION**

For former President George Bush of the United States of America (USA), the 1991 Persian Gulf war was about "more than one small country; it is a big idea; a new world order". Continuing, he stated that the new order comes "with new ways of working with other nations... peaceful settlement of disputes, solidarity against aggression, reduced and controlled arsenals and just treatment of all peoples"<sup>1</sup>, Encompassed within the last of all the ideas, was the idea that dictatorial single party regimes in the international system needed to rapidly transform to multi - party democratic social dispensations so as to give those who had been held in some form of political servitude in their own countries a lee way to express themselves.

Seen in this light, we may inadvertently impute into this order a justice or morality that it does not really have. It is thus reasonable to note that order has little to do with justice, but a lot to do with the distribution of power among states. World order is thus the product of a stable distribution of power among the major states. But Liberals see order as arising from broad values such as democracy and human rights, as well as from international law and institutions such as the United Nations. It was probably in this light that multiparty democracy came to be seen as a prerequisite for the new order that dawned in the international system following the diminution of Soviet power in Eastern Europe in the autumn of 1989. The rapid decline of the Soviet Union around this period caused the end of the old bipolar order that had persisted for nearly half a century.

It must be noted that the old order had provided a stability of sorts. Even though the cold war exacerbated a number of third world conflicts, economic conflicts among the United States, Europe and Japan were dampened by common concerns about the Soviet military threat. Bitter ethnic quarrels were kept under tight control by Soviet presence in Eastern Europe. A number of third world conflicts were averted or shortened if the Super Powers feared that their client states might drag them too close to the nuclear abyss. Some analysts believe that a stronger Soviet Union would never have allowed its Iraqi client to invade Kuwait in 1990; as Syria seem to indicate presently.

All these controls gave way by the diminution of Soviet power. So, rather than the Gulf War, it was the collapse of Soviet power in Eastern Europe that heralded the New World Order. With the end of the old order, a new order, dominated by liberal democratic ethos took centre stage in the international system of the late 90s. This was the background to multipartyism in Rwanda of the 1990s. But to properly understand the course of events, it is necessary to attempt a brief rehearse of Rwandan history up to the 1990s.

## 2. DEVELOPMENTS IN RWANDAN HISTORY UP TO THE 1990S

Rwanda and Burundi were part of former German East Africa. They were conquered by the Belgian army in 1916 and later given to Brussels as Mandate Territories by the League of Nations<sup>2</sup>.

The Kingdom of Rwanda-Urundi from which the modern states of Rwanda and Burundi emerged had been inhabited for several centuries by people who speak the 'Kinyarwanda' language. There are three major groups that constitute the population of these modern states - the Hutu about 85%, the Tutsi about 14% and the Twa about 1%. There is a fourth group - the Ganwa, an elite group but insignificant in numerical strength, descendants of past rulers, considered neither Hutu nor Tutsi<sup>3</sup>.

Contrary to popular opinion, these groups are not ethnic groups, or what colonial anthropology in sub-Saharan Africa referred to as "tribes". There are rather social divisions of the Barundi and Banyarwanda ethnic groups, who, it is believed may have had different origins, but have lived together and spoke the same language and intermarried for hundreds of years.<sup>4</sup>

A bastardized product of 19<sup>th</sup> century European racial theories, specifically, the now discredited "Hamitic hypothesis", posited a racial differentiation between the three aforementioned groups found in Rwanda and Burundi. According to this theory, the Tutsi were "black Caucasian" conquerors from Ethiopia - a superior aristocratic race; the majority Hutu were designated Bantu peasants, incapable of playing any role in a civilized society, and the tiny minority of Twa hunter gatherers, were relegated to the status of aboriginal pygmies, a so-called "leftovers from an earlier stage of human evolution".<sup>5</sup>

Belgium supported the Tutsi royal court right up to the eve of independence. It was only in the late 1950s that the Belgian authorities began to bow to international pressure, among other factors prevalent in the period, to switch sides abruptly to support the Hutu social revolution - the so called Rwandan Revolution of 1959 / 61.<sup>6</sup> As violence erupted against the Tutsi following the revolution, many Rwandan Tutsi fled to Uganda, among other countries of the Great Lakes. In Uganda, they were welcomed because of their historical connection with the Bahima royal family. These long standing ties had been reinforced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Rwanda extended its nominal hegemony to Bufumbira, which lies in present day kigezi district.<sup>7</sup>

The arrival of Rwandan refugees, mostly Tutsi, which continued for a number of years, was destined to impact on Bufumbira, as conditions there resembled those they left behind in Rwanda. A commentator captures the situation thus:

There are two ethnic groups: The Bahima and the Bairu. The Bahima were traditional rulers while the Bairu were serfs, like the Bahutu in Rwanda. Traditionally there have been conflicts between the ruling Bahima and the ruled Bairu. So whereas the Bahima were willing to let the Batutsi come in, the Bairu saw them as invaders who had to be fought and thrown out. The Batutsi were coming in to join hands with the Bahima to take away the little land belonging to Bairu.<sup>8</sup>

To add to the conflict potential of the above scenario, we recall that some 200,000 economic refugees, mostly Hutu, had arrived in south Uganda during the colonial period after fleeing Belgium regime of state -conscripted labour (corvee), and fierce taxation.<sup>9</sup> The free and easy movement of people across the Uganda - Rwanda border began to aid military incursions by the exiled Tutsi refugees into Rwanda, ostensibly to re-assume their dominant position in the country - the so called "Inyenzi" attacks.<sup>10</sup>

Meanwhile, situation in Rwanda in late 1959 had resulted ultimately to an overthrow of the Tutsi monarchy and the transfer of political power from the Tutsi to the Hutu. In 'Kinyarwanda', what happened is referred to as the "Muyaga - a word normally used to describe a strong but variable wind with unpredictable and destructive gusts."<sup>11</sup>

The flexing of Hutu political muscle which resulted to the "muyaga", could be seen to have began in 1957. In November of that year, two Hutu political parties were formed - the *Mouvement Social Mahutu* (MSM) or Hutu Social Movement, led by a Catholic Intellectual, Gregoire Kayibanda; and the *Association pour la promotion sociale de la Masse* (APROSOMA) or Association for Mass Social Promotion, led by a businessman, Joseph Gitera. Of these two men, it was Kayibanda, who succeeded in mobilizing the masses in fulfilling the dream of a Hutu Republic. With strong support from the Roman Catholic Church in Rwanda, and the Belgian Colonial authorities, Kayibanda became a major opponent of Tutsi royalists. The royalists, it would be recalled, organized themselves under the banner

of a political party - the *Union nationaux rwandaise* (UNAR) or Rwandan National Union, in 1959. In the same year, Kayibanda renamed the MSM - *Mouvement democratique rwandaise/parti du mouvement de Emancipation hutu* (MDR -PARMEHUTU) or Rwanda Democratic Movement/Party for the Emancipation of the Hutu.

*By the Time of Rwanda's Indenpence on 1 July 1962, these Three Parties:*

- MDR - PARMEHUTU, APPRO SOMA and UNAR - stood side by side. But, as we indicated earlier, it was Kayibanda and his party MDR -PARMETHUTU that came into political prominence in the period following the 'muyaga', and independence - the First Republic (1959/61 -1973). Another major consequence of the 'muyaga'<sup>1</sup>, as we hinted at earlier, was the large number of refugees and internally displaced persons in general. At the time of independence, the number of refugees (mostly Tutsi) in the neighbouring countries - Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi & DR Congo - and even outside the African continent, was estimated at 120,000.<sup>12</sup> This number, however, continued to grow in the years following, due essentially to new outflows resulting from episodic out bursts of inter-ethnic violence and the politics of exclusion pursued by both Kayibanda, and his would - be successor, Juvenal Habyarimana.

On 5 July 1973, a bloodless coup terminated the Kayibanda regime, and replaced it with that of Army General, Juvenal Habyarimana. Habyarimana came from the north, and so counted on the support of the long-marginalised 'abakonde' of the Ruhengeri axis.<sup>13</sup> To consolidate his power, among other measures, Habyarimana out-lawed political parties, but created his own about a year later, in 1974 - the *Mouvement Revolutionnaire National pour le Developpement* (MRND).

Although, Kayibanda's MDR - PARMEHUTU did not go through the process of constitutionally declaring itself a single - party, it was de facto single party, as it systematically eliminated all its competitors, rigged its own internal candidacy election processes and acted with as much intolerance as many single parties.<sup>14</sup> But in almost unabashed manner about his decision to create a one - party state, President Habyarimana declared in 1982: "I know some people favour multipartyism, but as far as I am concerned, I had no hesitation in choosing the single party system".<sup>15</sup> Thus, in 1978, article 7 of the constitution enshrined single -party rule as a basic value of Habyarimana's regime.

The MRND turned out to be a truly totalitarian party. Every single Rwandese citizen was to become a member, including babies and old people! All *bourgmestres* and *prefects* were chosen from among party cadres. As Gerard Prunier indicated, the party was everywhere; every hill had its cell, and party faithfuls hoping for promotion and professional boost, willingly spied on anybody they were told to spy on, including a few others, as well.<sup>16</sup> All citizens had their place of residence written on their identity cards. One may generally be allowed to travel, but may not change address without due cause or authorization. Administrative control was probably the tightest among non-communist states in Habyarimanda's Rwanda.

This was a glimpse of the military one-party dictatorship created by Habyarimana between 1973 and 1994. In his over 20 years of personal rule, Gen. Juvenal Habyarimana steadfastly refused to allow Tutsi refugees to return home. In August, 1988 a world congress of the Tutsi diaspora held in Washington D.C. adopted very strong resolution on the "right of return".<sup>17</sup> In the mean time, the Tutsi diaspora in Uganda had gained positions of responsibility and influence following their alliance and participation in the insurgency of Yoweri Museveni's National Resistance Army (NRA) which gained power in Kampala in January 1986.

Following the triumph of the NRA, it was expected that the Banyarwanda Tutsi refugee population in Uganda will be well accommodated in the scheme of things; but internal political dynamics dictated otherwise. Anti-Banyarwanda sentiments, even xenophobic tendencies seemed to have reached alarming proportions in the period following the NRA's Bush War and the anti insurgency operations in the north and north eastern Uganda. After the suppression of the rebellion in 1990, the Banyarwanda soldiers found themselves redundant in an environment that did not seem to appreciate their contributions to the liberation of Uganda.<sup>18</sup> It was in these circumstances that the Banyarwanda soldiers in the NRA suddenly deserted, and invaded Rwanda in large numbers on 1 October 1990. This was under the auspices of a hitherto little known organization - the Rwandese Patriotic Front / Army (RPF/A).

Led by Maj - General Fred Rwigyema, the RPF announced an 8 - point programme, which called for national unity, democracy, the building of a self-sustaining national economy and an end to "the system which generates refugees".<sup>19</sup> The programme further called for an end to the misuse of public

office, the establishment of social services, democratisation of the security forces and a progressive foreign policy.

Opposition groups from the south of the country and other liberals who detested the hard - line disposition of Habyarimana's ruling MRND party towards the Tutsi welcomed the invasion, as they hoped that it would weaken the regime and force it to make political concessions to the opposition. Meanwhile, it must be noted that one of the major demands of the opposition was what Dixon Kamukama referred to as "the donor- backed call for political pluralism".<sup>20</sup> It is to this demand and how it played out in a Rwanda enmeshed in internal insurgency that we now turn to.

### **3. IMPOSITION OF POLITICAL PLURALISM IN HABYARIMANA'S RWANDA, 1990 -1994**

One of the cardinal principles of the New World Order, as enunciated at the beginning of this analysis was multipartyism. As an instrument of bringing the high sounding ideals to practically, the international community, as led by the emergent sole super power, the United States, began to insist on the adoption of pluralism and multipartyism in the electoral process of states in the international system. It was this insistence that manifested as political demands by the RPF and other opposition groups, including the earlier referred "donor-backed call for political pluralism" in Habyarimana's Rwanda of the early 1990s. We shall proceed to determine the background i.e. the process of the evolution of multiparty democracy in the country.

It will be recalled that the RPF invasion had acted as a violent outside catalyst on an internal political situation that had been on the verge of transformation. President Habyarimana had initiated a wave of arrests in the days following the RPF invasion on 1 October 1990, which was calculated to intimidate the opposition. But the measure turned out to be a miscalculation. Rather than achieve the envisaged objective, the harsh measure had the effect of reinforcing resolution on both sides.

The opposition began to feel that it had to push for quick political changes so as to prevent such arbitrariness becoming "normal" in the war situation that ensued following the invasion,<sup>21</sup> while the MRND hardcore grumbled at what it saw as the President's 'softness', and began to denounce the Hutu democrats as 'Ibyitso' or accomplices, meaning pro-RPF fifth columnists. Although this accusation was false, it however struck with terrible consequences, as 1994 was to prove. Moving from an almost thirty year single - party dictatorship to multi-party democratic politics, and in the midst of a civil war, or at any rate, an internal insurgency, was not expected to be a smooth ride. But the international environment of the period dictated nothing less.

As another background to the democratization process, it will further be recalled that as President Habyarimana attended the Franco - African summit at *La Baule*<sup>22</sup> in June 1990, President Mitterrand, who appeared then to be on a "liberal" political course concerning African affairs, linking economic aid with political democratisation, advised Habyarimana to introduce a multi-party system in Rwanda.<sup>23</sup> The advice was quickly followed, as Habyarimana, who had always stringently enforced the MRND political monopoly, suddenly declared that he supported a multi-party system, in July 1990.

Although, his personal conviction on the issue appeared a different thing altogether, it did not prevent the President from signing a manifesto which demanded immediate democratization by some 33 Intellectuals in August 1990.<sup>24</sup> It must be noted that all these were happening just before the October invasion. So, they provided a lot of impetus to the RPF and other opposition groups' demand for multi-party democratic dispensation.

To give further credence to the envisaged multi-party dispensation, President Habyarimana made a very liberal speech on 11 November 1990, in which everyone could find something to be pleased with.<sup>25</sup> For the Hutu opposition, a multi-party system would soon be allowed and there would be a constitutional referendum in June 1991. For the Tutsi, there was a promise that the mention of ethnicity (*ubwoko*) would be removed from all future identity cards and other official papers.<sup>26</sup> For the foreigners, the President praised the Structural Adjustment Plan (SAP), calling it an excellent thing for the Rwandese economy.<sup>27</sup>

On 28 December 1990, the National Synthesis Commission published the first draft of a proposed National Charter which was supposed to open up the rules of Rwandese political life.<sup>28</sup> With a feeling that change was in the air, opponents began to hold series of clandestine meetings. But Article 7 of the 1978 constitution which gave legal backing to the one-party state was still officially in operation, so

aspiring democrats needed to be cautious. In the midst of these uncertain times, opposition parties began to form.

The first of the independent parties to appear was created in exile by Silas Majyambere, a former President of the Kigali Chamber of Commerce, and a crony of Habyarimana, though he had flirted for a while with the RPF. Barely a month after the invasion, on 9 November 1990, he created in Brussels the *Union du Peuple Rwandais* (UPR). Rather than offering a political programme, the opening document of the UPR proceeded to attack what it called "political assassination of recent years", government corruption, press intimidation and arbitrary arrests. Though most of the assertions were true, but the party could not offer a road-map for the way forward.<sup>29</sup>

A second opposition party emerged in Butare, named *Parti Social Democratique* (PSD). The PSD tried to position itself on the centre - left, and to attract a clientele of teachers, civil servants and professionals.

In the spring of 1991, a third opposition party emerged - the *Parti Liberal* (PL) or Liberal Party. The PL was a very urban party, and tended to attract businessmen, and was generally considered centre - right in European political terms. Without a particular geographical base, the PL was disseminated all over the country, and it soon began to count in its ranks a large number of well-to-do Tutsi. As its attitude to the ethnic question was generally liberal, it also tended to attract people whose ethnic status was ambiguous, such as the "Hutsi"<sup>30</sup> (children of mixed parentage) or people married to people of other ethnic groups.<sup>31</sup>

*Parti Democrates - Chretien* (PDC), a genuine Christian Democratic group emerged in 1991 as the fourth opposition party. This party had great difficulty coming into being given that the Catholic Church had always solidly supported President Habyarimana, just as the MRND had always been warmly welcomed in the Christian Democratic international circles. The history of Rwanda had shown that the Catholic Church, and indeed the entire church's game was total support for the regime in exchange for a rather open - ended ethnic policy and a free hand in social, educational and even financial matters. Given such a scenario, it was difficult for an opposition Christian Democratic Party to make political room for it, but the PDC tried to do just that.

The MRND held an extra-ordinary congress on 28 April 1991. At that congress, it changed its status to adapt to the coming multi-partyism. Following this on June 10, a new constitution was proclaimed, allowing the existence of several political parties, and within the next one week, a law governing their *modus operandi* was voted in. By early July, all the de facto opposition parties were in the process of officially registering. Then on 5 July 1991, the MRND, apparently in keeping with the times, added another "D" to its name to become the *Mouvement Revolutionnaires National pour le Developpement et la Democrates* (MRND(D)). It appeared that Rwanda had made its choice, and was heading down the democratic road, according to Prunier. But as negotiation with the RPF and the other opposition parties commenced, it became increasingly evident that there was more to it than met the eyes.

#### 4. THE MRND(D): A RELUCTANT DEMOCRATIC PARTNER

The young opposition democratic parties quickly came to learn that President, Habyarimana and his MRND(D)'s perception of their existence was largely decorative. Despite the proclamation of the new constitution, nothing much seemed to have changed from the point of view of the President even after his July 5 1990 speech, announcing the advent of multipartyism. It became increasingly evident that the President's conception of multi party democracy was nothing more than having a number of 'democratic' parties around, while the old MRND(D) would carry on very much as before, the whole point being simply to please the French and other donor agencies.

To achieve and perpetuate this objective, the President tried a number strategy. First, he favoured the birth of a great number of small ineffectual opposition parties - the *Parti Socialistes Rwandais* (PSR), the *Rassemblement Travailleiste pour la Democratie* (RTD), the *Parti Revolutionnaire du Rwanda* (PARERWA), and many others, such as the PECO - an Ecologist party, a Muslim Party - the *Parti Democratique Islamique* (PDI)<sup>(32)</sup>, including a rather bizarrely named *Mouvement des Femmes et du Bas Peuple* (MFBP) or Movement of the Women and of the Lower Classes. There were ten of such parties, but they played no active part in actual political life of a supposedly democratising Rwanda, except in a rather negative manner.<sup>33</sup>

Meanwhile, an eleventh offspring of the democratic parties was born in March 1992. This was the *Coalition pour la Defense de la Republique* (CDR), a radical Hutu racist party whose *raison d'etre*

was essentially to upbraid the MRND and the regime for their supposed softness towards the RPF and its democratic *'Ibyitso'* accomplices.

The CDR was founded by a rather unusual character on the Rwandese political scene - Jean Shyirambere Barahinyura. As a commentator has indicated, he, with other leaders of the organization, such as Jean -Bosco Barayagwiza, including its Secretary General, Martin Bucyana "were on the lunatic fringes of radical Hutu extremism".<sup>34</sup> It was from their political circle that the journalists of Radio Television Libre des Mille Collines (RTLMC), the infamous 'independent' radio station that was to play a firebrand role during the time of the genocide, were recruited.

A second and perhaps, most daunting difficulties of the democratization process in Rwanda came largely from the junction of two forces: the obdurate resistance of the power structure to any type of genuine democratisation and the selfish greed of a large part of the opposition leadership. In the middle however, were honest reformers and the mass of the electorate who yearned for a genuine democratic leadership and society. From within this middle, strong and well organized human rights organizations began to develop.

A vibrant press was born almost overnight, as it were, although the titles were openly defending (at times in terrible bad faith) their political favourites. For instance, while 'Kamarampeka' the name given to the referendum of 25 September 1991 that prepared the way for independence, was the MRND(D)'s organ, alongside its more militant sister publication 'Interahamwe' (those who work together) a name that was yet to acquire its later murderous connotations, La Nation and Isibo (Forward) were the French and 'Kinyarwanda' titles defending the MDR creed. Le Soleil was for the PSD, while Kangura preached the CDR racist creed. Rwanda Rushya (New Rwanda) was openly sympathetic to the RPF guerillas as Le Liberal stood for the party of the same name the (PL). Paix et Democratie, and later Umurangi, fought for different factions within the MDR, while the Catholic Church, a long time silent ally of the regime began to move towards more audacious positions.

In a daring and innovative document, the Primate of Rwanda first offered a strong self-criticism of the church itself, for its costly relationship with the regime, and then went on to denounce what he saw as a political situation where:

Assassination is now common place, where the government refused to play the democratic game fairly, where opposition parties were mostly opportunistic, where nobody seemed serious about reaching a negotiated peace with the guerillas and finally where there was no serious debate on the real social sins of the country.<sup>35</sup>

With this document, the conservative Catholic Church of Rwanda seemed to have publicly parted ways with Caesar! With this scenario, every step on the road to democracy had to be fought for or against a stubbornly conservative power elite and structure bent on keeping their privileges, and by 'democrats', who though not of the purest type, but had a large segment of the population on its side.

The fights opened on the issue of formation of a new cabinet. The new political parties had created an inter-party *Comite de Concertation de l' Opposition*.

#### **4.1. The Committee Subsequently Began to Agitate for a number of Demands**

- A de-institutionalisation of the MRND(D), which in practice implied, among other things, that President Habyarimana would resign from his position as the president of the former single party. It also implied equality of treatment for all political forces.
- The disbanding of Parliament and the convening of a national conference; and
- An opening up of the audio-visual media.<sup>36</sup>

It was felt that it was only a new, if neutral cabinet that could proceed with those reforms. Thus, on 13 October 1991, Justice Minister, Sylvestre Nsanzimana was asked to form a new cabinet. His liberal disposition and close attachment to Habyarimana worked to ensure disenchantment both from the MRND(D)'s hardliners and the opposition political parties, respectively. While the opposition was asking for fundamental reforms as a prerequisite for its participation in government, President Habyarimana, in deference to the demands of the hardliners in his party MRND(D), tried to dodge any basic change, but just to co-opt the opposition into a docile business-as-usual "new" cabinet.

It was against this background that the main opposition parties proceeded on 17 November 1991 to sign a common memorandum to the President detailing the obstacles they claimed the government was putting in the way of further democratization.

***These, According to them, Included***

- harassment of their militants; use of the government radio and television for MRND(D) propaganda, use of government vehicles buildings and other facilities to help MRND(D) candidates for party propaganda, and so forth.

To press home their demands, the *Comite de Concertation de l' Opposition* mobilized some 10,000 militants and sympathizers of their parties to demonstrate on the streets of Kigali against what it saw as the lingering MRND(D) political hegemony, and in favour of the national conference.

A week later, the MRND(D) responded by having 20,000 demonstrators march through the streets of Kigali, chanting anti-national conference slogans. The eventual formation and swearing in of the Nsazimana cabinet on 30 December 1991 only made matters worse, as it included only one opposition Minister, from the PDC, and in a secondary position. 50,000 demonstrators poured out onto the street of Kigali on 8 January 1992 to protest against the new cabinet, as thousands also demonstrated in Butare, and Gitarama. New demonstrations planned for 15 January 1992 was forbidden, and henceforth, illegal demonstrators were attacked and arrested by the police. The multiparty democratisation process, though formally legalized, appeared to have hit the rock.

## **5. DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS IN THE MIDST OF INSURGENCY**

It must be borne in mind that this whole process of political struggle was taking place not in ordinary circumstances, but while the country was engaged in limited scale-civil war, thanks to the RPF invasion of October 1990. A cease-fire agreement signed in N'Sele near Kinshasha, Zaire (DRC) on 29 March 1991 had no impact whatsoever. Following the Ruhengeri fiasco,<sup>37</sup> the RPF fighters had settled down to a typical guerilla tactics. Low-intensity operations dragged on, without either side gaining a definite advantage, though the *Forces Armees Rwandaise*

(FAR), the official Armed Forces of the Habyarimana regime, seemed, with some French support, to have some sort of an upper hand.

In these circumstances, opposition politicians felt largely powerless to repay the governments use of violence in kind. One opposition politician

- Felician Gatabazi (PSD) declared: "each time there are some difficulties (in the democratic process) there is a flare - up of tribal violence instigated by the regime, and threats of civil war are used to justify the status quo".<sup>38</sup> But the government apparently realised that violence was not enough in itself to stem the democratisation tide.

On 14 March 1992, President Habyarimana accepted the signature of an historic compromise agreement with the united opposition: a genuine coalition cabinet was to be installed, with the Premiership going to the largest opposition party (MDR). Peace negotiation was to open between the government and the RPF, and the principle of national conference was agreed upon.

The new cabinet under the premiership of Dismas Nsengiyaremye was sworn in on 7 April 1992. The MRND(D) was made for the first time to share power, though it was not yet a surrender, as the former single party held 9 cabinet portfolios out of 20; including those of Defense, Civil Service, Interior and Transport. Some key ministries that went to the opposition included those of Foreign Affairs (MDR), Education (MDR), Finance (PSD), Justice (PL) and Commerce (PL). Altogether, the opposition parties held 11 cabinet portfolios.<sup>39</sup>

As if to vindicate the MRND(D) hardliners opposed to the democratization process, the new cabinet went on the offensive immediately after being sworn in, in order to try and redress some of the regime's most obvious injustices. The new Education Minister, Mme Agathe Uwilingiyimana (who was to perish within hours of the commencement of the genocide), abolished the so-called "policy of equilibrium", which enabled the government to choose the ethnic origin of students, and replaced it with a simple but fair entrance examination. The notorious *Service Central de Renseignements* (SCR), an all- powerful secret service, was dismembered and divided between four different ministries. The worst Prefects were fired and replaced with opposition members. An emboldened and more independent judiciary proceeded to declared some past presidential decrees unconstitutional, and President Habyarimana resigned from his position as head of the armed forces, in line with the June 1991 constitution.

These changes, as far reaching as they seemed, were still fragile, as the political climate remained tense. In the wake of the swearing in of the new cabinet, several terrorist attacks took place all across the country. The SCR secrete service proceeded to reform itself, and began to act clandestinely. However they tried, things did not appear to be going on well with the regime hardliners. As events progressed, it became inevitable that negotiations with the RPF had to begin in line with the March agreement that paved way for the coalition government.

On 24 May 1992, Foreign Minister, Boniface Ngulinzira met the RPF Vice-Chairman Patrick Mazimpaka in Kampala for a first contact, and announced the commencement of direct negotiations in Paris, in June. This announcement caused immediate violent reactions. As both the opposition and MRND(D) youth wing poured out on the streets on 30 May 1992, either to support the announced peace process or oppose it as a betrayal, seven people lost their lives in the ensuing clashes.

Against this backdrop, the opposition braved the odds, and decided to meet directly with the RPF on 6 June. A joint MDR, PSD and PL delegation arrived in Brussels for talks. The RPF leadership not only welcomed this move enthusiastically, but proceeded to announce the end of the armed struggle, indicating that from then on, the struggle was to be political. On the same day, an agreement was reached in Paris on "the technical modalities of the peace process." And soon after, the actual peace process started at Arusha in Tanzania. On 14 July, a cease fire agreement was signed, and peace seemed to be just around the corner.<sup>40</sup>

## **6. ENEMIES OF PEACE AS ENEMIES OF MULTIPARTY POLITICS**

The announcement of the cease-fire agreement in Arusha brought great satisfaction to the mass of the population, but it caused great indignation among the supporters of the ideology of Hutu supremacy or the MRND(D) hardliners. Within days of the signing of cease-fire, MRND(D) ministers began a boycott of cabinet meetings, and demonstrations hostile to Foreign Minister, Dismas Nsegiyaremye erupted in the strongly conservative perfectures of Gishenyi and Ruhengeri.<sup>41</sup> To assuage the fear and displeasure of his supporters, President Habyarimana gave a longish speech on radio Kigali on 17 August 1992, where he declared

### **6.1. Inter Alia**

Our negotiation team in Arusha has been fully briefed ...so that the positions they adopt are no longer improvised.... This is why I think that the Rwandaise people can rest assured that all the precautions have been taken to ensure that individual actions do not lead our country into an adventure it would not like.<sup>(42)</sup>

The coded language "improvised positions" and "adventures our country would not like" alluded to in the speech referred to the position of the Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Ministers regarding the RPF, and the monopolistic grip which MRND(D) party faithful had been allowed to keep for last 20 years, which must not be jeopardized, respectively. For the regime hardliners, the problem was how to avoid these "dangers", if peace and political pluralism were to become the reality. As events were to prove, their answer and resolve was quiet radical: regardless of international opinion, if the new development threatened the *status-quo*, they must be fought and destroyed.

Meantime, the Arusha Peace negotiations continued, but in a climate of increasing tension. Between September 1992 and January 1993, discussions on power - sharing arrangements in Arusha went on surprisingly smoothly. The RPF had resolved to allow a politically diminished Habyarimana remain as president. After much haggling, the duration of the transitional period was put at 18 months. It was discussion around the creation of a new army which was to include the RPF, which started in February 1993 that proved very difficult. The initial

offer by the government to incorporate 20% of RPF soldiers into the future national army was sure to be rejected by the RPF, just, as the leadership of FAR was nervous about having more. In the short term, the extremists' main preoccupation was how to stop the growing dynamics of peace both in the country and at Arusha. In a move calculated to appease the extremists once again, President Habyarimana in a speech in his home base of Ruhengeri on 15 November 1992, disavowed the government delegation in Arusha, accusing it of "going beyond its mandate", and went as far as calling the July cease-fire agreement "a piece of trash... which the government is not obliged to respect".



Following in the President's footsteps, Leon Mugesera, Vice-President of the Gisenyi MRND(D), declared in an address to the party militants at

*Kabaya on 22 November 1992 as follows:*

The opposition parties have plotted with the enemy... They have plotted to undermine our armed forces... The law is quite clear on this point. Any person who is guilty of acts aiming at sapping the morale of the armed forces will be condemned to death... What are we waiting for? And what about the accomplices 'ibytso' here who are sending their children to the RPF? Why are we waiting to get rid of these families? ...The fatal mistake we made in 1959 was to let them (the Tutsi) get out. They belong in Ethiopia and we are going to find them a shorter cut to get them there by throwing them into the Nyabarongo River (which flows northwards). I must insist on this point... wipe them all out.<sup>4</sup>

The new idea of wiping them (Tutsi) all out stemmed from the fixation on a "final solution". It will be recalled that the new constitution of 10 June 1991 had opened the country not only to multi-party politics and a multi-party government, but a concomitant commitment at negotiating a peace accord with the RPF. A new vision of power-sharing was written into the Arusha Peace Agreement of 4 August 1993 which ended the 3 year war between the RPF and the (FAR) i.e. the Rwandan Army.<sup>(45)</sup> It was considered by many as the beginning of a process of reconciliation among Rwandans, but the extremists within the MRND(D) saw it differently - a putsch against Habyarimana and republican institutions. They thus proceeded to invent the mechanisms of resistance to include Kangura and the RTLM. In addition, they created the CDR (Coalition for the Defence of the Republic), an extremist political party which became the ally of the MRND-National Revolutionary Movement for Development - the former single party.

The main targets of the extremists' fury were in the first place, the key figures that were about to implement the Arusha Peace Accord. These were accused of betraying the Bahutu cause and organizing a putsch against the republican and democratic institutions. They were equally represented as usurpers or accomplices in attempting to remove Habyarimana from power. In one of its programmes, titled *La Paix d' Arusha n'existe pas*,

*The RTLM totally rejected the Arusha Agreement, and the team chosen for its implementation. It declared:*

Our politicians, in particular those who are concerned with bringing people to accept without questioning such an anti-democratic act so as to consecrate the power obtained by some individuals through force and intrigue... our politicians, then, are asking us to wait for hypothetical institutions of the transition and the Arusha Peace accord. Lie, lie, triple lie. Is it possible that the Prime Minister designate, who is incapable of working with the political parties so as to institute the transitional institutions will be capable of managing the government?... He offered himself voluntarily to become the puppet of the RPF with which he negotiated the formation of this cabinet... surrealism then, surrealism emerges out of the game of gendarmes and thieves. Because it is so, we consider Majors Kagame and Lizinde, Bizimangu and Kajeguhakwa: in brief, as thieves, bandits, and swindlers, converted into defenders of the widow and orphans.<sup>46</sup>

As we had seen earlier, because the protocol concerning power-sharing also included provisions that made it imperative that Habyarimana would no longer have a monopoly of power, including control of the Armed Forces, these clauses began to be exploited by the MRND(D) leaders to create a climate of suspicion. Of particular significance in this regard was the clause that would allow the new government to bring to trial those members of the administration and army who would be found guilty of human rights abuses.<sup>47</sup> The hardliners began to exploit these clauses to accuse the negotiators of the Peace Agreement of planning to reduce the army, and of offering the country to the "enemies". The accord was thus characterized as "lies", and the pursuit of the peace process as "surreal".

Other programmes of the RTLM continued to haul personal insults and attacks on persons and groups considered inimical to the sustenance of MRND(D)'s monopoly of power in a single - party state. In a programme broadcast on 10 March 1994, the RTLM attack on the peace agreement was much clearer. *The radio appealed to the people to turn their backs on the peace accord, and instead to prepare for war:*

The nation must know and the foreign residents understand. No more observing of fictitious arguments of the Arusha accord so as to mask a blind reality. You people of Rwanda, turn the page of

Arusha because it is terminated. A new page in the history of Rwanda is beginning. It is up to us to write it together but the title is not Arusha... Arusha is dead and buried, even if the UNAMIR keeps clinging to it so as to preserve its position of privilege. There is no such thing as the Arusha Peace Accord because there is no Arusha peace. Keep this maxim: *civis pacem par bellum* (whoever wants Peace prepares for war). Let's open our eyes. Nothing will prevent us from hoping for peace, but not as sheep being beheaded on the altar of RPF (adieu RPF). The blood of Melchior Ndadaye (President of Burundi assassinated on Melchior Ndadaye (President of Burundi assassinated on October 21 1993) is still not cold. Has his bloodshed for democracy of a whole nation flowed in vain? How many victims does the RPF want for nourishing its bloody bamis (Kings)?<sup>48</sup>

In addition to the double invitation extended to the populace to forget the Arusha Peace Accord and to prepare for war instead, the reference to the Burundi scenario seemed to demonstrate the resolve, even "justification" of the MRND(D) hardcore to frustrate multiparty democracy in Rwanda of the 1990s, It was this resolve that played itself out in the events of April 1994, otherwise referred to as the Rwandan Genocide.

## 7. CONCLUDING REMARKS

The resolve to frustrate the peace process and its attendant promise of ushering in a multiparty democratic dispensation in Rwanda may have been justified in the eyes of the protagonists of the idea, and indeed going by precedents in Rwandan history. But it had an unintended result. The very people the hardliners were reluctant to share power with, once-again became dominant in the very aftermath of the induced cataclysm.

The lesson of Rwanda to 21<sup>st</sup> century Africa, and indeed all plural societies, is the abiding need for political accommodation of all segments and groups. In spite of arguments, even rationale to the contrary, the multi-party system of democratic competition holds the promise for harmonious co-existence, development, progress and the pursuit of happiness in plural societies.

## REFERENCES

- [1] See Joseph S. Nye Jr., "What New World Order?", in *Foreign Affairs*, vol 71. No 2, Spring 1992, p. 83.
- [2] See Gerard Prunier, "The Great Lakes Crisis", in *Current History*, Vol. 96, No 610, May 1997. p. 195.
- [3] See Timothy Longman, *Proxy Targets: Civilians in the War in Burundi*, Human Rights Watch, New York, 1997, p. 10.
- [4] Prunier, p. 195
- [5] Alex De Waal and Rakiya Omaar, "The Genocide in Rwanda and the International Response; Humanitarianism Unbound?", Discussion Paper no. 5, London, November 1994, p. 156.
- [6] This saw the inauguration of the Hutu Republic that was terminated in 1994 as the RPF seized power in Kigali following the defeat of the genocidal regime of Juvenal Habyarimana.
- [7] See Ogenga Otunnu, "Rwandese Refugees and Immigrants in Uganda", in Howard Adelman and Astri Suhrke (eds), *The Path of a Genocide: The Rwanda Crisis from Uganda to Zaire*, New Brunswick and London, Transaction Publ, 1999, p. 6.
- [8] See Foster Emansueto Byaruga, "The Rwandese Refugees in Uganda", in Anders Hjort at Ornas and M. A. Mohamed Salih (eds), *Ecology and Politics: Environmental Stress and Security in Africa*, Uppsala, Sweden, Scandinevian Institute of African Studies, 1989, p. 150.
- [9] Otunnu, p. 7
- [10] For an analysis of the "Inyenzi" phenomenon, see a piece by the author of this paper, titled: "Contextualizing Justice and Human Dignity in Rwanda: The Inyenzi Phenomenon 1959 – 1994", in GMT Emezue, Inge Kosch & Maurice Vangel (eds), *Justice and Human Dignity in Africa*, HPC Books, Lagos, 2014, pp. 269 - 281
- [11] See Georges Nzongola - Ntalaja, "Ethnic Identification in the Great Lakes Region", in *Shifting African Identities*, in [www. Hsrcpress. ac za](http://www.Hsrcpress.ac.za), pp. 66 - 67.
- [12] Ntalaja, p. 68
- [13] See Gerard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide 1959-1994*, Kampala, Fountain Publ., 1995, pp. 57 - 58.

- [14] Much more would be said on this disposition of the party as the analysis progresses.
- [15] President Habyarimana's interview with a French Journalist, Philippe Decraene, in *Le Monde*, 7 October 1982, in Prunier, p. 76.
- [16] Prunier, pp. 76-77
- [17] Ntalaja, p. 68
- [18] See Dixon Kamukama, *Rwanda Conflict: its Roots and Regional Implications*, Kampala, Fountain Publ. 1997, p. 45,
- [19] Kamukama, p. 46.
- [20] Kamukama, p. 48
- [21] Prunier, p. 121
- [22] It is to be noted that over the last several years, France had slowly replaced Belgium as the tutelary power in Rwanda because it offered financial and especially military guarantees which Belgium could not provide. In 1975, Paris signed with Kigali a military cooperation and training agreement (but not a defense agreements), and had regularly increased its economic aid. France kept over 400 'cooperants' in the country, while its development aid was second only to that of Belgium with US \$37.2m in 1990. See OECD sources quoted in Economist Intelligence Unit, *Rwanda Country Profile*, London: EIU, 1993, in Prunier, p. 89.
- [23] This proved to be a volte-face as President Mitterrand radically changed his track within the next 18 months from his La Baule speech on democratization. For much of these contradictions of French Policy in Africa, see Antoine Glaser and Stephen Smith, *L'Afrique sans Africains*, Paris, Stock, 1994.
- [24] Prunier, p. 90
- [25] See the Kigali weekly, *La Releve*, 16 Nov. 1990
- [26] In spite of this promise, or rather because of it, the Minister of Interior went on air on 25 November to set matters straight as it seemed: the mentioning of 'ubwoko' on official documents was to be kept intact, and nothing would be changed.
- [27] See Prunier, p. 122
- [28] See *La Releve*, 28 December 1990. The draft charter was never actually voted, but a process of constitutional reform based on the use of art 91 of the 1978 constitution was eventually to lead to an abrogation of monopolyism six months later. See, Prunier p. 122,
- [29] Within a year, Majyambere lost all his urge for political reform, and relocated to Kampala.
- [30] Being a patrilineal society, children of mixed parentage in Rwanda belong to their father's group. But this situation tended to lose its rigidity in urban areas, among educated people. Here half-castes, aware of their mixed parentage felt reluctant to adopt strong "Hutsi" or "Hutu" positions.
- [31] There was the case of one PL leader - Landwald Ndasingwa who was always fond of saying: I am a Tutsi, my wife is a white Canadian, several members of my family are married to Hutu, in fact we are all tired of this ethnic business. See Prunier p. 125.
- [32] Jose Hamim Kagabo has described a small and complex Muslim community made up of natives and foreigners in his, *L'Islam et les Swahili au Rwanda*, Paris, Editions de 'Ecole Hautes en Sciences Sociales, 1988.
- [33] From March 1993, President Habyarimana began to use them to try and block the peace negotiation process with the RPF.
- [34] Prunier, p. 129.
- [35] Prunier, p. 132
- [36] This demand was particularly significant given that more than 60% of Rwanda's population could not read or write, and so the existence of a free press had meaning only for the literate few, who were already politically conscious. The vast majority on the hilly country-side could only be reached through the audiovisual media which was tightly controlled by the government, including its extremist RTLM radio.
- [37] This followed the death of the Commander of the RPF - Maj. Gen. Rwigyema, and those of Majors Baingana and Chris Bunyenyezi within a space of three weeks after the invasion. See Kamukama, p. 46.

- [38] See Interview in Le Monde, 14 March 1992.
- [39] See Prunier, p. 145
- [40] Prunier, p. 150
- [41] BBC Summary of World Broadcast (SWB), Radio Kigali, 4 and 5 August 1992.
- [42] SWB, Radio Kigali, 17 August 1992.
- [43] Though the President later denied having made those remarks as the speech was not aired by the National Radio, having been made in 'Kinyarwanda', but many people had taped it, so that the denial was of no effect whatsoever. See Prunier, p. 170.
- [44] FIDH, Rwanda, pp24-25, in Prunier, p. 172.
- [45] The Arusha Peace Accord signed on 14 August 1993 between the Government of Rwanda and the RPF to end the 3 year insurgency was a collection of six different protocols negotiated in various stages: the protocol of the cease-fire of 29 March 1991, renewed on 12 July 1992, the protocol on a state of rights of 18 August 1992. The protocol on sharing power of 30 September 1992 and 9 January 1993, the protocol on the repatriation of refugees on 9 June 1993, the protocol on the fusion of two armies of 3 August 1993. and the protocol on diverse questions also of 3 August 1992. see Republique Rwandaise, Journal Official, Annee 32, Vol. 16(15 August 1993 in Tharcisse Gatwa, The Churches and Ethnic Ideology in the Rwandan Crises 1900 - 1994, Milton Keynes, Regnum Bks, 2005, p. 157.
- [46] RTLM programme broadcast on 14 February 1994, in Gatwa, pp 157-158.
- [47] See Article 49, Arusha Peace Agreement on Offences Committed by Servicemen. "
- [48] RTLM programme broadcast, on 10 March 1994, in Gatwa, p. 159.

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