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Race Relations in Rwanda: An Historical Perspective

Deborah Mayersen

“‘Genocide’ Charge in Rwanda’ blared the headline in *The Times*; a few days later it was ‘Rwanda Policy of Genocide Alleged.’¹ Yet these headlines are not from 1994, but 1964. And while the massacres to which they refer occurred on a far smaller scale than the 1994 genocide, they are unprecedented as massacres targeted at the Tutsi minority *as a group*. They occurred at the end of a decade of radical change for the tiny nation. In 1954, Rwanda was administered as part of Ruanda-Urundi, a United Nations Trust Territory under Belgian trusteeship.² The Tutsi minority was regarded as racially superior, enjoyed preferential access to privilege and almost exclusive access to indigenous positions of authority. Their position seemed stably entrenched. Yet an examination of Rwanda just ten years later reveals a starkly contrasting picture. By 1964, the newly independent Republic of Rwanda was ruled almost exclusively by the Hutu majority.³ More than 300,000 Tutsi refugees were scattered around its borders; thousands had been killed in massacres following a failed refugee invasion.⁴ In the intervening decade the nation had experienced the full throes of rapid decolonisation, revolution and its first democratic elections. Crucial to understanding this extraordinary decade in Rwanda’s history is an understanding of issues surrounding ethnic identity. Moreover, many of the root causes of the 1994 genocide can be found in the events of this tumultuous period. This article will shed insight on both, through an exploration of ethnic polarisation in Rwanda between 1954 and 1964.

¹ *The Times*, Wednesday 29 January 1964, p. 8; *The Times*, Monday 3 February 1964, p. 10.

² A note on the terminology used in this article. Kinyarwanda is a language that uses prefixes extensively, but in conformance with general practice in academic writing on Rwanda, the terms ‘Hutu’, ‘Tutsi’ and ‘Twa’ will be used without prefixes, to denote both singular and plural. In Kinyarwanda the prefix ‘mu’ denotes singular, and ‘ba’ plural. Where quotes include these prefixes, they have not been altered. Rwanda will be spelled as such whenever referred to in the singular; where the colony of ‘Ruanda-Urundi’ is mentioned the original spelling has been used; additionally the spelling in quotes is the original. This article will also limit its discussion to Rwanda and not Urundi/Burundi. Despite Ruanda-Urundi being placed under a single mandate, Belgium recognised the two nations’ distinct histories and identities, and administered each country separately at most levels. Finally, it must be noted that the terms used to denote the Hutu/Tutsi distinction, such as race, ethnicity, caste etc, have themselves come to have political meaning, and been interpreted by some to indicate an author’s ‘pro-Hutu’ or ‘pro-Tutsi’ stance. For this reason, wherever possible the author has attempted to use apolitical terms to describe the subgroups. When a particular term has been used, the author has endeavoured to use the term most common to the historical period under discussion, or the most commonly used depicter, ‘ethnicity’.

³ Mahmood Mamdani, *When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism, and the Genocide in Rwanda* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001), p. 134; René Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1970), p. 197.

⁴ Jean Sayinzoga, “Les Réfugiés Rwandais: quelques repères historiques et reflexions socio-politiques,” *Journal of the Swiss Society of African Studies* 20, no. 1 (1982): 51; Aaron Segal, *Massacre in Rwanda*, Fabian Research Series 240, (London: Fabian Society, 1964), p. 17; Lemarchand, 225.

“Every ‘serious’ study of Rwanda ... begins by giving the ethnic composition of the population (84 per cent Hutu, 15 per cent Tutsi and 1 per cent Twa)” quipped a United Nations Commissioner in 1962.⁵ The key role of Hutu and Tutsi identities and interrelations in understanding Rwandan history is undisputed. The precise nature of these identities, however, has been the subject of intense debate. The distinction between the Hutu majority and Tutsi minority subgroups has been variously described as one of race, tribe, caste, class, domination and subjugation, ethnicity and political identity. Each descriptor appears to have more than a kernel of truth, but also elements of distortion and inaccuracy. Moreover, the nature of these identities is not a static one, as they have changed over time and in response to both internal and external influences. Whereas today these identities are commonly referred to as ethnic identities, for much of Rwanda’s history they were considered racial. First German then Belgian colonial authorities considered the Hutu, Tutsi and Twa as distinct races, which came to have profound consequences for the Rwandan people.

From the very first, Rwanda’s colonisers also ranked each ‘race’ hierarchically. For the Twa, “quite similar to the apes whom he chases in the forest,” that rank was clearly at the bottom.⁶ By contrast, “the Mututsi of good race has nothing of the Negro, apart from his colour ... gifted with a vivacious intelligence, the Tutsi displays a refinement of feelings which is rare among primitive people.”⁷ But the racially obsessed Europeans went much further than simple hierarchical rankings. The concept that a ‘negroid race’ could be of sufficient intelligence and development to organise a kingdom such as that of Rwanda was apparently inconceivable. Thus the ‘Hamitic hypothesis’ was invoked. First proposed by explorer John Speke, this theory supposed that superior, ruling groups within Africa, (this category eventually to include the Tutsi) were actually migrant descendents of Noah’s son Ham. They were thus not truly ‘Negro’, but the lowest rung on the Caucasian ladder.⁸ The notion behind this concept, which had multiple variations, was that as descendents of Noah they remained part of humanity, with their organisational faculties attributed to these origins.⁹ As

⁵ United Nations, *Question of the Future of Ruanda-Urundi: Statement made by Mr. Majid Rahnema, United Nations Commissioner for Ruanda-Urundi, at the 1265th meeting of the Fourth Committee, A/C.4/525*, 23 January 1962, p. 4.

⁶ *Rapport Annuel du Territoire de Nyanza* (1925), quoted in Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 6.

⁷ Belgium, Ministère des Colonies, *Rapport sur l’administration belge du Ruanda-Urundi, 1925*, p. 34, quoted in Prunier, p. 6.

⁸ Mamdani, pp. 82, 84.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 81.

descendants of Noah's cursed son Ham, however, they were (comfortably) inferior to Europeans.¹⁰ Some variations, however, went so far as to suggest the Tutsi was "a European under black skin."¹¹ Where, precisely, the Tutsi came from was the source of much conjecture. Southern Ethiopia and ancient Egypt were commonly proposed, although some of the more bizarre theories suggested India, Tibet, the lost continent of Atlantis and even the Garden of Eden.¹² Of more importance were the three concepts at the heart of the theory: that the Tutsi were a distinct race, that they were racially superior to the Hutu and Twa, and that they were subjugators of foreign origin. By the 1950s, this racialised and hierarchical interpretation of subgroup identity had long been institutionalised within Belgian colonial policies, and internalised by much of the Rwandan population.

In the early 1950s, Rwanda stood on the cusp of a period of major change. While its remote location had offered protection from many of the travails of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, in the wake of World War Two external pressures mounted. The broad mandate of good governance upon which Belgium's colonial authority rested under its League of Nations Mandate was replaced by far more onerous obligations under a United Nations Trusteeship Agreement. Belgium now agreed to take "all proper measures to assure the political evolution of the peoples of Ruanda-Urundi", and ensure progression towards independence.¹³ Moreover, triennial UN Visiting Missions would provide unprecedented active oversight. The reports and recommendations of the UN Visiting Missions, and the Belgian response to them, became a major focus of events in Rwanda for much of the Trusteeship period, and a driver of the rapid change there in the 1950s.

In particular, the report of the first Visiting Mission, in 1948, led to the commencement of a period of swift development. While the report praised Belgium's economic, educational and social achievements in Rwanda, it expressed concern with the slow pace of change.¹⁴ It recommended a major expansion of education and increased indigenous responsibility in the administration of the nation.¹⁵ It proposed the abolition of *ubuletwa*, an onerous form of

¹⁰ Ibid, pp. 80-87.

¹¹ F. Menard, "Les Barundi", Archives des Père Blancs, Rome, quoted in Mamdani, p. 88.

¹² Prunier, pp. 7-8.

¹³ Pierre Leroy, *Legislation du Ruanda-Urundi* (Usumbura: Les Presses Lavigeria, 1949), pp. 12-13, quoted in Fred Waggoner, "Nation Building in Africa: A Description and Analysis of the Development of Rwanda" (PhD thesis, The American University, 1968), pp. 108-109.

¹⁴ David Rawson, "The Role of the United Nations in the Political Development of Ruanda-Urundi, 1947-1962" (PhD thesis, The American University, 1966), pp. 51-52; United Nations, *Visiting Mission 1948*, T/217, pp. 16, 20, quoted in Rawson, pp. 34, 51.

¹⁵ Rawson, pp. 37-38.

forced labour used for tasks such as road building, and its replacement with a monetary tax. Finally, it recommended “The administration should seek further to democratize the whole political structure as far as possible.”¹⁶ The Belgian government grumbled, but largely acquiesced in the major recommendations. It commenced work on a ten-year plan, primarily focused on economic development, but also providing significant financial support for public health, agriculture and education.¹⁷ These developments, however, had different impacts for the Hutu and Tutsi populations, in time also influencing intergroup relations.

By the mid-1950s, the changes were beginning to have a substantial effect. By 1954, some 750,000 Rwandan children were attending school, although the vast majority continued to receive only a rudimentary one or two year primary education.¹⁸ Post-primary education was slowly expanding – by 1954 there were 1400 trainee teachers, and by 1956 2,500 students received secondary education across Ruanda-Urundi.¹⁹ This still represented only a tiny fraction of the population, however, which drew increasing criticism from the Trusteeship Council.²⁰ Moreover, the Tutsi minority, who had previously had almost exclusive access to post-primary education, continued to dominate the secondary schools.²¹ Indeed, the UN Visiting Mission for 1957 noted that less than 10 per cent of students in secondary schools in Rwanda were Hutu.²² The Belgian Administration, however, retained its misgivings about almost any sort of higher education, and particularly so for Hutu children. Researcher Mary Duarte remarked: “By 1960 – indeed, after four decades under Belgian control – Ruanda-Urundi had neither a viable education system nor an educated elite prepared to govern. Fewer than 100 natives of Ruanda-Urundi had received post-secondary education, and no literate population had emerged.”²³ The African studies specialist Jnanabrota Bhattacharyya, however, has commented:

¹⁶ United Nations, *Visiting Mission 1948*, p. 19, quoted in Rawson, p. 36.

¹⁷ Rawson, p. 88.

¹⁸ Jnanabrota Bhattacharyya, “Belgian Administration in Ruanda during the Trusteeship Period with Special Reference to the Tutsi-Hutu Relationship” (PhD thesis, University of Delhi, 1967), p. 72.

¹⁹ Ibid; Mary Duarte, “Education in Ruanda-Urundi, 1946-61,” *The Historian* 57, no. 2 (1994): 280.

²⁰ United Nations, *United Nations Trusteeship Council Official Records*, 11th Session, 427th Meeting, 24 June 1952, p. 28; Ibid, 13th Session, 28 January-25 March 1954, p. 8, both cited in Duarte, p. 280.

²¹ M. G. Cyimana, “Plaidoyer pour le menu peuple au Rwanda-Burundi,” *Revue Nouvelle*, 15 mars 1959, reproduced in *Rwanda Politique: 1958-1960*, ed. F. Nkundabagenzi (Bruxelles: Centre de Recherche et d’Information Socio-Politiques, 1961), p. 63.

²² United Nations, *United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, 1957, Report on Ruanda-Urundi*, T/1346, 1957, paragraph 268, cited in Mary Atterbury, *Revolution in Rwanda*, Occasional Paper No. 2 (Madison: African Studies Program, The University of Wisconsin, 1970), p. 31.

²³ Duarte, p. 284.

On the other hand, the spread of primary education to about three fourths of the population is not without political and social consequences even when this is not followed up for most pupils by higher education. Literacy, even low literacy, furnishes an equipment for better communication and thereby for better political mobilization ... In the Hutu's political awakening in the fifties, the role of extensive primary education must be duly recognized. Education awakened a sense of resentment and bitterness among the masses, which was politically explosive.²⁴

The economic impact of colonial development policies was also becoming apparent. There had been no serious famine since that of 1943-44. Whilst the Belgians still considered there to be some risk of famine in Rwanda, a range of strategies had been put in place to both prevent and mitigate the impact of such an event.²⁵ Previous famines had disproportionately affected Hutu, whose ties to the land and the seasons left them with little ability to combat drought, but this vulnerability was now lessened.²⁶ Living standards, too, were becoming more equitable – at least if one excluded wealthy Tutsi from the comparison.²⁷ The small Tutsi elite continued to monopolise much of the nation's wealth and control indigenous positions of power, and there was no equivalent Hutu elite. Amongst the majority of the ordinary population of Hutu and Tutsi, however, disparity in income and assets was diminishing.²⁸ Access to medical care had also become more equitable under Belgian rule. Whereas in pre-colonial times the cost of traditional healers for medical problems had been prohibitive for many Hutu, under the Belgian administration medical care became widely available, effective, and affordable – independent of subgroup identity.²⁹

The increasing monetarisation of the Rwandan economy enabled Hutu to realise the advantages and opportunities associated with commerce. In part this was a result of the decision of the indigenous Rwandan Superior Council to abolish the traditional patron-client relationship of *ubuhake* in 1954. Traditionally, wealth in Rwanda was primarily associated with the ownership of cattle. Under the system of *ubuhake*, a (usually) Tutsi patron would provide custodianship of one or more cows to a (typically) Hutu client, in exchange for

²⁴ Bhattacharyya, p. 77.

²⁵ Helen Codere, *The Biography of an African Society, Rwanda 1900-1960: Based on Forty-Eight Rwandan Autobiographies* (Tervuren, België: Koninklijk Museum Voor Midden-Afrika, 1973), p. 320.

²⁶ *Ibid*, pp. 320-322.

²⁷ Philippe Leurquin, *Le Niveau de vie des populations rurales du Ruanda-Urundi* (Louvain: Éditions Nauwelaerts, 1960), p. 203.

²⁸ *Ibid*, pp. 203-204.

²⁹ Codere, p. 323.

agricultural products and sometimes also labour. While the relationship could be “moderately reciprocal”, particularly given the high status of cows within traditional Rwandan society, it was more often one of unequal power, with considerable potential for exploitation.³⁰ Thus *ubuhake* was associated with both the authority of the Tutsi, and a spirit of Hutu subservience.³¹

In abolishing *ubuhake*, the Rwandan Superior Council was following a major recommendation of the 1951 UN Visiting Mission. Yet in doing so, it failed to address the key issue of land tenure. Thus Tutsi continued to possess rights over the grazing land, as traditional custodians of the land for the Rwandan monarch, and could continue to demand payment – in money, services, or cows – for grazing rights.³² In practice, “The Batutsi lost little in the division of the cattle, while the Bahutu, who had to pay for grazing rights, barely profited from the maintenance of their cattle.”³³ This issue also had wider ramifications for agriculture. The introduction of the cash crop of coffee offered Hutu a powerful alternative to the previous reliance on cattle – bound up in the subservient *ubuhake* relationship – for wealth. Thus according to one analyst, “Coffee was thus an instrument of emancipation and gave the Hutu the self-confidence and the economic basis he needed to break his bonds.”³⁴ Yet the land tenure problem meant a large portion of the coffee had to be paid for use of the land.³⁵ Issues surrounding land tenure became a major source of division between the Hutu and Tutsi subgroups.

The UN Visiting Missions placed strong emphasis on the need for democratisation. Initially, the Belgian government had responded to this pressure by introducing major reforms to the indigenous conciliar system.³⁶ An advisory council was created for each level of the hierarchical system of chiefdoms, which was required to be consulted for all major decisions at that level.³⁷ Yet while membership of the councils was partially elected by the subordinate level, there was no universal suffrage in their selection and they were limited to an advisory capacity. It wasn’t until 1956 that adult male suffrage was introduced into the election

³⁰ African Rights, *Rwanda: Death, Despair and Defiance*, Revised Edition (London: African Rights, 1995), p. 4; Atterbury, p. 12.

³¹ Rawson, pp. 173-174; Bhattacharyya, pp. 168-169; Waggoner, pp. 147-148.

³² Rawson, p. 177.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ A.L. Latham-Koenig, “Ruanda-Urundi on the Threshold of Independence,” *The World Today* 18, no. 7 (1962): 289-290.

³⁵ Rawson, p. 178.

³⁶ Ibid, p. 64.

³⁷ Ibid, p. 93.

process – in response to the recommendations of the 1954 UN Visiting Mission. Nevertheless, the system could hardly be described as democratic. Notables responsible for electing the subchiefdom councils – that is, the lowest level of councils – would themselves now be elected rather than nominated. Each council would subsequently vote on the membership of the superordinate council, as previously. At each ascending level of the councils, Hutu representation diminished. At the highest level of the Superior Council, for example, Tutsi representation was a staggering 97% of the membership.³⁸ At the lower levels, however, and in regions in which Tutsi dominance was less entrenched, a more complex picture emerged as Hutu gained increased levels of representation. Arguably though, the most important outcome of these elections was not their result. Rather, for the Tutsi elite these elections “rang the first warning bell for the local authorities that the emerging consciousness among the Hutu masses posed a serious challenge to them.”³⁹ For the Hutu, the elections had exposed their demographic dominance, and the potential of Hutu power, yet in the end, had “changed nothing at all.”⁴⁰

The advent of the UN Trusteeship had fundamentally changed the nature of Belgian colonial rule, and the outcomes of the first decade of Belgian governance under the auspices of the UN contrast quite significantly with those from the period of the League of Nations Mandate. The first three decades of Belgian colonialism had led to the solidification of Tutsi rule, the consolidation of Tutsi privilege and the internalisation of the Hamitic hypothesis within Rwandan society. By contrast, the policies implemented in Rwanda in the late forties and early fifties came to be – often unintentionally – about opportunities for Hutu. Expanded education gave Hutu a thirst for knowledge; the first forays into a democratic system led to a dawning awareness of the possible power of the Hutu majority. The abolition of *ubuhake* and *ubuletwa*, and the more varied opportunities in the new money economy, opened potential routes to prosperity for Hutu. The standard of living of Hutu and (at least some) Tutsi even converged to some extent. Yet in all these areas, Hutu remained substantially disadvantaged. The limited opportunities were countered by an increased awareness of the constraints.

³⁸ John Webster, *The Political Development of Rwanda and Burundi*, Occasional Paper No. 16, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Maxwell Graduate School of Citizenship and Public Affairs), 1966, p. 33b.

³⁹ Bhattacharyya, p. 188.

⁴⁰ Webster, p. 34; Atterbury, p. 37.

The 1954 UN Visiting Mission to Rwanda would be the last to observe that “There appeared to be very little development of general or even local public opinion” in the country.⁴¹ The rapid changes of the post-war decade led to the emergence of a Hutu consciousness, or what has been dubbed the ‘Hutu awakening’. A tiny Hutu intelligentsia began to form, that felt keenly the systemic disadvantages to which Hutu were subject, and the frustrations of Hutu powerlessness.⁴² In March 1957, some of this frustration was expressed in the *Bahutu Manifesto*, signed by nine members of the Hutu counter-elite, including future Rwandan president Grégoire Kayibanda. The *Manifesto* challenged every facet of Rwandan society:

Some people have asked whether this is a social or a racial conflict ... In reality and in the minds of men it is both. It can, however, be narrowed down for it is primarily a question of a political monopoly held by one race, the Mututsi, and, in view of the social situation as a whole, it has become an economic and social monopoly. In view, also, of the *de facto* selection in education, this political, economic and social monopoly has also become a cultural monopoly, to the great despair of the Bahutu, who see themselves condemned forever to the role of subordinate manual workers, and this, worse still, after achieving an independence which they will have unwittingly helped to obtain.⁴³

For the Tutsi elite, the *Manifesto* – published to influence the 1957 UN Visiting Mission – represented a menacing threat to their entrenched privilege.⁴⁴ They too sought to influence the Visiting Mission, through the *Statement of Views*. In this document, the Superior Council focussed upon the need for rapid preparation for independence, through empowering the present elite.⁴⁵ In stark contrast to the *Bahutu Manifesto*, nowhere was there any reference whatsoever to the deep cleavages between the Hutu and Tutsi subgroups. Instead, faced with this challenge to their previous hegemony, the Superior Council “set up a characteristically mythical reinterpretation of the ancient socio-political structure of Rwanda.”⁴⁶ The Hamitic

⁴¹ United Nations, *United Nations Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, 1954, Report on Ruanda-Urundi*, T/1168, 1954, p. 2, quoted in Rawson, p. 98.

⁴² Lemarchand, “Political Instability in Africa: The case of Rwanda and Burundi,” *Civilisations* XVI, no. 3 (1966): 318; Segal, p. 8.

⁴³ Maximilien Niyonzima and others, *Manifesto of the Bahutu: Note on the Social Aspect of the Indigenous Racial Problem in Ruanda*, in United Nations, *Visiting Mission 1957*, Annex I, p. 3.

⁴⁴ Leo Kuper, *The Pity of it All: Polarisation of Racial and Ethnic Relations* (London: Duckworth, 1977), p. 176.

⁴⁵ High Council of State (Ruanda), *Statement of Views (Mise au Point)*, in United Nations, *Visiting Mission 1957*, Annex II, p. 12.

⁴⁶ Marcel D’Hertefelt, “Myth and Political Acculturation in Rwanda (U.N. Trust Territory),” in *Myth in Modern Africa: The Fourteenth Conference Proceedings of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute for Social Research*, ed. Allie Dubb (Lusaka, Northern Rhodesia: The Rhodes-Livingstone Institute, 1960), p. 122.

myth was replaced with a focus upon the cooperation between Hutu, Tutsi and Twa, and the essential feature of Rwandan society was recast as “its homogeneity as a people and a nation”.⁴⁷ The Hutu-Tutsi-Twa distinctions were to be radically de-emphasised in a bid for the elite to retain its power.

The Report of the 1954 Visiting Mission to Ruanda-Urundi had completely failed to mention the problem of subgroup identity in Rwanda, and it was left to the Belgians to point this out in their response:

The Visiting Mission ... makes no reference to the deep cleavages which divide the Batutsi, the Bahutu, the Batwa and the Waswahili. Those cleavages are obvious ... and they dominate the whole of social life.⁴⁸

In 1957, the *Statement of Views* and *Bahutu Manifesto* awaiting the Mission ensured that these issues could not help but be noticed. Yet the only solution the 1957 Mission recommended, with “almost ridiculous optimism”, was further education.⁴⁹ According to the political scientist Rawson, the failure of the Trusteeship Council to realise “the disintegrative potential of the traditional social stratification ... was a crucial factor in the developmental process.”⁵⁰ In the same vein, the 1957 Mission failed to deal with the land tenure problem, despite its “economic, social and ultimately political ramifications” being “most acute.”⁵¹ Yet at this stage, the political ideals of the Hutu and Tutsi were being expressed in a moderate fashion, and “the way was still open for peaceful change and compromise in Rwanda.”⁵² It is unfortunate that the UN Trusteeship Council, the Belgian administration and the Indigenous authorities each failed to take decisive action in response to the *Statement of Views*, the *Bahutu Manifesto*, or the rising tide of ferment within Rwanda. The Rwandan monarch, the *Mwami*, further inflamed the situation by adopting a partisan pro-Tutsi stance, which was particularly damaging in light of the *Mwami*’s traditional role as the ultimate arbiter in Rwandan society.⁵³

⁴⁷ Ibid; Atterbury, p. 58.

⁴⁸ United Nations, *Observations of the Administering Authority on the Report of the Visiting Mission*, T/1164, 1955, p. 47, quoted in Rawson, p. 173.

⁴⁹ Waggoner, p. 161.

⁵⁰ Rawson, p. 219.

⁵¹ Ibid, p. 179.

⁵² Waggoner, p. 162.

⁵³ Jacques Maquet, *The Premise of Inequality in Ruanda: A Study of Political Relations in a Central African Kingdom*, (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), p. 124.

Thus it was in a climate of increasing tension and polarisation that the first Rwandan political parties were formed in the late 1950s. This is reflected in their formation along the boundaries of ethnic identity. The *Mouvement Démocratique Rwandais/Parti du Mouvement et de l'Émancipation Hutu* (MDR-PARMEHUTU) was led by Kayibanda, and its program was based upon the *Bahutu Manifesto*. It sought “a true union of all the Rwandan people without any race dominating another as is the case today.”⁵⁴ *L'Association pour la Promotion Sociale de la Masse*, or APROSOMA, sought “to unite Hutu and Tutsi poor against Tutsi privilege,” and primarily drew support from the southern regions of Rwanda (in contrast to MDR-PARMEHUTU’s powerbase in the north and centre of the country).⁵⁵ Despite its stated aims, however, it developed as a Hutu party in practice.⁵⁶ In opposition stood UNAR, *Union Nationale Rwandaise*. Created by conservative Tutsi (although nominally led by Hutu François Rukeba), it espoused the ‘traditionalist’ view of Rwandan society.⁵⁷ Yet, “Although the Tutsi authorities constituted the hard core of the party, loyalty to UNAR was by no means confined to the Tutsis. It had a large number of adherents among the Hutus, explained partly by the feudal prestige and influence the Tutsi authorities still enjoyed among the masses and partly by the threats and pressure they used.”⁵⁸ Very quickly debate crystallised around the key issues of democracy and independence. MDR-PARMEHUTU “insisted on a genuine democratization of all existing institutions before the granting of independence.”⁵⁹ For UNAR, however, the priority was immediate independence.⁶⁰

“Rwanda in 1959 ... was a land of tensions, rumours, and troubles”, wrote anthropologist Helen Codere, reflecting on her time in the country.⁶¹ Tension increased dramatically when the Belgian administration announced on 13 January a plan for the decolonisation of neighbouring Congo, in the wake of the Leopoldville riots.⁶² The new policy had arisen from the report of the Working Group that had recently visited the Congo; a similar group visited Ruanda-Urundi in April. Intergroup frictions escalated, as organisations representing each

⁵⁴ “Manifeste-Programme du Parmehutu,” 18 October 1959, in *Rwanda Politique*, p. 113. Subsequently MDR-PARMEHUTU dropped the first part of its name to become PARMEHUTU.

⁵⁵ Mamdani, p. 123; Kuper, p. 177; D’Hertefeldt, p. 125.

⁵⁶ Kuper, p. 177.

⁵⁷ Mamdani, p. 120.

⁵⁸ Bhattacharyya, p. 246.

⁵⁹ Lemarchand, p. 160.

⁶⁰ Prunier, p. 47.

⁶¹ Helen Codere, “Fieldwork in Rwanda, 1959-1960,” in *Women in the Field: Anthropological Experiences*, Second Edition, ed. Peggy Golde (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), p. 162.

⁶² Atterbury, p. 48.

subgroup sought to convince the working group of their proposals for Rwanda's future. Tensions rose still further with the unexpected death of *Mwami* Mutara III on 25 July. With no clear succession plan in place, and with wild rumours circulating as to the cause of death, the colonial administration was taken by surprise when indigenous authorities simply announced the new *Mwami* at Mutara's funeral.⁶³ Rwanda remained a "simmering cauldron".⁶⁴ Elections were due at the end of the year; however the form they would take had not been finalised.⁶⁵ The report of the Working Group was anticipated, with potentially enormous ramifications for the future of the country. The political parties commenced a period of frenetic activity. UNAR's approach, in particular, involved violence and a campaign of intimidation against opposition leaders and supporters.⁶⁶ By 1 November, it took only a spark to ignite the Rwandan revolution.

Like many revolutions that have changed the course of a nation's history, the Rwandan Revolution began as a spontaneous uprising. An altercation in which a band of "young UNAR militants" attacked a PARMEHUTU leader led to a Hutu retaliation that escalated into revolution.⁶⁷ Hutu-led violence and the burning of Tutsi huts rapidly spread. As the subsequent Visiting Mission Report noted:

The operations were generally carried out by a fairly similar process. Incendiaries would set off in bands of some tens of persons. Armed with matches and paraffin, which the indigenous inhabitants used in large quantities for their lamps, they pillaged the Tutsi houses they passed on their way and set fire to them. On their way they would enlist other incendiaries to follow in the procession while the first recruits, too exhausted to continue, would give up and return home. Thus day after day fires spread from hill to hill. Generally speaking the incendiaries, who were often unarmed, did not attack the inhabitants of the huts and were content with pillaging and setting fire to them.⁶⁸

It is notable that, by and large, there were few fatalities associated with these attacks. Nevertheless, serious damage was done, as thousands and thousands of huts were pillaged

⁶³ United Nations, *Visiting Mission to Trust Territories in East Africa, 1960: Report on Ruanda-Urundi*, T/1538, 3 June 1960, pp. 55-57; Bhattacharyya, p. 238; Waggoner, p. 180.

⁶⁴ Atterbury, p. 64.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Bhattacharyya, pp. 255-256.

⁶⁷ Lemarchand, p. 162.

⁶⁸ United Nations, *Visiting Mission 1960*, p. 73.

and burned, plantations plundered and livestock killed.⁶⁹ In some parts of the north, not a single Tutsi hut was left standing.⁷⁰

The Tutsi reaction to the uprising was swift, yet far more organised than the largely spontaneous Hutu incendiarism.⁷¹ UNAR leaders, working from the *Mwami's* palace, quickly organised commando units and dispatched them to arrest or kill specific Hutu leaders.⁷² According to the UN Visiting Mission report:

Each commando party amounted to some hundreds of persons or more, and included a majority of Hutu, but the leaders were generally Tutsi or Twa. The group would set off on its mission with very definite instructions. In other cases, emissaries were sent out from Nyanza with verbal orders instructing them to bring back or kill certain persons ... It seems to be an established fact, moreover, that in many cases a commando group set out with orders only to arrest a person, but in effect killed him, either because he resisted arrest or because some attackers had the instinct to kill.⁷³

Well over a dozen prominent Hutu were killed in this way, including two leaders of APROSOMA. UNAR appeared to be trying to eliminate the Hutu leadership, and thus its opposition.

The Belgian administration, despite anticipating the disturbance, took more than a week to bring the situation under control.⁷⁴ It was not until 14 November that quiet was fully restored. At least 200 people were dead, and several hundred more wounded.⁷⁵ Meanwhile, in an effort to calm the situation, Belgium released a major policy statement on the future of Rwanda. The radical reforms overhauled the conciliar structure to create communes, for which councillors would be elected through universal male suffrage.⁷⁶ They in turn would elect a burgomaster and a new State Council, which would progressively be granted legislative powers and autonomy.⁷⁷ While the *Mwami* would remain, the role would largely become that of a figurehead.

⁶⁹ Lemarchand, p. 167.

⁷⁰ United Nations, *Visiting Mission 1960*, p. 73.

⁷¹ *Ibid*, pp. 75, 77; René Lemarchand, "The Coup in Rwanda," in *Protest and Power in Black Africa*, ed. Robert Rotberg and Ali Mazrui (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), p. 904.

⁷² United Nations, *Visiting Mission 1960*, pp. 75, 77.

⁷³ *Ibid*, p. 77.

⁷⁴ United Nations, *Visiting Mission 1960*, pp. 73, 78; Bhattacharyya, p. 262.

⁷⁵ According to the United Nations estimate, *Visiting Mission 1960*, p. 82.

⁷⁶ UN Visiting Mission 1960, p. 88; Webster, p. 61.

⁷⁷ UN Visiting Mission 1960, pp. 88-89.

Perhaps the most significant outcome of the revolution, however, was that it resulted in a profound change in the attitude of the Belgian Administration towards the Hutu and Tutsi subgroups. The previous policies of according privilege to the Tutsi minority were replaced by a much more egalitarian approach – whether by necessity or calculation. In the course of the uprising, hundreds of Tutsi chiefs and subchiefs had fled, been killed, been forced to resign due to Hutu opposition, or had been involved in the Tutsi counter-attacks and subsequently arrested or removed from office.⁷⁸ The Belgian Administration filled these vacant posts predominantly with Hutu. Thus, by 1 March the number of Hutu chiefs went from 0 to 22, out of a total of 45 chiefdoms, and the number of Hutu subchiefs rose from 10 to 297, out of a total of 531.⁷⁹ Four months after the revolution, it “had suddenly become a smashing Hutu success.”⁸⁰

The atmosphere in Rwanda remained charged in the wake of the revolution. Sporadic outbreaks of violence destabilised the nation throughout 1960. The waves of violence continued to occur along ethnic lines, leading to growing numbers of Tutsi refugees. Increasingly, intergroup relations became the central issue around which other cleavages polarised.⁸¹ Thus UNAR politicised the refugees’ problems, and proved hostile to the Belgian Administration’s attempts to resolve them.⁸² UNAR’s campaign specifically targeted Tutsi with a progressive agenda, undermining the possibility of more unifying platforms gaining currency.⁸³ At the same time, there was also an “intense politicisation of the racial cleavages by PARMEHUTU.”⁸⁴ The Hamitic hypothesis was reinterpreted, and, according to the political scientist Lemarchand, now “The Tutsi are seen as the Hamitic foreigners who imposed their rule on the unsuspecting Bantu populations by cunning and cruelty, using their cows and beautiful women to bait the Hutu into submission.”⁸⁵

The UN Visiting Mission that arrived in Rwanda in March of 1960 did little to aid the situation. It sought an amnesty for events during the revolution, but as the Belgian Administration countered, the idea of an amnesty was not politically neutral given that the

⁷⁸ Waggoner, p. 196; Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 173; United Nations, *Visiting Mission 1960*, p. 85.

⁷⁹ United Nations, *Visiting Mission 1960*, pp. 85-86.

⁸⁰ Waggoner, p. 197.

⁸¹ Leo Kuper, *Race, Class, and Power: Ideology and Revolutionary Change in Plural Societies* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1975), p. 195; Bhattacharyya, p. 313.

⁸² Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 173; United Nations, *Visiting Mission 1960*, pp. 84-85.

⁸³ Kuper, *The Pity of it All*, p. 189.

⁸⁴ Bhattacharyya, p. 314.

⁸⁵ René Lemarchand, “Comparing the Killing Fields,” in *Genocide: Cases, Comparisons and Contemporary Debates*, ed. Steven Jensen (Copenhagen: Danish Centre for Holocaust and Genocide Studies, 2003), p. 158.

Tutsi had gone far beyond the Hutu in the scope of their crimes.⁸⁶ Moreover, the speed and intensity of events in Rwanda meant that “Its observations came too late to be useful in changing the political situation.”⁸⁷ Despite the ongoing sporadic violence, the Belgian Administration pressed ahead with the communal elections set for June. Yet they, too, failed to bring calm to the country. PARMEHUTU swept to power, with some 75 per cent of the vote.⁸⁸ Rather than leading to democratic local government, however, the transfer of power seemed more “the transference of political clientelism to the Hutu stratum.”⁸⁹ Within five months, the opposition parties – including UNAR – banded together to form a ‘Common Front’ to protest “the dictatorial regime PARMEHUTU.”⁹⁰

The Belgian Administration was strained still further by repeated cross-border raids by groups of Tutsi refugees in the border zones of Uganda and the Congo. These groups came to be known as *inyenzi*, or cockroaches, for their night-time attacks. Meanwhile, the *Mwami* and UNAR petitioned the UN repeatedly, where they cultivated a highly sympathetic General Assembly. On 20 December 1960, the General Assembly thus recommended a range of reforms, including that legislative elections planned for 15 January be postponed, to a date to be determined by a UN Commission that would visit Ruanda-Urundi in late January. Furious that the UN-proposed actions would advantage UNAR, PARMEHUTU chose the day of the UN Visiting Mission’s arrival for a *coup d’état*.⁹¹ The UN was incensed when the Belgian Administration promptly recognised the powers of the newly declared government.⁹² Following the coup, PARMEHUTU – with Kayibanda at its helm – effectively took control of running the nation, with the Belgian Administration adopting a supporting role.⁹³ A new Belgian government also sought to pacify the UN by adhering to its central

⁸⁶ Rawson, p. 234; United Nations, *Statement of Mr. Claeys Bouwaert, Twenty-sixth Session*, T/SR.1112, 1960, p. 414, quoted in Rawson, p. 235.

⁸⁷ Rawson, p. 275.

⁸⁸ Service d’Information du Rwanda-Burundi, ed. “Les élections communales au Rwanda,” in *Rwanda Politique*, p. 272.

⁸⁹ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 187.

⁹⁰ Joseph Habyarimana Gitara and others, “Relation des travaux du Comité d’étude des problèmes Twa - Hutu - Tutsi et Zungu au Rwanda. (Réunion tenue à Kigali les 24, 25 et 26 novembre 1960),” in *Rwanda Politique*, p. 347.

⁹¹ United Nations, *Question of the Future of Ruanda-Urundi: Note from the Aprosoma and Parmehutu parties concerning the coup d’état at Gitarama on 28 January 1961*, A/C.4/477, 4 April 1961, pp. 2-3.

⁹² Belgian Government, *Rapport sur l’administration belge du Ruanda-Urundi pendant l’année 1960* (Bruxelles : Fr. Van Muysewinkel, 1961), pp. 44-45; United Nations, *Communiqué officiel du gouvernement belge définissant son attitude envers les événements de Gitarama*, A/4706/Add 1, 1 February 1961, in *Rwanda Politique*, pp. 397-398; United Nations, *Note from the Aprosoma*, A/C.4/477, p. 4; United Nations, *Question of the Future of Ruanda-Urundi: Statement made by the representative of Belgium at the 1108th meeting of the Fourth Committee on 20 March 1961*, A/C.4/473, p. 6.

⁹³ Waggoner, p. 215.

recommendations, including those for legislative elections and a referendum on the future of the monarchy.

By this time, the stark ethnic polarisation led to substantial conflation between political and ethnic divisions. In its anger following the Gitarama coup, for example, the UN Commission reported in March 1961 that “A racial dictatorship of one party has been set up in Rwanda, and the developments of the last eighteen months have consisted in the transition from one type of repressive regime to another.”⁹⁴ As the legislative elections rescheduled for September 1961 approached, tension erupted into violence once more. There were repeated outbreaks of violence, incendiarism, and a large rise in the number of refugees. Belgian security forces struggled to prevent the situation from spiralling out of control. As the UN reported:

Serious disturbances took place in several regions of the country, including the districts of Myanza, Astrida, Gitarama, and Kiungu and some communes in Kigali and Kibuye. As a result of the incidents there, tens of thousands of new disaster victims and refugees had to leave their homes and seek refuge.⁹⁵

Both sides initiated and participated in the violence, although there were conflicting opinions as to those primarily responsible.⁹⁶

There was an overwhelming turnout of 95 per cent of registered voters for the election. PARMEHUTU received 77.7 per cent of the votes, UNAR 16.8 per cent, APROSOMA 3.5 per cent, and RADER less than 1 per cent. This led to PARMEHUTU dominating the Legislative Assembly with 35 of the 44 seats, UNAR receiving 7 and APROSOMA 2.⁹⁷ The polarisation of Rwandan society along ethnic lines was clear: “The Legislative Assembly thus had an ethnic composition of 84% Hutu and 16% Tutsi – corresponding closely to the proportion of Hutu and of Tutsi in the population.”⁹⁸ About 80 per cent of voters also declared a preference for the abolition of the monarchy. After much debate and vacillation,

⁹⁴ United Nations, *Interim Report of the UN Commission for Ruanda-Urundi*, A/4706, 8 March 1961, p. 51, quoted in Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, pp. 194-195.

⁹⁵ United Nations, *Question of the Future of Ruanda-Urundi: Report of the United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi*, A/4994, 30 November 1961, p. 60.

⁹⁶ United Nations, *Question of the Future of Ruanda-Urundi: Statement made by Mr. E. Gassou, United Nations Commissioner for Ruanda-Urundi, at the 1264th Meeting of the Fourth Committee*, A/C.4/524, 19 January 1962, pp. 2-3; United Nations, *Statement made by Mr. Majid Rahnema*, p. 13.

⁹⁷ Waggoner, p. 234.

⁹⁸ Atterbury, p. 77.

the United Nations eventually agreed to accept the results of the elections as free and fair. The final preparations for independence commenced.

Following the elections, Rwanda continued to be beset by sporadic violence, and a large refugee problem. If the pre-election violence had been instigated by both PARMEHUTU and opposition forces, the pre-independence violence consisted largely of bands of Tutsi *inyenzi* conducting cross-border raids from bases in neighbouring countries. According to Rwandan government sources, there were no fewer than 27 incidences of such violence between October 1961 and May 1962.⁹⁹ There were many acts of murder, huts being set alight, and pillage. Biumba in northern Rwanda was particularly targeted, and attackers were often armed with machine guns or revolvers, as well as more traditional weapons. Biumba was also the location of a particularly harsh reprisal by the authorities, when following two raids there was a massacre of local Tutsi, further burning of huts and considerable pillage.¹⁰⁰ The highest estimates put the death toll at between one and two thousand.¹⁰¹ The UN reported: “The situation ... appeared alarming to all experienced observers.”¹⁰² The refugee situation was particularly problematic, difficult even to quantify, let alone to resolve. Despite UN attempts to address the problem, by the time of independence, approximately 100,000 Rwandan refugees were scattered between Uganda, Tanzania, Burundi and the Congo.¹⁰³

On 1 July 1962, the Republic of Rwanda achieved independence. Despite the massive ethnic polarisation that marked the decolonisation period, the Tutsi minority retained at least some political voice. Under agreements reached with the UN, UNAR had secured two ministerial posts in the government and some additional senior postings, which along with its seven elected seats in the National Assembly ensured a viable opposition.¹⁰⁴ Two *inyenzi* incursions into Rwanda on 4 and 17 July – challenging the nation as it drew its very first breath – were unsuccessful, as the authorities had received advance intelligence warning of both.¹⁰⁵ Following these attacks, the situation settled, and Rwanda began the process of nation building. A number of development projects were commenced in conjunction with

⁹⁹ Rwanda, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, *Toute la vérité sur le terrorisme “Inyenzi” au Rwanda: une mise au point du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères du Rwanda* (Kigali: Service d’information, 1964), pp. 11-12.

¹⁰⁰ Mamdani, p. 129.

¹⁰¹ United Nations, *Question of the Future of Ruanda-Urundi: Report of the United Nations Commission for Ruanda-Urundi established under General Assembly resolution 1743 (XVI)*, A/5126, 30 May 1962, p. 45.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Webster, p. 84.

¹⁰⁴ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 197.

¹⁰⁵ “Indépendance du Rwanda: un an et demi de paix et de concorde nationale”, in Rwanda, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, *Toute la vérité*, pp. 13-14.

other nations, Rwanda sought foreign aid from numerous sources, and an austerity campaign began which included the raising of taxes.¹⁰⁶ A program commenced to ‘democratise’ education, which meant radically altering the ethnic composition of the student body to more accurately reflect that of the nation.¹⁰⁷ The problems of land tenure were addressed in the Rwandan constitution, and a final redistribution of cattle and land erased the last remnants of the feudal system, although not without some discord.¹⁰⁸ Overall, despite the dire predictions of some foreign officials and reporters, the first year and a half of Rwandan independence was surprisingly calm, and surprisingly successful.

The relative peace in the immediate aftermath of Rwanda’s independence was not indicative of UNAR and/or Tutsi acceptance of the new situation, however, but rather representative of UNAR’s disorganisation and factionalism.¹⁰⁹ The August 1963 communal elections appear to have spurred UNAR into violent action. In these first elections since independence, tactics such as intimidation of UNAR candidates resumed, and there were several killings.¹¹⁰ UNAR responded by boycotting the elections, which only had the effect of PARMEHUTU receiving 98 per cent of the votes cast and almost total governmental power.¹¹¹ Following this defeat, UNAR leader Rukeba was able to obtain some funding and weaponry, and to facilitate some organisation and coordination amongst the *inyenzi* – particularly in Burundi, where conditions were most favourable for such activities.¹¹² For Rukeba, it was time to adopt a different approach.

On the night of 20 December, the Bugesera invasion was launched. Of course, had the Rwandan National Guard been a more formidable force, the invasion of a few hundred Tutsi refugees with largely homemade weapons might barely have been considered a threat. As it happened, however, the invaders were able to attack and overrun a small Rwandan military camp, obtaining two vehicles and some light arms.¹¹³ They also increased their number by several hundred through rallying local Tutsi – an action that provoked great fear amongst the Hutu population.¹¹⁴ The invaders came within 20 kilometres of the capital city of Kigali

¹⁰⁶ Webster, p. 83.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ *Constitution de la République Rwandaise*, in *Rwanda Politique*, p. 392 ; Webster, p. 84; Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, pp. 230-233.

¹⁰⁹ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, pp. 197-227.

¹¹⁰ Waggoner, p. 256.

¹¹¹ Ibid, pp. 256-257.

¹¹² Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, pp. 215, 219-220.

¹¹³ Segal, p. 13.

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

before meeting any resistance. There, at the Kanzenze bridge on the Nyabarongo River, a battle ensued with a company of the Rwandan national guard, and the invading force was quickly overrun.¹¹⁵ A combination of factors led the Rwandan government to a panic-stricken response, however. The Rwandan National Guard consisted of only 1000 men who were poorly armed and poorly equipped, and spread thinly around the country.¹¹⁶ Its commander was a lieutenant barely two years out of Officers' school.¹¹⁷ The mountainous nature of the country and its largely open borders made defence particularly difficult. Furthermore, there were deep fears that the Tutsi population in Rwanda would join the invaders in a grab for power.

Perhaps the greatest fear, though, was that "the attack was part of a concerted plot from several directions to overthrow the regime and restore the monarchy," possibly with the collusion of the government of Burundi.¹¹⁸ At first, this terrible scenario appeared to be materialising. On 21 and 22 December there were a number of cross-border raids from the Congo. On 25 December the Ugandan authorities intercepted a further group before they could cross the border from Uganda; a second group of about 600 men managed to cross the border, but were repelled by a National Guard that had been forewarned of their arrival several days in advance.¹¹⁹ As the Rwandan government scrambled to respond to these threats, it dispatched government officials to each region to organise 'civilian defence forces' to aid the army.¹²⁰ As Lemarchand has noted:

These arrangements were made within a few hours, in an atmosphere of panic, and therefore with little attention to procedural details or co-ordination. Meanwhile, Kigali Radio repeatedly beamed emergency warnings, asking the population to be 'constantly on the alert' for Tutsi terrorists. In this atmosphere of intense fear, saturated with rumour and suspicion, the worst was bound to happen.¹²¹

What was intended for self-defence turned into a series of vicious reprisals and massacres of Rwandan Tutsi. The worst were undoubtedly in the region of Gikongoro. In this former seat of Tutsi power, rumours flew that the government in Kigali had fallen, and the *Mwami* had

¹¹⁵ Wagoner, p. 258.

¹¹⁶ Ibid, p. 298.

¹¹⁷ Segal, pp. 13-14.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, p. 14.

¹¹⁹ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 222; Segal, p. 16.

¹²⁰ Segal, p. 14; Wagoner, p. 259.

¹²¹ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 223.

been restored to power.¹²² The local prefect is reported to have sparked the massacres by asserting at a hastily arranged meeting of local leaders: “We are expected to defend ourselves. The only way to go about it is to paralyse the Tutsi. How? They must be killed.”¹²³ By all accounts, the violence was brutal. The use of traditional arms was widespread, and there are many accounts of great cruelty. Without central organisation, local influences determined the severity of the massacres in each area. Only in Kibungo prefecture were local leaders and priests able to work together to prevent the outbreak of violence.¹²⁴ Elsewhere, some 10,000 – 14,000 were killed in late December and early January.¹²⁵ Only as it became clear that the Kayibanda government retained control and that there was no major threat did the massacres abate. By mid-January the mass killing had ceased, and despite further *inyenzi* raids in late January and early February, it did not recommence.¹²⁶ In many respects though, it was too late. The tiny newborn nation of Rwanda had been changed forever.

Contrary to the sensationalist headlines in *The Times*, the massacres in Rwanda in 1964 were not regarded as genocide at the time. UN Commissioner Max Dorsinville, in Rwanda both as the massacres unfolded in late December to early January, and again in February after their cessation, reported “There is no question of a systematic elimination or extermination of the Batutsi, or of what some sources have hastened to call genocide.”¹²⁷ Nor was there sustained persecution of the Tutsi in their wake. While a number of Tutsi leaders had been killed during the massacres, nearly half of Rwanda’s administration continued to be staffed by Tutsi, and they continued to form the majority of teachers at secondary schools.¹²⁸ Kayibanda promised “those responsible for these excesses will be ruthlessly punished,” although the subsequent investigations were flawed.¹²⁹ By mid-1964 the Kayibanda government was expressing its desires for peace and tolerance: “Today more than ever, after the hard lesson inflicted on the terrorists, Rwanda wants to be a tolerant and peaceful nation. This is the will of all the people, and this is the will of all its leaders.”¹³⁰ And indeed, the

¹²² Segal, p. 15.

¹²³ Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, pp. 223-224.

¹²⁴ Segal, p. 14.

¹²⁵ Ibid, p. 15; Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 225.

¹²⁶ Segal, p. 17; “The United Nations’ Findings on Rwanda and Burundi: A summary of reports made by Max. H. Dorsinville on his two missions to Rwanda and Burundi as the United Nations Secretary General’s Special Representative,” *Africa Report* 9, no. 4 (1964): 7.

¹²⁷ “The United Nations’ Findings,” p. 7.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

¹²⁹ Ibid; Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 226.

¹³⁰ Rwanda, Ministère des Affaires Étrangères, *Toute la vérité*, p. 13.

Hutu and Tutsi populations in Rwanda returned to a largely peaceful, if sometimes uneasy, co-existence.

Yet the legacy of the massacres was profound. The massacres left the UNAR leadership decimated, and the UNAR newspaper *Unité* was no longer published. They effectively resulted “in the silencing of the opposition.”¹³¹ Rwanda became, and largely remained, a Hutu nation.¹³² In the wake of the violence a further wave of Tutsi fled Rwanda as refugees. Estimates of Rwandan refugees in 1964 were that over 336,000 were scattered in bordering nations.¹³³ Decades later, the children of some of these refugees would form the Rwandan Patriotic Front and invade Rwanda in 1990. As in 1964, they would be viewed as deeply threatening to the very being of the nation. The polarisation that had occurred over the decade between 1954 and 1964 led to a society in which Hutu-Tutsi divisions remained prominent, and politicised. Obstructions to the achievement of political goals were at times blamed on ‘cockroachism’.¹³⁴ The view of the Hutu-Tutsi divide remained a racial one, with the colonial ancillary to the Hamitic hypothesis – that the Tutsi were therefore foreigners – remaining salient within the society.¹³⁵ In this context, little was done to address the refugee problem. Furthermore, the manner in which intergroup divisions had been politicised between 1954 and 1964 led to perceptions of political power in the nation as a ‘zero-sum’ game. Rather than approaches that sought to accommodate the needs and desires of both Hutu and Tutsi, it seemed that the gains of one group could only come at the expense of the other.

The decade between 1954 and 1964 was a momentous one in Rwanda’s history. At its opening, Tutsi privilege and power were deeply entrenched within Rwandan society; by its end, the reversal of authority was all but absolute. For the Hutu majority, this was a profound liberation to be celebrated. Yet the legacy of their historical disadvantage continued to impact the new nation. The massive challenges ahead of the new Hutu government were compounded by a lack of appropriate education and experience amongst its members. A deep insecurity and fear of a return to Tutsi hegemony lurked in the shadows of Rwandan politics. And key opportunities to promote unity and moderation in the decolonisation

¹³¹ “The United Nations’ Findings,” p. 7.

¹³² Mamdani, p. 134; Lemarchand, *Rwanda and Burundi*, p. 197.

¹³³ Sayinzoga, p. 51.

¹³⁴ Waggoner, p. 292.

¹³⁵ Mamdani, pp. 134-5, 138.

process had been lost in a spiral of ethnic polarisation. The Rwanda of 1964 was a fractured nation.