

# **Development Ideology, the Peasantry and Genocide: Rwanda represented in Habyarimana's speeches**

by

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*“Some societies have, in the past, opposed manual and intellectual labor with the latter giving in general more prestige to its performer. Such a concept not only seems outdated but also unacceptable because it is not realistic. In fact, manual labor, especially agricultural labor is the basis of our economy. We want to repeat that agriculture will stay the essential base of our economic system for the years to come.*

*In order to attract the attention of the Rwandan population for this reality, We have named the year 1974 the national year for agriculture and manual labor. We take this opportunity to thank and to encourage everyone who understood Our attitude and who supported our action by practicing one day of manual labor themselves every week.*

*Remember that this is the way we want to fight this form of intellectual bourgeoisie and give all kinds of physical labor its value back . And we think that in all programs, the brightest, must be the example for their countrymen. Action is thus called for. “*

Message of the Head of State, Major-General Juvenal Habyarimana, May 1, 1974.

*‘Umurimo ni uguhinga, ibindi ni amahirwe‘*

(“Our job is to cultivate, all the rest is good luck” -- popular Rwandan expression )

## 1. INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

Two of the most intriguing books written on the genocide in Rwanda are Allison DesForges' *Leave None to Tell the Story* (1999) and Peter Uvin's *Aiding Violence : the development enterprise in Rwanda* (1998). The first book offers a very detailed and very rich account of the implementation of genocidal policies in Rwanda from 1990 to 1994. It is the best book on the genocide available to the world community. The main thesis of the author is that the political elite in Rwanda chose genocide as a political strategy to remain in power. The second book is a well-researched analysis of the impact of the development business in Rwanda. It is a harsh critique of the way the Rwandan state, the NGO's and the international donor community organized development projects in Rwanda before the genocide. The main thesis of P. Uvin is that the developmental process in Rwanda humiliated, frustrated and infantilized the Rwandan peasant. He offers interesting insights and reflections on the relationship between this developmental process and participation in the genocide by the peasants.

The arguments that I will develop in this paper do not question the analysis of the above mentioned authors, but focus on a neglected characteristic of the genocide, namely the underlying peasant ideology. Desforges stresses the intentions of the political elite but does not talk (or not much) about the economic conditions of the country. These conditions are emphasized by Uvin, but he does not talk (or not much) about the intentions of the political elite. This study of the regime's peasant ideology brings together the politics and economics of the regime and in this way touches the core of the Habyarimana regime.

In this paper, I take a closer look at the ideology of the Habyarimana regime (1973-1994) as it is represented in his speeches. All speeches by and interviews with Habyarimana were published during his reign by his office and the Office of Information of Rwanda (ORINFOR). These speeches are the primary source of information regarding Habyarimana's political thought. His speeches from the years 1973, 1974, 1979, 1980,

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The author owes many thanks to Ben Kiernan for giving the initial impetus to research the relationship between the regime's ideology and the peasantry in Rwanda. I am also grateful to Thavro Phim, Toni Samantha Phim, Niti Pawakapan, Puangthong Rungswasdisab, Laurent Nkusi, Andy Storey, John McKinnon and Ben Kiernan from providing insightful comments. I owe many thanks to Camille Riley for editing and correcting a draft version of the paper. This research is supported by the Fund for Scientific Research (Flanders, Belgium) and the Belgian American Educational Foundation. All responsibility remains with the author.

1981, 1982, 1986, 1987 and 1988 were analyzed to determine Habyarimana's ideology.<sup>2</sup> The focus is on the speeches he gave on the many occasions of celebration in Rwanda. These speeches, contrary to those he made abroad, are directed at the Rwandan population and, as such, reveal the way the dictator saw his country, its population and his own task as leader. These speeches should not be considered mere rhetoric. I will show that Habyarimana actually implemented the policies that he advocated in his speeches. Hiding his real intentions, he gave a friendly and nice explanation of his policies in his speeches. I want to show that his speeches provide the answer to the question: where did the genocidal strategy come from?

Did Habyarimana write his speeches all by himself? This question remains open, but he probably did not. According to my informants, at least three people helped him: Ferdinand Nahimana, professor of history and leading intellectual of the regime; Jeanne Charles, a Swiss professor and consultant to the president; and C. Mfusi, a Rwandan journalist who later became a critic of the regime.

I focus my analysis of the ideology of Habyarimana on the politics and economics of his regime. I want to show that his ideology served as a legitimation for the policies he advocated and especially for his personal hold onto power.<sup>3</sup>

The following conclusion, which can serve as a hypothesis for future research, will be reached at the end of this study: Habyarimana wanted Rwanda to be an agricultural society. He glorified the peasantry and pictured himself as a peasant. In his ideology of rural romanticism, only the Hutu were the real peasants of Rwanda; the Tutsi were the feudal class closely associated with colonialist occupation. According to this Hutu ideology, the Tutsi refused to till the land and were considered petty bourgeois. When dictatorial political power is legitimized with a peasant ideology, genocide becomes a political option (and indeed almost a necessity) because a peasant society does not tolerate the existence of non-peasants, in the same way as a communist society does not tolerate the existence of a capitalist class. The latter group is labeled "enemies of the revolution". The particular combination of peasant ideology and racism is also found in other genocidal regimes as the Khmer Rouge in Cambodia and the Nazis in Germany. When only one

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I was unable to locate the speeches for the other years of his reign. The pages used in the footnotes of the sections where I cite from Habyarimana's speech, refer to the pages in the publications by ORINFOR.

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In my dissertation, I will develop a theoretical political economy framework to study Habyarimana's dictatorship and its ideology.

particular group of people has the right to exist, namely, that group defined as ‘the real peasants’, all other groups are targeted for extermination.

I argue that the Habyarimana regime annihilated the Tutsi minority because the Tutsis were not considered real peasants. This annihilation resulted from the revolutionary Hutu ideology which pictured the Hutu peasantry as a subordinated and exploited class that has to rise against its Tutsi masters (and indeed against all Tutsi in general) to attain liberation. When revolutionary leaders espouse a mono-ethnic peasant ideology to legitimize their power and want to hold on power at all cost, genocide becomes their ultimate strategy.

Most scholars writing about the Rwandan genocide are convinced that the plan to commit genocide was developed in the period between November 1991 and August 1992. Although it is not easy to highlight dates on which specific decisions were made, numerous sources reveal evidence of the importance of this period. One example is a document transmitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by the Belgian Ambassador in Rwanda in March 1992 that refers to

*“a secret military staff charged with the extermination of the Tutsi of Rwanda in order to solve forever, in their way, the ethnic problem in Rwanda and to destroy the domestic Hutu opposition “.*<sup>4</sup>

I agree on the importance of the civil war and the 1991-1992 period for the development of the genocidal plan, but the research I present in this paper shows that the civil war was not the cause of the genocidal plan. The civil war offered merely the pretext, the occasion to execute the final solution. War allows a regime to hide preparations for mass murder from the media, from its own population, and from a political opposition. And, very important, war allows the spreading of a message of ethnic hatred among the population. In a context of war, a regime can blame the other army for the massacres, as Habyarimana did in Rwanda.

In dealing with the UN, the donor countries and the internal opposition Habyarimana showed his strategic skills. However, strategic behavior as such is not enough to explain the genocide. The question arises where did the genocidal strategy come from. It cannot be that political leaders, even dictators, choose these far-reaching strategies out of the blue. We have to find out why, from the options the regime leaders had, they chose genocide. This paper is a search for the roots of a government policy that planned and succeeded,

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<sup>4</sup> Belgian Senate, *Report of Rwanda Commission of Inquiry*, December 6, 1997, pp. 493-494.

over 100 days, in killing three-quarters of its minority population--about 800,000 people. It will be shown that Habyarimana's genocidal policy in the 1990-1994 period was an extreme implementation of policies that already existed in the 1973-1990 period.

The structure of the paper is as follows. Part 2 below is a brief discussion on development statistics to argue that scholars have misjudged the developmental realizations of the Habyarimana regime. This section alone does not constitute the argument that I want to make in this paper, but is a follow-up of Uvin's book. The question whether or not Habyarimana developed his country depends to a large extent on the definition of development one is using. However, we should always keep in mind that Adolf Hitler also developed his country in the 1930s; the population was proud of the economic achievements of the Nazis. In order to understand the actions of dictatorial regimes, one should not only look at their 'developmental' outcomes, but also at the intentions of the regime. What particular kind of development did they want to achieve for their country? In order to discover the intentions of the regime, 'development' in Rwanda is studied as an ideology with particular emphasis on agriculture and on the restrictions of movement imposed by the regime. That is the content of Part 3, where the central features of Habyarimana's ideology are discussed. In Part 4, I turn to some of the specific policies of the regime in order to show how the so-called peasant-friendly rhetoric was actually translated into anti-peasant policies. Demographic policy, forced labor policy, land policy and youth policy are discussed. Part 5 points out that the main constraints of the Rwandan economy are man-made. In Part 6, I relate the regime's development and peasant ideology to the civil war and the implementation of genocide as a 'final solution'. Part 7 concludes the argument.

## **2. DEVELOPMENT AS AN OFFICIAL GOAL AND GENERAL OBJECTIVE**

In most of his speeches, Habyarimana focuses on the Rwandan economy. Habyarimana provides little or no analysis of the condition of the economy in his speeches, but, rather, unfolds his economic vision :

*“It is our duty and the supreme interest of our Nation, to overcome, once and for all, unfounded hesitations and to engage ourselves in political action for national development that translates our own will, our own genius, our own sense of responsibility, our own sense of determination to get out of socio-economic and mental underdevelopment.”<sup>5</sup>*

To the Rwandan population and to the outside world, Habyarimana presented himself as a development-oriented leader. This in large part explains his initial popularity in the country and his long lasting popularity in the international donor community. Economists have long judged the level of development of a country by one single standard, namely the gross domestic product (GDP or GNP) per capita. This is the value of all products and services produced in a country in one year. Using this criterion, the evolution of the Rwandan economy is as follows

**Table 1 : GNP Per Capita in Rwanda <sup>6</sup> :**

Year	per capita GNP in US\$	Rank*
1977	130	11
1978	180	17
1979	200	17
1980	200	14
1982	260	12
1984	280	19
1988	320	20
1989	320	19

\* from the bottom

On the basis of these statistics, some researchers argue that development in Rwanda under Habyarimana was better than in neighboring countries. F. Reyntjens, for example, uses statistics on GNP per capita from the World Development Reports to advance this thesis (Reyntjens, 1994, p. 35). He argues that over a period of 15 years, Rwanda improved its rank much more than its neighbouring countries and sees this as a proof of the developmental attitude of the Habyarimana regime. Looking at the severe economic

<sup>5</sup> Habyarimana, J, *Discours-programme*, January 8, 1979, p.17-18.

<sup>6</sup> From the yearly *World Development Reports*.

problems Rwanda was facing, one is inclined to agree on this (see also Section 6).<sup>7</sup> Table 1 however shows that a major improvement was reached in one year (1978). The GNP per capita of Rwanda in 1977 was \$130. One year later, it was \$180. This is an extraordinary increase of 38% in one year and it allowed Rwanda to jump from 11th to 17th in the World Development rankings. But during that year, even Zaire's GNP per capita increased by 50% – further evidence that GNP measures should be critically viewed as reliable indicators of development. In fact, the growth of Rwandan agricultural production (and GNP) in the seventies and eighties came from putting most of the remaining cultivable land into use and from eliminating fallow, not from technological or market innovations.<sup>8</sup>

In the following, two things will be shown: first, that the use of GNP per capita as an indicator for development is long out-dated in the development economics research community; and, second, that insights from development economics research, combined with statistical indicators other than the GNP, reveal a different picture about development in Rwanda.

## **2.1. GNP/capita as a Measure of Development**

The development economics literature distinguishes between three concepts: economic growth, development, and human development. When a researcher uses GNP per capita as a measure of development, he/she is actually talking about economic growth. However, development is broader than economic growth and cannot be measured solely by GNP per capita. Many activities considered to be a part of 'development' are not captured in the GNP measure. Development involves, among other things, the construction of democratic institutions, the establishment of a performing banking system, the rule of law and an independent judicial system, a free press, and access to health care and education. None of these issues is captured in the GNP.

In addition, GNP does not measure certain economic activities or their effects. Some of these include household labor, informal or black market activities, and the depletion of natural resources. The World Bank states that GNP per capita does not, by itself, constitute or measure welfare or success in development. GNP does not distinguish

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<sup>7</sup> Prunier, G., and DesForges, A. copy these conclusions from F. Reytjens in their respective books on the Rwandan genocide.

<sup>8</sup> The World Bank, *Rwanda Agricultural Strategy Review*, 1991, p. 1

between the aims and ultimate uses of a given product, nor does it say whether the product merely offsets some natural or other obstacle, or harms or contributes to welfare.<sup>9</sup>

## 2.2. HDI as a Measure of Development

The other concept used by development economists to measure development -- human development -- tries to correct for the failures of GNP as the sole measure of a country's development. The Human Development Index, reported in the yearly Human Development Reports of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), is a composite measure including literacy, life expectancy and GDP per capita. As a specific interpretation of 'development', it gives a more accurate picture of the development process in a country than the GDP measure alone, but as it includes the GDP measure it also faces, to a minor degree, similar difficulties. Rwanda was ranked 21<sup>st</sup> lowest by the HDI measure in 1990, meaning that 20 countries in the world were doing worse. As the statistics for this index are based on the years 1985 through 1987, it is possible to see that the life expectancy at birth of the average Rwandan citizen was 49 years, that 47% of the population could read and write, and that real GDP per capita was 571 (Purchasing Power Parity \$). In comparison, Zaire was ranked 20<sup>th</sup>, Tanzania 35<sup>th</sup>, Burundi 11<sup>th</sup> and Uganda 28<sup>th</sup>.

**Table 2: GDP and HDI for Rwanda in Comparison**<sup>10</sup>

	GDP/capita 1987	Rank	HDI (stat.1987)	Rank
Rwanda	571	26	0.304	21
Burundi	450	18	0.235	11
Zaire	220	5	0.294	20
Tanzania	405	12	0.413	35
Uganda	511	21	0.354	28

Given the growth of its GDP/capita, Rwanda could have outperformed the other countries in human development. With fewer resources, as indicated by a low GDP, Tanzania reached a much higher HDI than Rwanda. Even Zaire, with only half of Rwanda's

<sup>9</sup> *World Development Report*, 1993, World Bank, p. 306.

<sup>10</sup> From the UNDP 1990 *Human Development Report*.

GDP/capita reached an equal level of human development. Uganda, with lower GDP/capita than Rwanda, outperformed Rwanda in terms of human development. Only Burundi has both a lower GDP/capita and a lower HDI than Rwanda. Certainly, this paints a different picture of ‘development’ in Rwanda than the one usually presented. According to the HDI, Rwanda did worse than three of its four neighbors.

### 2.3. The HDI and other Human Development Statistics

The HDI can be used to make other comparisons that indicate a country’s development, and since, in the case of Rwanda, there is no *a priori* reason to limit the comparison to its neighbors, all countries in the ‘low human development’ category of the Human Development Report will be considered. In 1990, 44 countries are ranked in that category. Niger and Mali received the lowest HDI scores and Zambia and Morocco had the highest.

The Human Development Report calculates the HDI for males and females separately.<sup>11</sup> This can be revealing since the overall HDI score does not indicate the level of gender inequality in human development. For example, the male and female HDI scores for some countries are very close (e.g. Mali, Mauritania, Tanzania, Namibia), but for other countries they are far apart (e.g. Afganistan, India, Yemen). Rwanda’s scores indicate that the difference between the male and female HDI is 0.080, which ranks it 10<sup>th</sup> lowest in the world, the same as Pakistan. This means that Rwanda joins the Asian and Muslim countries as concerns the gender inequality between male and female human development. Only 9 countries in the world had lower scores. Other relevant HDI information for Rwanda is summarized in the following table. 1990 is used as a baseline year, since the information in the 1990 report is based on statistics from the 1985-1987 period, when there was no civil war to blame for poverty. The rank always indicates the position of Rwanda compared to the 43 other countries. For instance, if the rank is 5 (access to health services), it means that 4 countries are doing worse than Rwanda for that category.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> *Human Development Report*, 1990, p. 111

<sup>12</sup> The few times information for one or more countries was lacking, this country was not considered in the ranking.

**Table 3: Statistics for Rwanda from the Human Development Reports**

	1990	rank	1994	rank
HDI	0.304	21	0.274	21
Annual Pop Growth Rate	3.3	4	-	-
% of population in rural areas	93	2	94	2
Pop / Doctor	34,700	7	50,000	3
% Pop Access to Health	27	5	-	-
Health Expend. as % of GNP	0.6	8	1.9	19
Calories/capita/day	1,830	5	1,910	10
% of required calories	81	5	80	5
% of children in prim school	65	13	70	28
% of children in sec school	7	4	7	12
% of sec school in vocational edu	26.4	3	-	-
% of people in tertiary edu	0.6	3	0.2	3
Education Expend. as % of GNP	3.2	16	4.2	26
% Rural Population in Poverty	90	2	90	1
% Urban Population in Poverty	30	12	30	9
% Population in the Labor Force	49.2	4	46	9
% Labor Force in Agriculture	92.8	3	90	4
Scientists per 1,000 people	0.4	2	0.2	2
Life Expectancy at Birth	49	16	48.1	12

As indicated earlier, on the basis of the HDI measure, there is a high level of gender inequality in Rwanda. Using the measures of GDP/capita and HDI, other inequalities in Rwanda are manifest. For example, in the late eighties, in comparison with all countries in the world, only Nepal and Bhutan were doing worse than Rwanda in the measure of rural poverty. Nearly everyone in the entire population still lived in the rural areas, nearly everyone worked in agriculture and nearly everyone was poor.<sup>13</sup> Supporters of the Habyarimana regime view this intentional lack of urbanization as a example of a successful development policy. In this way, they argue, the regime prevented the establishment of slums in the cities. This may appear to be an achievement, but further analysis will indicate that this view of the regime's development policy is inaccurate.<sup>14</sup> One positive measure is the broad participation in primary schooling. In the late eighties, almost two-thirds of the children in Rwanda were going to school. Although the quality of

<sup>13</sup> Further on, we shall see that this is not a coincidence, but the result of deliberate policies.

<sup>14</sup> I refer especially to section 3.4. for this point.

the education cannot be determined, in terms of enrollment numbers alone, this is a strong result for a poor country.

An examination of secondary school enrollment indicates that Rwanda scored poorly in this category. Only 7% of the primary school graduates in Rwanda continued to secondary schooling. From economic studies in other countries, we know that schooling is very often only worth pursuing if one continues into secondary school. The earning of a secondary diploma often gives access to off-farm labor in a nearby city.<sup>15</sup> Getting this was the privilege of the happy few in Rwanda. Migration to the city was not allowed unless you obtained one of the scarce government jobs. People were obliged to remain on their farms and perform agricultural labor.<sup>16</sup> Also notice that the percentage of the population working in agriculture had scarcely changed in the post-colonial period. Another remarkable aspect of post-primary schooling in Rwanda under Habyarimana was the number of students enrolled in vocational education. In Rwanda, this meant ‘learning to be a farmer’. This will be discussed more in detail in section 4.4, in which youth policy is discussed.

### 3. THE DICTATORIAL PERSPECTIVE: DEVELOPMENT AS AN IDEOLOGY

The flaw in reviewing Habyarimana’s regime by using development statistics is that Habyarimana was a military dictator and that his rhetoric is not distinguished from his role. It is possible to view economic development of a regime through the lens of what could be called the ‘dictatorial’ approach. The Canadian political economist Wintrobe (1998), for example, argues that dictators like economic growth. Growth, as measured by GNP, gives them more resources to satisfy the elite’s desire for consumption, to employ more people in the state’s administration, and to satisfy basic needs, thereby increasing the dictator’s power. A brief look at the political economy of dictatorship makes this clear : in order to stay in power, a dictator needs three things: first, a budget; second the loyalty of at least a part of the population; and, third, a repressive apparatus to control the unsatisfied part of the population. These three are inter-linked as an increase in his budget increases the dictator’s power and allows him to reward supporters and repress opponents.

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<sup>15</sup> Reardon, Th., ‘Using Evidence of Household Income Diversification to inform Study of the Rural Nonfarm Labor Market in Africa,’ *World Development*, vol 25, no 5, 1997.

<sup>16</sup> Again, we come back to this to show that this was a deliberate policy.

One observer, the German pastor Herbert Keiner, called the Habyarimana regime a development dictatorship.<sup>17</sup> In the next sections, the dictatorial approach to economic development will be used to interpret Habyarimana's rhetoric and policies. The key issue in the political economy of development is that policies detrimental to the economy (and to the population) are nevertheless carried out when they are beneficial to the country's elite and/or to the political power of the dictator. It will become clear that what Habyarimana meant by the word 'development' is very different from the meaning of that word in the development economics literature. In fact, Habyarimana's 'development' is exactly the opposite of development and of human development.

### 3.1. Agriculture

Habyarimana was convinced that the Rwandan economy should be agriculturally self-sufficient, making import of food unnecessary. In all of his speeches, which can be considered official statements, he stresses that the development of Rwanda is the foremost goal of his economic policy, and that auto-development and food self-reliance were the methods to be used to meet that goal.

*"If it is true that the first objective of a national economy is to be able to feed the country at the service of the one's it works for and is organized for, and if it is true that the priority of priorities of Rwanda is just to build the national economy around this major imperative, meaning to give it a solid base to allow it to respond to this fundamental demand, one must absolutely be able to identify clearly the key factors our economy needs in order to attain the objective of a well understood food self-reliance."*<sup>18</sup>

And

*"Auto-development is not a slogan for us, it is not an effort to theorize, it is not a vain aspiration to embrace a doctrine or a school of thought. No, for us, auto-development is our conviction that progress needs to come from our own forces, that we cannot live beyond our means and that the solutions of our problems need to come from us."*<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Keiner, H., Allmahlich schwand die Bewunderung for 'Habis' regime, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, November 5<sup>th</sup>, 1992.

<sup>18</sup> Habyarimana, J., speech 'Youth and Development', May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1986, p. 49.

<sup>19</sup> Habyarimana, J, speech on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 1987, pp. 205-206.

In his speeches, Habyarimana often stated that the increase in the income of the peasant and the development of the rural areas were priorities for his government. When viewed in terms of his ideology, this is perfectly compatible with food self-reliance since increased food production benefits the peasants directly. Indeed, if the government had actually considered the food situation and the income of the Rwandan farmer to be of prime importance, this would have been, other things being equal, a good government. After reviewing his speeches, one infers that Habyarimana wants agricultural production to increase. In fact, he presents increased agricultural production as the one and only solution to overcome the problems of the Rwandan economy.

*“In the coming twenty years, the population of Rwanda will be doubled. We thus have to make sure that we have enough food. Our food strategy gives absolute priority to our peasants and to the production of food crops that are most important to solve our food crisis. The establishment of a policy of increased production demands a profound internal transformation and a continuous effort for a long period.”<sup>20</sup>*

More specifically, however, Habyarimana is interested in increased production of export crops, the foremost of which is coffee:

*“In his policy of promotion and management of the export industries, the government always takes care of the peasant families, being the essential productive forces of our country, by delivering a guaranteed and certain income in order to improve their standard of life regularly.”<sup>21</sup>*

This indicates the first inconsistency in the implementation of policies according to the ideology: if food-self reliance is the primary goal, then why strongly promote the cultivation of coffee crops and tea plants for export? Taxation is the most probable answer to this. Coffee provided the main source of tax-income for the regime. The production of export crops is only beneficial to food security when the earnings from these crops for the households are higher than the earnings from food crops. With declining international prices for coffee and tea in the 1988-1993 period, the contribution of export crops to food security at the household level was no longer assured. If food self-reliance was the stated regime’s objective, the 1989 famine in southern Rwanda showed that food security was not high on the regime’s agenda.

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<sup>20</sup> Habyarimana, J., Speech for July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1983, p. 220.

<sup>21</sup> Habyarimana, J, speech on the occasion of July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1984, pp.196-197.

While increased productivity is generally considered a goal in most countries, it was a requirement in Rwanda. All Rwandans, especially the peasants, HAD TO participate in the enterprise of development and HAD TO increase their agricultural productivity. This is revealed in the following excerpt from a speech Habyarimana delivered at the National University in Butare in 1973:

*“The coup d’état that we did, was above all a moral coup d’état. And what we want, and we would consider our action as failed if we do not reach this goal, what we want, is to ban once and for all, the spirit of intrigue and feudal mentality. What we want is to give back labor and individual yield its real value. Because, we say it again, the one who refuses to work is harmful to society.”*<sup>22</sup>

When reading this excerpt from his speech for the first time, one is inclined to think that the speaker is a goal-oriented, conservative type of person. Close and repeated reading however, allow the researcher to interpret this statement. Let us go through it step by step. (1) He says he did not do a coup d’état, but a *moral coup d’état*. Something of a higher, divine order. As one of my colleagues put it, he sees himself as a person of historic importance. (2) His coup d’état has a goal, an objective. Habyarimana literally says that *he would consider his coup d’état to have failed if he did not reach that goal*. This speaker clearly has embarked on a mission. (3) In the next part we learn what the objective is, *namely to ban, once and for all, the spirit of intrigue and feudal mentality*. This is the most important part. These are exactly the words the regime used when it was talking about the Tutsi. The Tutsi were considered the feudalists, the former masters of the Hutu-peasants. You cannot trust them, the Hutu-ideology tells you (intrigue), they are always plotting against the Hutu and working for the benefit of their own ethnic group. I remind that, in the meeting of secret military staff (quoted on p. 4, above) we also find the expression ‘to solve forever’. (4) *To give back labor and individual yield its real value. The one who refuses to work is harmful to society*. Habyarimana wants all Rwandans to do manual labor (see also section 4.3). According to him, the value of manual labor has been neglected. Moreover, those not performing agricultural work, the ‘non-peasants,’ are harmful to society. Habyarimana is saying that only the Hutu peasant, the one tilling the land, is productive and good for society.

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<sup>22</sup> Habyarimana, J, Speech at the occasion of the opening of the academic year in Butare, October 14, 1973, p. 44.

Habyarimana's 1973 speech contains words and expressions that appear in the exterminist propaganda of the nineties. I argue that the peasant and racist ideology is present in Habyarimana's speeches from the very beginning of his dictatorship. Can one interpret the 1973 speech as saying that Habyarimana wants to ban the Tutsi from Rwanda and would consider his presidency failed if he would not reach that objective? Does 'ban' mean the removal of public office or public life in general? Does it mean the expulsion, forced emigration, or ethnic cleansing of the Tutsi? Implementing 'ethnic cleansing' against the Tutsi is considered 'good' because the Tutsi are harmful to society. In that way Habyarimana can realize his ideal of a real peasant society, where everybody is doing manual labour. If 'ban' only means to ban a feudal mentality, not the Tutsi as a group, then at least the foundations for the banning of the Tutsis are laid in this speech. When one associates an ethnic group with a specific mentality, as Habyarimana did, then the removal of Tutsi from political power can be a first step, and the expulsion of the Tutsi as a group, a second.

In order to secure his power, Habyarimana had to dissolve the power base of his predecessor, president Kayibanda, but at the same time remain faithful to the Hutu ideology. Kayibanda put it bluntly: 'the Tutsi must also cultivate'. Habyarimana was more discreet, but as least as determined.

In Hitler's ideology, the Jews were not willing the work and were exploiting the Germans. In the remainder of the paper, I will try to uncover, step by step, Habyarimana's ideology and practices, by further analysis of his speeches.

According to Habyarimana, all forces in Rwanda have to be mobilized for development

*"Isn't auto-development before everything else the exaltation of our living forces, isn't auto-development essentially the mobilization of all our living forces for a development, a progress, a national management of the challenges of our country?"*<sup>23</sup>

The Khmer Rouge used exactly the same language: Cambodia needed to be developed. Everybody needed to raise one's productivity to allow Cambodia to make the Great Leap Forward.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Habyarimana, J., Discours on July 5<sup>th</sup>, 1986 for the 24<sup>th</sup> anniversary of national independence, the 13<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 2e Republic and the 11<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the MRND, p.108

<sup>24</sup> The Khmer Rouge government in Cambodia (called Democratic Kampuchea at the time) from 1975 till 1979 killed 1.7 million Cambodians during their reign of terror and genocide.

With almost all cultivable land in use, Habyarimana relied on the increased productivity of manual work to reach a higher production of food. Economists call this a labor-based strategy of intensification. However, because of the density of the population vis-à-vis the available land, the supply of labor in agriculture was abundant. Land, capital and technology are the constraints for the Rwandan economy, not labor. Increasing the labor productivity in agriculture would only mean that fewer people are needed to perform the same amount of work. This is the second inconsistency in the implementation of policies according to the ideology: if all agricultural work can be done by approximately 50% of the population currently working in agriculture, then why demand that everyone do agricultural work and that everyone be more productive?

Food production could have been increased, but not without various kinds of costs. First, since all land was already put into cultivation, one could only intensify cultivation to increase production. This risks further depletion of the soils. In this case, one has to use fertilizer. The regime however, preferred to use its limited import budget to import fertilizer for its lucrative large-scale tea plantations.<sup>25</sup> This is a clear trade-off between improving tea and improving food production. The issue was decided in favor of tea production, just as it was with coffee. Second, during the whole of Habyarimana's rule, almost no technological innovation was introduced in Rwandan agriculture. In 1993, peasants were still working with tools they had always been using.<sup>26</sup>

Food self-reliance does not only concern the production of food, but also involves other activities

*“Of course, in the strategy of food self-reliance, agricultural production is very important, but we should not minimize the connected activities : infrastructure, the roads to evacuate the products, the health centers, a healthy population is able to produce more than a sick one.”<sup>27</sup>*

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<sup>25</sup> *Länderbericht* (Country Report) Rwanda, Statistisches Bundesamt, BRD, 1992, p. 41.

<sup>26</sup> Section 4.3 below also deals with the regime's agricultural policies.

<sup>27</sup> Habyarimana, J., interview by Swiss television, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1988, Kigali, p.27

### 3.2. Industrial Development

The very modest Rwandan efforts towards industrialization were undertaken only after intense outside pressure. The development of small handicraft enterprises for example, was only allowed in 1985 after a campaign by the ILO, the Young Catholic Workers of Rwanda and the special representative of Switzerland.<sup>28</sup> According to Habyarimana, industrial development should always be auto-centered and endogenous,<sup>29</sup> but more importantly, industrial development should be organic:<sup>30</sup>

*“Our strategy for industrialization will not have two heads (= formal and informal sector) ; it will be an organic strategy coming from a global vision of the problems and the needs. Such a strategy will encourage industrial units of national dimension, but who will not be defined separately, or independent, but organic and in line with what is done for the small enterprise, in order for large enterprises to come to support the small ones and not to destroy them.”*

The use of the word ‘organic’ normally refers to the anatomy of the human body. In a 1981 speech, we find more evidence for the analogy between the economy and the human body:

*“The commune must remain a body constitute of several cells, lively and dynamic. And as every living body, the commune needs several elements to be able to render service to its population. The commune, the basic cell of our development and of our economy, has been restructured in order to fulfill better its mission i.e. to dynamize the living forces of the country for their well-being.”*<sup>31</sup>

Habyarimana thus viewed the economy as a human body where all organs should function together for the well-being of the whole. This fits perfectly into other parts of his ideology: he frequently repeats that the individual is subordinate to the collective.

The economic theory of Habyarimana resembles very closely a well-known theory developed in 18th Century France, by the Physiocrats. The key concept of this school were the following: (1) agriculture is the basis of the economy and the only source of productive value, (2) the economy can be thought of as a physical body where the products flow from producers to consumers as blood flows through the organs of a body, (3) Society consists

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<sup>28</sup> Willame, J.C, *Au sources de l'hécatombe Rwandaise*, Cahiers Africaines, 1995, p. 154.

<sup>29</sup> Habyarimana, J., Speech 1986, p.43.

<sup>30</sup> Habyarimana, J.,Speech 1986, p. 41-42.

<sup>31</sup> Habyarimana, J., Speech on the occasion of the first session of the National Development Council, p.119, 1981

of three classes: the peasant-producers, the landowners and the ‘sterile’ class of administrators-politicians, (4) equilibrium conditions exist in each economy, where equilibrium means a situation of no surpluses or shortages.

The foremost theoretician of the Physiocratic School, Francois Quesnay, had a background of medical training before he began the study of political economy. According to the economic historian Taylor, Quesnay viewed the economy as a ‘circular flow’ or ‘body’ and attributes this to his medical background.<sup>32</sup> (It is interesting but not persuasive to note that before becoming a military officer in the new Rwandan Army, the young Habyarimana attended medical school for at least one year at the Louvanium University in Kinshasa, Zaire.) Although no references to Quesnay have been noted in the available Habyarimana speeches, both men have in common that their theory is not just a theory about the economy, but a philosophy about the entire organization of society. Quesnay published books entitled *Rural Philosophy* and *The Natural Law*, in which he says that a government cannot enact laws that oppose the natural law inherent in society. This would now be considered an argument for ‘free trade’. At the time Quesnay was writing, advocating free trade was not difficult because France was a primary producer of agricultural products and had nothing to lose from trade.<sup>33</sup> The difference between the two men is that Habyarimana wanted to minimize trade in food, especially food imports, whereas Quesnay realized the benefits of trade.

### 3.3. Macro-Economic Equilibria and the Individual

In a speech before the members of the Rwandan public administration, Habyarimana discussed his favorite topic, the macro-economic equilibria of the Rwandan economy. For him these equilibria are two-fold: the food/population equilibrium where food production should increase faster than population growth, and the internal/external equilibrium, or balance of trade, where the value of exports should equal the value of imports. In this speech, he stressed that there is a direct link between the everyday activities of every person and these equilibria. If, for example a secretary uses a car owned by the state to go shopping, this increases the cost of imports because the state has to import the fuel.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Taylor, H.O, *A History of Economic Thought*, Harvard University, 1960, pp.14 and 21

<sup>33</sup> Schumpeter, J.A., *History of Economic Analysis*, Oxford University Press, 1963, pp.234 and 235.

<sup>34</sup> Habyarimana, J., Speech, 1986, pp. 146-148.

Habyarimana often asked his public to be creative, innovative and to take responsibility, but in fact, the peasants (Habyarimana's term) were not allowed to do anything unless instructed by the administration. Peasants were not allowed to cultivate the crops they wished, to use the techniques of soil protection they wanted, to move to the city, or to organize themselves outside the MRND. Instead, the peasants were told to work hard and increase their productivity. They were told to listen to the administration and to the burgomasters of their communes. Habyarimana was strongly supported by the Catholic Church in his advocacy of moral values, the labor ethic, and obedience to authority.

### 3.4. Restrictions on Movement

Habyarimana followed a consistent policy to make the peasants stay in the rural areas. They had to remain in an agricultural setting. Of course, this anti-urban policy benefited people already living in the cities, the so-called 'elite'. It also explains why in 1973, 95% of the population lived in the rural areas and in 1993, 95% still lived in the rural areas. The dictator considered cities places of immorality, theft and prostitution. This 'moral stand' closely resembled the teaching of the Catholic Church in Rwanda which also considered the cities as dangerous places which young people should be kept away from lest they be contaminated by the cities' immorality. Prostitutes or so-called prostitutes (often Tutsi girlfriends of expatriates) in Kigali were sent to a re-education camp in Nsinda in the prefecture of Kibungo.

Other dictatorships favoring ruralization instead of urbanisation have been studied. For instance, on the reason why the Khmer Rouge evacuated the cities, Ben Kiernan writes that it became far easier to control the population:<sup>35</sup>

"From now on, there would be no more assembled constituency to whom dissident or underground political activists could appeal or among whom they could quietly work. No human agglomeration facilitating private communication between individuals. Nowhere that the exchange of news and ideas could escape tight monitoring that reduced it to a minimum. No venue for a large crowd to assemble except on CPK initiative, no audience for someone like Sihanouk to address. No possibility of pressuring the nerve center of the regime by means of popular demonstrations in the capital. And no chance for an orthodox marxist or other dissident faction to develop a base among a proletariat."

The difference between Pol Pot and Habyarimana is that, during his reign, Habyarimana did not have to cleanse the cities in order to control the population. Nearly everybody was

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<sup>35</sup> Kiernan, B., *The Pol Pot Regime, Race, Power and Genocide under the Khmer Rouge 1975-1979*, Yale University Press, 1996, p. 64.

already living in the rural areas and he only had to make sure that they stayed there. However, the comparison with Pol Pot becomes chilling when one realizes that the capital of Kigali was the first place that was cleansed of Tutsis (and moderate Hutus) during the genocide.

An extension of favoring a rural population is the glorification of the peasant. In an interview in 1980, Habyarimana stated that he had eight children himself and that his character was strongly influenced by his parents and by his life on the farm :<sup>36</sup>

*“My parents were cultivators, simple peasants thus, they are dead unfortunately and it is really in this point in life in the countryside, on the hills, in life with the land (soil), that they have influenced me the most, and they were simple peasants, they were not part of the leadership at the time and also the fact that they were Catholic. Many points that one could underline for the part of my parents and that have influenced my character and my own life.”*

It is highly unlikely that a son of ‘simple peasants’ could first go to study medicine at Louvanium University in Kinshasa and later enroll in the military academy in Rwanda. Habyarimana is not the first dictator to ennoble peasants because of his regime’s ideology. The Cambodian mass murderer Pol Pot also pretended to be a simple peasant. Ben Kiernan writes that Hitler declared the farmer “the most important participant” in the Nazi revolution. In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler linked German peasant farmland with German racial characteristics.<sup>37</sup> According to Chrétien, several copies of films about Hitler and Nazism were found in Habyarimana’s home.<sup>38</sup> In a 1997 book, David Large reminds us not to forget rural Germany and especially Bavaria (the NSDAP hot spot) during the rise of Nazism.<sup>39</sup>

It is instructive to remember that Habyarimana’s population and agricultural policies had their roots in the colonial area. The Belgian colonizers of Rwanda also tried both to prevent the growth of cities and to increase the production of coffee, undoubtedly because forcing the population to stay in the rural areas facilitates their exploitation.

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<sup>36</sup> Habyarimana, J, interviewed by Yuki Sato, July 12, 1980, p.236.

<sup>37</sup> Kiernan, B., ‘Genocide and “ethnic cleansing”,’ in *The Encyclopedia of Politics and Religion*, ed. Robert Wuthnow, Washington, D.C., Congressional Quarterly, vol. 1, p. 298.

<sup>38</sup> Chrétien, J.P., *Les Médias du Genocide*, 1995, p. 256.

<sup>39</sup> Large, D. *Where Ghosts Walked : Munich’s Road to the Third Reich*, Norton, New York, 1997, taken from a review by Tom Nairn ‘Reflections on Nationalist Disasters’, p. 151.

In 1994 the World Bank condemned the restrictions on population movement because they impeded the development of market centers essential for developing a market economy. The World Bank added that this policy reduced the potential for economic growth. This means that Habyarimana's migration prohibition policy was considered an impediment to development by the world's leading development agency. Of course, one could disagree with the World Bank on the grounds that it has an ideological bias toward free market economics. In this case, however, the World Bank was absolutely right in its condemnation of the regime's restrictive policy. In the same document, the World Bank added that these migration restrictions increased poverty by limiting the options of the poor. From the development economics literature we know that migration, and especially temporary employment in cities, is an important strategy to cope with poverty. The Bank does not go as far as saying that this restrictive policy was a means to control the population. When we look at this policy from a dictatorial point of view, the motivation behind the policy becomes clearer.

#### **Intermediate Conclusion with reference to G. Prunier's work**

In summary, Habyarimana's macro-economic ideology, as derived from his speeches, is as follows. Rwanda is a peasant economy and should stay remain so; in fact, all Rwandans should be peasants. Agricultural manual labor is the only source of value and thus all human and physical activity should be concentrated in the rural areas. Rwanda is a Nation and all citizens share the same national identity. The revolutionary elite knows how to develop the country and will lead Rwanda to food self-reliance. This aim can only be achieved if all peasants join forces in the Revolutionary Movement for National Development (MRND). Rwanda can only overcome its population problem if everyone increases his production of food. The balance between the population and the supply of food is not the only essential equilibrium in the economy. The other equilibrium is the balance between imports and exports. In order for Rwanda to be able to reach both these equilibria, the Rwandan economy and peasantry has to become more productive. Especially the production of export crops should increase.

Habyarimana espoused a development ideology. His speeches reveal his vision for Rwanda. Unspoken, but just as important, is that this ideology served as a legitimation for his dictatorial power. As G. Prunier writes

“The MRND was a truly totalitarian party : every single Rwandese citizen had to be a member, including babies and old people. All bourgmestres and prefects were chosen from among party cadres. The party was everywhere.”<sup>40</sup>

Prunier also writes that the MRND was not supposed to be a ‘political’ party:

“Indeed, the word ‘politics’ was almost a dirty word in the virtuous and hard working world of Habyarimanism. Every effort was made to forget- at least officially – that politics existed.”<sup>41</sup>

Having one single party was the right choice for Habyarimana given his ideology and his desire to stay in power. He could control the entire population, outlaw political opposition and implement his vision of society. In so-called animation sessions, the population had to glorify Habyarimana.

In Prunier’s words,

“Along the somewhat reminiscent lines of eighteenth century European theories of ‘benevolent despotism’, President Habyarimana had decided to take upon his shoulders the heavy burden of the state so that his subjects could devote themselves entirely to the business of agriculture.”<sup>42</sup>

Prunier opened the eyes of the world community with his book on the genocide. He also wrote about the ideology of Habyarimana, but he did not go all the way. Prunier believes the system worked at the economic level, but he does not consider the ultimate consequences of the agricultural and peasant ideology of Habyarimana (see pages 76–80 of his book). This linkage of the peasant ideology directly to the genocide, offers a perspective on Rwanda that allows for comparison with other genocides.

It is possible to see that the policies he adopted were designed to further both the adoption of his ideology by the population, and his dictatorial power. Table 4 summarizes the findings that will be discussed in detail in the next section.

Habyarimana’s policies were expressed as “peasant-friendly”, that is, they were presented as helping peasants improve their lives. However, closer examination of several of these policies -- including demographic policy; ‘Umaganda’; land and crops; and education and youth -- indicates that these policies were in fact virulently anti-peasant.

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<sup>40</sup> Prunier, D. *The Rwanda Crisis, History of a Genocide*, 1995, p. 76.

<sup>41</sup> Prunier, G. *ibidem*, p. 77.

<sup>42</sup> Prunier, G., *ibidem*, p. 77.



**Table 4: Comparing stated aims with actual outcomes**

Policy	stated aim : increase Income of peasant	ideology of auto-development		dictator's aim staying in power increasing power
		Food/Population Balance	Import/Export Balance	
Migration to cities strongly discouraged Umuganda High Fertility Mandatory coffee cultivation Overvalued national currency Vocational education Fixed price for coffee and monopsony State owned firms Tea growing on large estates Carry ethnic identity card Ethnic quota in schools Reserve government jobs for Hutu	reduces peasant options reduces peasant income reduces peasant consump. reduces peasant crop choice import made cheaper learning to be a peasant increase export earnings reduces investments deprive peasants of land discriminate Tutsi discriminate Tutsi discriminate Tutsi	peasant should perform farm work unpaid collective work more and cheaper labor increases government foreign currency holdings  realize a peasant society  allows government planned economy increase budget registration prevents free movement “solving the ethnic conflict, uniting Rwanda”		control people enslave people refuse women the choice raise taxes, make profit favoring elite consump. keep people uneducated control income peasants increase dependency increase export earnings control people favoring Hutu rent-seeking by Hutu

Publicly stated range of importance of the objectives of these policies.

(1) increase peasant income (2) Establish Food/population balance and Import/export balance (3) staying in power (not stated).

Author's conclusion after studying the motivation behind these objectives and policies.

(1) Staying in power (2) Implement ideology : Import/Export balance and Food/population balance (3) neglect peasant income.



## 4. DISCUSSION OF SPECIFIC POLICIES AND THEIR JUSTIFICATION IN HABYARIMANA'S OWN WORDS

### 4.1. Demographic Policy

As noted earlier, one of Habyarimana's primary policies was to make Rwanda food self-sufficient. However, it can be argued that a strategy of increased food production without a family planning policy is self-defeating. For many years, Rwandan farmers had been able to increase food production because Rwanda was blessed with fertile soil. However, at some point, land under cultivation reaches its absolute limit, and there is ample evidence that by the end of the 1980s this limit had been reached. Rwanda was one of the most densely populated countries in the world, yet developed no population control policy. In fact, Rwandan women had the highest birthrate in the world. In 1974, at the beginning of his dictatorship, Habyarimana told his audience that Rwanda had a demographic problem :

*“We are aware of the problems caused by the demographic growth of the Rwandan population and they should be getting our permanent and serious attention. We believe however that the people who seem to advocate fast solutions, resulting from a certain literature whose authors do not hide their egotism, should be more reserved. The solution that we are looking for shall be Rwandan, taking our mentalities, our moral values, our culture, our possibilities and human solidarity into account.”<sup>43</sup>*

Rwanda had a Population Bureau or family planning unit, but it was a sham. Prunier (1995, pp. 88-89) writes that the Ministry of the Interior allowed Catholic pro-life commandos to attack pharmacies that sold condoms. Questioned about the demographic policy of the government, Habyarimana gave misleading answers to hide its non-existence : at one point he says that his scientists were looking for the best way to prevent population growth and at another point he appealed to the Church to tolerate family planning, as if scientists or the churches were to blame for the lack of family planning. The Catholic Church, officially against family planning, did not oppose its individual members giving family planning advice to people who requested it. Habyarimana himself opposed family planning.

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<sup>43</sup> Habyarimana, J., Discours-programme, August 1, 1973.

Family planning, if available to the peasant households, would surely have been used (see part 5). However, reviewing Habyarimana's policies as a dictator sheds light on the absence of family planning policy in Rwanda regardless of the will of the populace. From the perspective of the dictator, people are production factors, which are used to produce coffee and to supply labor to the 'collective works' (*umuganda*). More people means more peasants and thus a larger supply of labor.

Three of Habyarimana's speeches illustrate his views:

*"I have already affirmed in other occasions, that the number of inhabitants of our country should not always be presented as excessive, nor always be presented as a constraint on development. That development is exactly the fruit of people's work."*<sup>44</sup>

*"A Rwandan by nature wants to have a lot of children because he considers his children a source of protection, a source of production to secure his living. The Rwandan family wants to have children and it is a disaster when it does not have children."*<sup>45</sup>

*" We believe there is a real problem. If the population grows faster than the economy, we have a problem. And nevertheless, we must reconcile two things, on the one hand, the more numerous we are, the stronger we are, because we have more arms and more brains, but the more numerous we are, the more we have to produce for that population in order to have enough food, to have education, to have clothes. We must reconcile these two parameters : population and growth. "*<sup>46</sup>

Habyarimana himself used the word 'overpopulation' as a justification to bar the return of the 1959 refugees (mostly Tutsis) and their offspring. Population density was clearly not a problem, however, when the regime accepted 300,000 Hutu refugees from Burundi in 1993. The message: Rwanda had space for only one ethnic group.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Habyarimana, J, Discours-programme du 8 Janvier 1979, Discours et Entretiens de Son Excellence le Général-Major Habyarimana Juvénal Président de la République Rwandaise, et Président-Fondateur du Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement, ORINFOR, Rwanda, 1979, p.23

<sup>45</sup> Habyarimana, J., interviewed by Yuki Sato, July 12, 1980, Discours et Entretiens de Son Excellence le Général-Major Habyarimana Juvénal Président de la République Rwandaise, et Président-Fondateur du Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement, ORINFOR, Rwanda, 1980, p.243

<sup>46</sup> Habyarimana, J, interview given to ZDF, German Television Channel 2, September, 29, 1987, ibidem, ORINFOR, Rwanda, 1987, p. 258

<sup>47</sup> In May 1990, the National Population Office published four volumes titled "The Demographic Problem in Rwanda and the Framework of its Solution". I did not find drastic proposals for the solution of the problem, but this publication is a very detailed study of the relationship between population and development in Rwanda and lists a large number of measures to be taken immediately. They include family planning, schooling for women, industrialisation and urbanisation, the creation of off-farm jobs. All sorts of measures that were not only costly to the state, but ran opposite to the regime's ideology. From his speeches, I conclude that Habyarimana was extremely preoccupied with the food-population

It is clear from his speeches that Habyarimana acknowledges that Rwanda's population growth is a real problem, but, in practice, he does nothing about it. In fact, from his rhetoric, it is also clear that he considers population growth beneficial for the national economy. People, and especially the peasants are essential to produce coffee and tea:

*“It is the Rwandan peasant that makes Rwanda live. Because the foreign currency we have for our imports, is because of the coffee, because of the tea, because of the export of furs, there you can see the role of the peasant, the farmer, the cultivator.”<sup>48</sup>*

The fact that fertility did decline in Rwanda during the eighties has more to do with the lack of economic opportunities than with government family planning policies. Fertility in Rwanda declined because young people married at later ages than they used to do and as a result have less children.

#### **4.2. Umuganda Policy**

*Umuganda*, the Kinyarwanda word for the wood used to construct a house, was one of Habyarimana's favorite speech topics and one of the regime's most influential policies, both in economic and in ideological terms. On February, 2, 1974, the President ordered that every Rwandan perform unpaid collective work one day per week. This was stressed in a speech given by Habyarimana at a seminar for Burgomasters in August 1975, after the creation of the MRND (Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement):

*“The doctrine of our Movement is that Rwanda will only be developed by the sum of the efforts of its own sons and daughters, the product of their efforts belongs to them. That is why it has judged the Collective Works for Development a necessary obligation for all the inhabitants of the country.”*

This policy was presented as the reestablishment of an institution that had long existed in Rwandan culture but that had been suppressed by the colonial economy. *Umuganda* was, according to the MRND, a reaction against the monetarisation of the Rwandan economy under colonialism.<sup>49</sup> Related to this is the non-compensation of *Umuganda*, which again

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equilibrium in his country, but more research is needed to find hard evidence that links his ideas on demography and economics with the planning of the genocide.

<sup>48</sup> Habyarimana, J., interview by Swiss television, Kigali, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 1988, p.28.

<sup>49</sup> Needless to repeat that Habyarimana continued and intensified the policy of coffee cultivation, which is practiced to extract taxes (monetary income) from the peasants. He only added another source of tax, non-monetary in nature, namely a tax on labour (*umuganda*). Both taxes existed in the colonial period.

makes the comparison with Pol Pot interesting. All Rwandans ‘HAD TO VOLUNTARILY’ contribute their labor to the weekly collective works. In the party publication on Umuganda, the authors argue further that Umuganda had been forgotten because of the generalization of education and the increase in salaried jobs.<sup>50</sup>

Economically Umuganda was very important for Rwanda since it made an enormous amount of unpaid labor available to the state. During Umuganda, the Rwandan people built such things as schools, roads, sanitation facilities, and health centers.

However, the political and ideological functions of Umuganda were even more important than its economic benefits to the state. Ideologically, Umuganda was explicitly designed to make sure that all Rwandans would do manual labor. The local politicians and administrators were responsible for the organization of the weekly Umuganda, which gave these officials great discretionary power. They could decide who did and who did not have to participate. Not surprisingly, the cronies and friends of the regime escaped Umuganda.

The Manifesto of the MRND says that ‘it is a man’s labor that constitutes the essential source of wealth in the country and from there the basis of economic accumulation.’<sup>51</sup> On many public occasions, Habyarimana expressed his low esteem for intellectual work and his high esteem for manual work. He instituted the Umuganda policy by cultivating a plot of land together with his close friends.

*“I admit that I do not understand, that I absolutely do not understand, when listening to certain intellectuals, one is obliged to hear nothing but disobeying remarks and destructive criticism regarding some accomplishments, regarding certain political options taken that are not open for questioning.*

*I take the example of Umuganda – our collective work for development, thanks to the manual labor of everybody. It is inconceivable that we could do without Umuganda. A country is constructed by hands, not by words ! Rwanda will be constructed by the sweat on our face and not by useless speculations !*

*The results obtained by Umuganda, its remarkable realizations that many countries envy us, constitutes the best proof that it cannot be separated from the progress Rwanda made in the last 10 years, that it is an essential part of that progress and that it corresponds with our ancestral values – to engage oneself – so that everyone, by individual effort, performs better in a collectivity always in progress. Each intelligent and honest Rwandan can see this.*

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<sup>50</sup> *L’Umuganda dans le développement national*, Présidence de MRND, Affaires Economiques, Janvier 1990, p. 10.

<sup>51</sup> Manifesto of the MRND, cited from *Umuganda dans le développement national*, 1990, p.5.

*I can only regret, with my last effort, that there still are ‘intellectuals ‘ who use their time to criticize, destroy, this institution with their words, in stead of telling us how to improve it, making it more performing, adapt it better to our needs.’<sup>52</sup>*

It is clear that he wants Rwanda’s professors to stop criticizing him and to contribute to national development. In other words, the professors should do the same as the general population: keep their mouths shut and work hard.

Although he expended much effort on portraying himself as a peasant, he saw himself and the leaders of the regime as an elite :

*“Rwanda has one single national language for the whole country. We do not have to rely on an intermediate language, like many other countries have to do, in order for the population and their elites to understand each other. We also do not have the problem of imposing one of the national languages and the risk that such linguistic hegemony poses”.*<sup>53</sup>

As we have seen before, it is common practice for Habyarimana, as for other dictators, to use cultural arguments to justify economic exploitation. Working for the collective good, as Umuganda was called, is a prime example of this. In section 6, Umuganda will be related to the organization of the genocide. It will appear to be an effective instrument of mass mobilization during the genocide. I mention it here in order to show that unpaid collective labor, supervised by the regime officials, had existed since 1974. In the preparation of the genocide, the regime could build upon practices and their ideological and economic justification in place since the mid-seventies. Umuganda also gave the local party and state officials knowledge and experience in the mobilization of the peasant population. A skill that was to prove deadly during the genocide.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Habyarimana, J., “Youth and Development”, speech at the occasion of his visit to the National University of Rwanda, May 21, 1986, p.66.

<sup>53</sup> Habyarimana, J, “Francophonie et developpement,” speech, Paris Conference, Feb 17 to 19, 1986, p. 25.

<sup>54</sup> In a future paper, I want to do in depth analysis of the mobilisation of the peasant population for mass murder.

*“Umuganda must be planned in order to reach its objective, developing our country by building the necessary infrastructure for its economy and, allowing the new Rwandan to engage in his work. Because of this, it has to be oriented towards directly productive actions. In order to increase the development projects in the Umuganda framework, the mobilization and sensibilization of the popular masses is necessary and the MRND offers the appropriate way to do this”.*<sup>55</sup>

Umuganda is one of the prime examples of a top-down policy with an appealing development image that was designed and used to exploit peasant labor, to control the peasant population, to humiliate the Rwandan intellectuals, to give politicians discretionary power over labor and to indoctrinate the Rwandans with the regime’s ideology.<sup>56</sup> Because of abuse, corruption and disbelief, Umuganda was not popular among the peasant population. As soon as the power of the regime decreased, Umuganda had to be abolished. Peter Uvin, writing on development aid, writes that Rwanda is a prime example of state-run, state-controlled, top-down development. All development initiatives in Rwanda were controlled by the regime, especially by the MRND party.<sup>57</sup>

### 4.3. Land and Crop Policy

The export of coffee was the major source of income for the Habyarimana regime.<sup>58</sup> The confinement of the peasants to the farms was, in part, in order to compel them to grow coffee. So important was the cultivation of coffee that the Rwandan penal code listed penalties for ripping out, destroying or neglecting coffee plants on one’s farm.<sup>59</sup> Farmers were obliged to sell their coffee to a monopoly agency for a fixed price per kilogram of coffee. Again, this is exactly the way the Belgian colonizers organized the Rwandan economy. C. Newbury writes that the core of Belgian economic policy was the control of labor and the forced cultivation of cash crops (for taxation purposes).<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> *L’Umuganda dans le Developpement National*, 1988, p.39.

<sup>56</sup> I refer to the 1988 government publication on Umuganda p.20-32 for details on the organisational structure of umuganda.

<sup>57</sup> Uvin, P., *Aiding violence : the development enterprise in Rwanda*, 1998.

<sup>58</sup> The price the producers received for the coffee was high compared to other African countries, but the mandatory continuation to grow coffee in times of a low international price decreased income.

<sup>59</sup> Little, P.D., and Horowitz, M., ‘Agricultural policy and practice in Rwanda,’ *Human Organization*, vol 46, 1987 and vol 47, 1988.

<sup>60</sup> Newbury, C., *The Cohesion of Oppression*, 1987, pp. 152-154.

It is worth noting that Habyarimana discouraged the cultivation of bananas, even though bananas produce a very high yield per acre, and despite the fact that a large domestic banana market existed in Rwanda<sup>61</sup>. In a 1979 speech, he is very explicit about that:

*“Despite the opposition and the misunderstanding that I have seen in this question, I remain convinced that the extension of the wine banana and, in certain regions, the appropriation of land for its cultivation, are a great handicap for development and for the food equilibrium of the population. The “myth of the banana tree” must disappear as well as the myth of the “nice corners” and that of the burning of bushes so-called regenerating effect.”*<sup>62</sup>

From 1989 to 1992, a research team from the University of Michigan Agricultural Economics Department undertook a national household survey in Rwanda. Econometric analysis of these agricultural household data reveal the importance of banana cultivation for the income and the calorie intake of Rwandan peasants. In table 5, one can observe a positive correlation between a high percentage of one’s land used for banana cultivation on the one hand and high total income and high calorie intake on the other hand. For the percentage of one’s land used for coffee cultivation, no such correlation is observable.<sup>63</sup> Total income refers to the sum of the income earned from subsistence production, the sale of crops and non-farm activities.

**Table 5: Pearson Correlations between crop cultivation, income and calorie intake**

% of land used	Total income		Calorie intake	
	Corr.	Signif.	Corr.	Signif.
for banana cultivation	.077**	.009	.070*	.020
for coffee cultivation	-.012	.689	.001	.969

\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level.

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level.

<sup>61</sup> Little and Horowitz, *ibidem*.

<sup>62</sup> Habyarimana, J, Speech at the opening of the 1980 new year, 1979, p.135.

<sup>63</sup> The author owes many thanks to D. Clay for providing the data set. These data were gathered in 1991 when 1,240 households were interviewed. The correlation in Table 5 is only a rough measure, but nevertheless gives a good indication. In the future, the author hopes to present more analysis with these data. For further information on the data set, I refer to the numerous publications by D. Clay.

As for the access to land is concerned, this depends on the purchasing power a family has and on the political connections. The burgomaster was in charge of the re-allocation of land, a task that gives him much power.<sup>64</sup> If the regime decided it needed more land for the cultivation of export crops, mostly large-scale plantations of tea, peasants were driven off the land and received very little compensation.<sup>65</sup> We come back to this discussion in relation to the genocide (section 6). Peter Uvin's book on the development enterprise in Rwanda details the many instances in which farmers showed their disapproval with the land and crop policies enacted by the Habyarimana regime: farmers uprooted coffee trees, invaded land that was previously appropriated by the government, attacked development workers, told researchers that they would like to stop farming, refused to pay taxes and so on.<sup>66</sup>

#### 4.4. Education and youth policy

With other dictators and with the Catholic Church, Habyarimana shared a particular interest in the youth. He devoted numerous speeches to this subject in which he repeats that the youth is the future of Rwanda :

*“All our policy of auto-development is, in fact, oriented towards this major objective: to assure the future of our children, who, in their way, will assure the future of Rwanda.”*<sup>67</sup>

Habyarimana had a very particular idea of the task of a Rwandan youngster. Like all Rwandan adults, a youth had to learn how to be productive. To illustrate this, we give another excerpt from his speeches :

*“Sharing my preoccupations, you have not hesitated helping the Government to take the necessary measures for educational reform, addressing the desires of the Rwandan population and the social-economic realities of our country. This reform, as we repeated over and over again, especially the representatives of the Ministry of National Education, aims, at the primary level the preparation of the Youth for their life, giving them, during eight years, an education that enables them to take part in national development. Rural and integrated handicraft education will have the*

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<sup>64</sup> Des Forges, A., *Leave None to Tell the Story*, Human Rights Watch, 1999, p.236-237.

<sup>65</sup> Little and Horowitz, *ibidem*.

<sup>66</sup> Uvin, P., *ibidem*, pp. 118, 125, 126, 129.

<sup>67</sup> Habyarimana, J., Speech on Youth and Development, May 21, 1986, p.46.

*mission to train productive citizens, to promote their cooperative spirit and to open themselves for the collectivity. For its part, secondary education has to be specialized and oriented in order to satisfy the needs of the country for middle management. Higher education, organized in the National University of Rwanda will have the objective to train senior management people ready to improve the sectors that are directly useful for national development.*"<sup>68</sup>

In the publications of the state agency for information (ORINFOR) that published all of Habyarimana's speeches, one finds many pictures of Habyarimana greeting Rwandan children. The subtitle on one of those pictures says "*the permanent contact between the leaders (dirigeants) and the subjects (dirigés).*"<sup>69</sup>

It was exactly these young people, aged between 14 and 25, of whom Habyarimana demanded that they should engage themselves actively in the national development enterprise, who would do a lot of the killing during the 1994 genocide. In the ideology of the regime, killing people was considered as doing a job (see section 6). One could add that the regime told youngsters that they were working for the development of the country when they participated in the killing campaign.

## **5. REAL ECONOMIC PROBLEMS, BUT**

Long before the civil war, Rwanda faced severe economic problems. The major constraints for the Rwandan economy are the land shortage, the depletion of soil quality, the very high population growth, the absence of meaningful industrialization, the underdevelopment of internal markets, and the fact that the country is landlocked. During Habyarimana's rule, almost everybody was working in agriculture, the degree of urbanization was the lowest in the world, prices of imported goods were high, marginal product of labor in agriculture was zero, many youth were unemployed, most people were very poor, and famine occurred periodically.

Facing these difficulties, one is inclined to think that they are 'given and set by nature' and one would give any regime a lot of credit. These economic problems indeed were very

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<sup>68</sup> Habyarimana, J, Speech at the Opening of the New Year 1980, The Presidency of the Rwandan Republic 1979, p 127-128.

<sup>69</sup> ORINFOR publication of 1983, p.302.

real. When I proposed to take a look at Habyarimana's speeches in the course of this paper however, I set out to analyze his vision of Rwanda. The question arises to what extent can the Rwandan regime be blamed for the degree of suffering of the Rwandan population, given the severe constraints the economy faced. A few points come to mind here :

(1) Any policy directed at the solution of some of the problems in Rwanda has to allow (and encourage) urbanization, the development of markets and the formation of a dynamic private sector. From Habyarimana's speeches, however, one learns that he was opposed to exactly these measures. Cities were immoral places, where criminals prosper (he used the term 'vagabondage' ) and prostitution destroyed the mores. Young people who moved to the city (because they were literally starving in the rural areas) were fined and put in prison when they wanted to set up a small business in Kigali. They were released after paying bribes to the police.

The US Department of State 1993 Human Rights report writes on this that<sup>70</sup>

"Freedom of movement and residence are restricted by laws and regulations which require all residents to hold national identity cards and residence and work permits. Police conduct periodic checks, especially in urban areas, and return those not registered in the locality to their own commune. Property owners who do not require tenants to show valid documentation are subject to fines and even imprisonment. Undocumented tenants are subject to expulsion."

(2) Any policy advocating a solution should have a strong family planning package. Survey research from 1992 indicates that while 92% of the women knew methods of contraception, only 20% used them. A much larger percentage (49%) of women said that they intended to use it in the following months. But Habyarimana's speeches actually opposed a family planning policy. In 1983, after ten years of his rule, only 10% of Rwandan women used contraception.<sup>71</sup> Only towards the end of his reign, he seemed to agree to install an active family planning program.

(3) During the eighties, land concentration in the hands of the rich became increasingly prevalent. Several surveys indicate that peasants had to sell their land out of distress. The buyers of course were wealthy people who gained their primary income in government administration (Uvin, pp. 112-113). In contrast to the *ubuhake* or cattle contract, the *ubukonde* or land tenure system of northern Rwanda was not abolished after the Hutu

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<sup>70</sup> US Department of State, Country reports on Human Rights Practices for 1993, Report submitted to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House and the Senate.

<sup>71</sup> *Enquête Démographique et de Santé*, Office National de la population, 1992, p.41-63

revolution. R. Lemarchand writes on this that the wealthy Hutu from the north benefited most from *ubukonde*.<sup>72</sup>

**(4)** Having the population pay for all kinds of permits allows officials to demand cash bribes for these permits. Having the population stay in the rural areas allows politicians to control them easier and mobilize them for communal work. Preventing the development of a market economy, allows the owners of state firms to collect monopoly rents.

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<sup>72</sup> Lemarchand, R, *Rwanda and Burundi*, 1970, p.232

## 6. THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DEVELOPMENT IDEOLOGY, THE PEASANTRY, AND GENOCIDE

In his outstanding 1998 book, Peter Uvin writes that<sup>73</sup>

“long before the 1990’s, life in Rwanda had become devoid of hope and dreams for the large majority of people: the future looked worse than the already bad present. Peasant life was perceived as a prison without escape in which poverty, infantilization, social inferiority and powerlessness combined to create a sense of personal failure. “

I ask the reader to compare two excerpts, the first is a citation from Habyarimana’s speech delivered on January 8, 1979, the second from an official letter of instruction during the genocide:

*“In order to attack the development problems efficiently and to overcome the forces of evil, we have to rise, march and act as one person and the results shall be spectacular.”*<sup>74</sup>

*“Encircle the enemy so that he does not take possession of the commune. This means that at the moment of the attack of the enemy, all the inhabitants must rise as one single person and make a front, attack at the same time with their traditional weapons, helped by the local police and the youth that is learning to defend the commune (civil auto-defense). Those who live close to the border must guard her even more.”*<sup>75</sup>

In the two cases, the same language is used to describe the tasks. Whether it is a development project, or the extermination of the Tutsi, the population should behave in the same way: it should act as one person in order to attack the problem efficiently. The (Hutu-) population, say the instructions, has to overcome its hesitations, it has to fight in order to drive out the forces of evil, being mental underdevelopment in the first instruction, and the Tutsi neighbors in the second. The anthropologist Toni S. Phim writes that the Khmer Rouge in<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Uvin, P., *Aiding Violence, The development enterprise in Rwanda*, 1998, p.117.

<sup>74</sup> Habyarimana, J, 1979.

<sup>75</sup> Simbalikure, A., Under-prefect of Busoro Under-Prefecture, Letter to the Burgomasters of the Communes of Gishamvu, Kigembe, Nyakizu and Runyinya, June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994.

<sup>76</sup> Phim, T.S., *Anthropologies of the Khmer Rouge: Terror and Aesthetics*, Genocide Studies Working Paper, Yale Center for International and Area Studies, 1998, p. 7.

“official speeches, as well as performance of the songs and dances, inculcated the notion that the entire population was an army, engaged in combat with the elements - rain, the earth – and with human foes. “

The language Habyarimana used in his speech of January 8<sup>th</sup>, 1979 is the same as the language used in the 1994 letter of instruction for civil auto-defense. My interpretation is that the meaning of the two instructions is also the same. The “*forces of evil*” in Habyarimana’s speech are the Tutsi, the representatives of the feudal class and feudal mentality. “*Attacking the development problems*” is a call to establish a real peasant society. Habyarimana wants his audience to understand that Rwanda will only solve its development problems when it gets rid of the Tutsi mentality. It is the feudal class, or the bourgeoisie, that is the development problem of Rwanda.

Again, this is exactly the same language as used by Pol Pot and other Khmer Rouge leaders in Cambodia. Talking about the Plan to develop Cambodia, Pol Pot said that the Plan had been drawn up

“from basic notions held by the Party Center, which has decreed that the country must be built and that socialism must be built as rapidly as possible, taking us from a backward agriculture to a modern one in from five to ten years, and from an agricultural base to an industrial one in fifteen to twenty years. “

Speed was essential, Pol Pot continued, primarily because

“enemies attack us and torment us. From the east and from the west, they persist in pounding us and worrying us. If we are slow and weak, they will mistreat us. “

He remarked that

“What is important about the Plan is not its numbers, but the ideology behind it, and the notion that we must all unite together.”<sup>77</sup>

A number of references to the Rwandan peasantry can be found in the propaganda during the period 1990-1994. Most of this propaganda is racist, but sometimes racism is combined with the glorification of the peasantry. After all, in the ideology of the regime, only the

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<sup>77</sup> These three citations are taken from Document IV translated and introduced by David P. Chandler in *Pol Pot Plans the Future: Confidential Leadership Documents from Democratic Kampuchea, 1976-1977*, David. P. Chandler, Ben Kiernan and Chanthou Boua, eds., Monograph Series No. 33, Yale University Southeast Asia Studies, New Haven, 1988, pp. 120-121.

Hutu were the real peasants. Some examples of this can be found in the analysis of the extremist media by J.P Chrétien. I cite from his book (translating into English)

*“Rwandan intellectuals, have courage, help the president defend the nation. I think that the silence of the Rwandan intellectuals on the war of October-November 1990 becomes more and more clear and maybe complicit as she was on the rural question for thirty years.”<sup>78</sup>*

*“Did you know that 85% of the inhabitants of Kigali (= the capital) are Tutsi ? When they expelled all the unemployed from the city, only the Hutu left. The Tutsi have obtained working permits because their brothers confirmed that they used them in the household.”<sup>79</sup>*

*“During this Revolution one took the goods of these people who did not show their engagement and one gave them to the poor who had engaged themselves in the Revolution. So we can say that what we are concerned that this war is a final war , we have to show to the world that we are not impressed by the Whites, that the Hutu is more courageous then the Tutsi, that the majority people is more courageous, that we serve ourselves (French text : que nous nous autosuffisons)...This war is really final...we have to conduct a war without mercy.”<sup>80</sup>*

In these three citations from the genocide propaganda machine, one finds some of the central concepts of the Habyarimana regime that are discussed in this paper: the anti-urban, anti-intellectual, and self-reliance ideology. As was said in the beginning of the paper, the use of genocide as a political strategy does not come out of the blue, it is rooted in principles and policies that existed long before the genocide. I believe one could summarize the ideological construction of the regime by means of the following antithesis:

urban = consuming = immorality = trader = intellectual = minority = Tutsi

vs.

rural = producing = morality = farmer = manual worker = majority = Hutu

In relation to the autarkic economic and cultural ideology that was discussed in the first part, it is worth noting that early in the genocide, but its organizers literally closed the borders of Rwanda to prevent Tutsi from fleeing Rwanda. The country was not only

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<sup>78</sup> *Kangura*, nr 5, November 1990, copied and translated from Chrétien, J.P., p.35.

<sup>79</sup> *Kangura*, nr 18, July 1991, p.10, copies and translated from Chrétien, J.P., p.145.

<sup>80</sup> RTML, Radio Terre des Mille Collines, June 17<sup>th</sup>, 1994, copied and translated from Chrétien, J.P., p.330.

enclosed and surrounded by other countries, the organizers of the genocide made sure all its borders were effectively closed in order to kill all Tutsi.

In order to further support my position, I now turn to Umuganda, the famous labor policy of the Habyarimana regime. I compare the decisions regarding Umuganda taken by the Central Committee of the MRND (in 1982, 1984 and 1986) and the structure used to organize the killing before and during the genocide.

#### A) Decisions of November 12, 1982<sup>81</sup>

1. Members of the national Umuganda Commission :
  - secretary-general of the MRND (pres.)
  - ministry of Plan
  - ministry of Public Works
  - ministry of Agriculture
  - ministry of the Interior
  - vice-president of the CND
  - secretary-general of the Chamber of Comm.
2. At the level of the prefecture, a Commission in charge of Umuganda composed of MRND officials is installed
3. rehabilitation of manual labor and obligatory nature of Umuganda
4. local officials have to feel concerned about the political weight of the Umuganda institution, serve as an example and manage the population
5. One should allocate the task in a proportional way in order to appreciate the work of each group objectively

#### Organization of the genocide<sup>82</sup>

1. The highest authorities of the country including the president, the president and secretary-general of the MRND, all MRND ministers and important army officers, together with the brothers of Md. Habyarimana organize genocide in Rwanda from 1990 to 1994. Business friends import weapons.
2. MRND officials given orders to execute massacres in the 1990-1994 period. They lead the population in the execution of the genocide.
3. National and local officials use the word Umuganda to describe the killing.
4. The population should act like one person to destroy the forces of evil. Local officials sensitize and mobilize the population
5. Individuals are forced to kill, implicate most Hutu in the killing. Refusal to kill is a death warrant.

<sup>81</sup> From the above-mentioned government publication on *Umuganda*, p.51-53

<sup>82</sup> This evidence can be found in numerous books and documents on the Rwandan genocide: FIDH (1993), *Death, despair and defiance*, Africa Rights (1995), A. DesForges, *Leave None to tell the Story* (1999), Chrétien, J.P., *Les Média du Genocide* (1996).

6. For the Communal Works of Development, each participant must bring his own equipment. Only heavy or collective material will be given by the Cell.

7. Accumulation of unfinished projects or not useful projects must be avoided. nobody Umuganda projects have to be harmonized with national programmes.

8. The militants must be informed on the results of the Communal Works for Development, the destination of the products of the harvest and on the evolution of Umuganda in other parts of the country

#### B) Decisions of June 27, 1984

1. Decision on the hours of work for Umuganda and on the radio broadcasting for Umuganda

2. Umuganda will take seven hours starting from the place of work

3. The official responsible for Umuganda at the level of the Cell will decide when Umuganda finishes, but one should not leave kill day the place before 10 o'clock

4. In order to strengthen the sensitization for Umuganda, the Central Committee has decided that Radio Rwanda will provide broadcasting on Umuganda and animation.

#### C) Decisions of April 10, 1986

1. A price of 1.000.000 FRW will be given to the Commune ranked first in the Umuganda activities. This price will be inscribed on the budget of the MRND presidency.

6. Machetes, an agricultural tool most Rwandans own, is the main instrument used in the killing. Firearms are used by officials in case of resistance.

7. Propaganda calls upon peasants to finish the project, meaning that should escape.

8. Members of the genocidal govt. tell peasants not to hesitate to kill because killing is already going on in the rest of the country.

#### Organization of the genocide

1. At public meetings and on the radio, government officials incite the Hutu population to do a special Umuganda

2. Genocidal government decides who shall be killed first and who next.

3. Local officials determine the start and the end of the killing. *Interhamwe* ('those who work together') and night.

4. Radio Rwanda and Radio Mille Collines provide false information on the RPF and incite killing.

#### organization of the genocide

1. Various incentives used to implicate people in the killing, from giving free beer, the chance to loot the house of the killed person, to extract cash from victims and to grab a plot of land.

This comparison shows how a policy of forced unpaid work, designed to control and exploit the peasant population and to enable local and national officials to mobilize the population for collective ends, can be turned into an efficient extermination machine. Some of my colleagues have pointed out that communal labor activities are a feature of many communist-type regimes and do not necessarily lead to genocide. They are right, but I believe that it is not correct to consider the usage of Umuganda for a campaign of mass murder as a mere ‘perversion’ of the Umuganda institution. This would mean that Umuganda was inherently ‘good’ and only abused by a group of killers. I do not believe this; there was more continuation of existing policies than a perversion of them. Umuganda was deliberately installed to order all Rwandans to perform manual work, including students and professors. During the genocide, Tutsi intellectuals as well as Hutu intellectuals who opposed the regime, were among the first to be killed. During the Cambodian genocide, Pol Pot killed most Cambodian intellectuals. At one point, Adolf Hitler said that when he did not need the German intellectuals anymore, he would have them killed.

Umuganda allowed national and local officials to mobilize and control the labor of the entire Rwandan adult population one day every week.<sup>83</sup> In her recent book, A. DesForges (1999, p. 234) writes on this :

“Prefects transmitted orders and supervised results, but it was burgomasters and their subordinates who really mobilized the people. Using their authority to summon citizens for communal projects, as they were used to doing for Umuganda, burgomasters delivered assailants to the massacre sites, where military personnel or former soldiers then usually took charge of the operation. Just as burgomasters had organized barriers and patrols before the genocide so now they enforced regular and routine participation in such activities against the Tutsi. They sent councilors and their subordinates from house to house to sign up all adult males, informing them when they were to work. Or they drew up lists and posted the schedules at the places where public notices were usually affixed.”

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<sup>83</sup> Although Umuganda was forced labor, the majority of the population may have believed in the intrinsic qualities of this policy, at least in the beginning. This, however, is irrelevant to the regime’s reasons for the policy and is a topic for further research: to what extent did the population cooperate with these policies ?

## 7. THE ECONOMY, THE CIVIL WAR, AND THE FIRST MASSACRES

As long as agricultural production was increasing, especially the production of coffee for export, the power of the state was increasing. More production allowed for more tax revenue and thus for a larger government budget. This in turn strengthened the repressive apparatus of the state and the ability of the state to continue its rent-distributing capacity.

When, at the end of the eighties, state resources decreased sharply because of the drop in the world coffee price, the ability of the regime to satisfy two goals at the same time decreased: to satisfy the peasant population (to increase or maintain income) and to increase export earnings (rent-seeking).

We know that, by all means, the regime wanted to increase export earnings. This namely provided funds for the regime for import and elite rent-seeking. The effect of the forced cultivation of coffee on the peasant population however became more and more coercive in the process of decreased coffee-prices. It was, from the peasants' perspective, economic nonsense to cultivate coffee, since other crops gave higher yields. This meant that the coffee policy impoverished the Rwandan peasant.

A coffee price fixed high enough guaranteed the regime the loyalty of the peasant population. From 1990 onwards, this was no longer possible. The regime decreased the price paid to the producer from 125 Rfr before 1990 to 100 Rfr in 1990 and increased it again to 115 thereafter. Because of inflation, the real income of the peasant population decreased during these years. A dictatorial regime, as we have discussed earlier, can only survive when it receives a certain level of loyalty from the population on the one hand and produces repression on the other hand. When the supply of loyalty drops, as it did in Rwanda, the dictator needs to produce more repression to stay in power. I believe this is the mechanism that explains dictatorial behavior in Rwanda in the years preceding the genocide.

From the moment the exiled RPF rebels attacked, the regime started killing Tutsi civilians. From 1990 to 1994, about 2,000 Tutsi civilians were murdered by the regime. As in the case of Nazi Germany, the war offered a pretext and a cover-up for the killings. The difference is that the Nazis started the war themselves, whereas Rwanda was attacked by the RPF. Being attacked legitimizes the use of defensive forces, but can never legitimize the extermination of an entire civilian population.

I want to stress that the regime did not wait with its murderous campaign until later developments in the war. In the first action of mass murder, 348 persons were killed in 48 hours in Kibilira, only 12 days after the start of the RPF attack.<sup>84</sup> Habyarimana must have known about the upcoming attack by the RPF, since it is highly likely that his intelligence service informed him of this.<sup>85</sup> This means that the regime was prepared for the attack. The ‘preparation’, however, went a lot further than the usual military readiness. Only three days after this attack, the regime rounded-up 8,000 to 10,000 people in Kigali and put them in prison. In peace-time, the regime could only discriminate against the Tutsi. The civil war allowed a radical and extreme strategy.

Not only vis-à-vis the Tutsi population, but also vis-à-vis other countries did Habyarimana have his strategy ready. One day after the attack, he called President Mitterrand and two days after the attack he was welcomed at the Palace of the Belgian King. Both rulers promised immediate military aid. From the limited time span, it should be clear that it was Habyarimana’s plan to involve other countries in the conflict. Prunier (1995) recalls that Habyarimana staged a fake attack on his own capital to exaggerate the rebel threat on October 3 and 4, 1990. Mitterrand responded by sending even more troops. The first mass murder was thus committed while French, Belgian and Zairian troops supported the military operations of the Rwandan army. I argue that it was Habyarimana’s purpose to reach this result. Evidence given in other sections of this paper and also in G. Prunier’s book (pp. 84-90) supports the argument that long before October 1, 1990 the Habyarimana regime was losing the loyalty of the population and that the regime resorted to violence to solve conflicts.

These few lines are necessary to show that the civil war was not the real cause of the massacres and other actions of the Habyarimana regime. The war merely offered the occasion, the pretext, to kill members of the Tutsi population. This means, as I have tried to argue in this paper, that the plan to commit genocide must have originated from something else. This, I argue, is to be found in a combination of the following factors

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<sup>84</sup> These killings, their organized character and the implication of the regime are described in detail in a report by the International Commission on Human Rights Violations in Rwanda since October 1990 (FIDH, March 1993). It is, I believe very important to observe that Léon Mugesera, close friend of Habyarimana and one of the ideologists of the genocide, was present at the location of this first massacre. Two years later, in 1992, this man would make an extremely racist speech inciting his audience to kill Tutsi.

<sup>85</sup> Adelman, H and Shurki, A., *Joint Evaluation of Emergency Assistance to Rwanda*, 1996, p.20.

- a political economy argument: decreased coffee prices are a budgetary problem and a 'dictatorial problem'. If the economy no longer allows the dictator to win the loyalty of the population, more coercive and repressive methods are necessary to stay in power.
- an ideological argument: Rwandan is an agricultural nation and faced difficult equilibria, both internal and external. Every Rwandan had to be as productive as possible to keep the country in balance. This equilibrium was disturbed by the end of the eighties.
- an ethnic argument: this is stressed by many authors and is compatible with my argument in the following way. When resources are scarce, and regime leaders believe that only the Hutu are the legitimate inhabitants of Rwanda, the connection is simple, in this sense that the resources of the country are such they can only support one ethnic group.

Of course, during the civil war, the plan for genocide was further developed and elaborated. Various genocidal 'tests' were run to check the reaction of the local population, the local officials, the army, and especially the international community. From all these 'tests', the regime learned that it could get away with mass murder. But the civil war also worsened the economic condition of the regime and of the population. The war was costly to the regime and food production was strongly disrupted because of internal displacement.

## **8. BY WAY OF CONCLUSION**

From our discussion on 'development' we have derived that it is possible to document a number of inequalities in Rwanda that are stronger or more outspoken than in other countries with similar or comparable levels of GNP per capita and HDI. These inequalities are summarized in the following dichotomies: male-female and rural-urban. With the help of other sources, we have also documented three other inequalities that have nothing to do with the level of GNP or HDI: Hutu/Tutsi, north/south, intellectual labor/manual labour. If you take a close look at these five inequalities, and combine them with the 'dictatorship approach' to Habyarimana, we get the following result:

The policies that Habyarimana executed during his reign, served his two main objectives at the same time: Rwanda would remain a poor rural society based on agriculture, and he would stay in power. It is this combination that provides the key to understand the

genocide : all Rwandans had to be peasants and perform manual labor. The racist element fits into this picture, since in the Hutu revolutionary ideology the Hutu alone are the real peasants of Rwanda. The Tutsi, the feudal class, the bourgeoisie are the development problem of Rwanda. The adherents of this ideology, first of all Habyarimana himself, gained additional strength by observing the shortage of cultivable land. This led Habyarimana to conclude that Rwanda only had space (or resources) for one ethnic group. Ultimately, the civil war became the occasion to spread ethnic hatred among the rural population, to increase the loyalty to Habyarimana, and to implement the genocidal program.

Political violence and massacres in the 1990-1994 period served several purposes: (1) The regime could blame the RPF for it and polarize the population along ethnic lines. (2) Violence and repression allowed the regime to stay in power and increase power in the face of declined loyalty from the population. (3) The regime could run 'tests' to observe the reaction of the population, the administration and the international community. (4) The regime could redistribute the goods and land of murdered Tutsi to supporters of the regime.

The most likely explanation is that the racist ideology, already present from the beginning and institutionalized in Rwandan society, became an exterminist ideology when the regime was losing power. Ethnic violence against Tutsi and its ideological justification were used to regain the loyalty of the Hutu population and to remain in power. Habyarimana came to power after ethnic violence had occurred in Rwanda. He realized the effectiveness of this instrument to increase his power. Habyarimana executed the policies favoring auto-development only if they were compatible with - and serving at the same time - his desire to stay in power. If a policy was beneficial to his level of power but detrimental to development, he would implement the policy. He regarded the population (Hutu as well as Tutsi) as suppliers of coffee and of unpaid labor. He wants the peasants to glorify him and demanded strict obedience from the population.

In the small scale mass-murders of the 1990-1994 period, the local officials used the same language derived from agriculture to describe the task: Umuganda, the well-known word for weekly 'communal labor for development' is used to describe and organize the killing.

Using the three perspectives from section 6 in this paper, one can explain the genocide as follows : Rwanda should be a peasant society (ideology) and only the Hutu are the real peasants (ethnicity). Land scarcity and declining coffee prices diminished the loyalty of the peasantry towards the Habyarimana regime (political economy). In order to restore the

loyalty of the Hutu population and to make Rwanda, once and for all, a real peasant society, all Tutsi had to be killed. This annihilation would allow a redistribution of wealth from Tutsi to Hutu and implicate a large part of the Hutu population in the killing campaign.

In the late eighties, the regime had lost the loyalty of the peasant population after falling coffee prices, famine, corruption, land appropriation and nepotism at all levels. The regime increased repression and terror against one group of people (Tutsi) in order to secure the loyalty of another group (Hutu). In fact, by implementing genocide, three essential objectives of the regime were realized at the same time : they used the country's resources to enrich themselves and their supporters in the Hutu population ; they were given the loyalty of that population and thus could remain in power; they could restore the food/population equilibrium in favor of the Hutu. The Rwandan genocide was indeed a 'final solution,' a policy to get rid of the Tutsis once and for all, and to establish a pure peasant society.

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