

THE GENOCIDE AGAINST THE TUTSI 1994: THE COMPASS THAT REFUSES TO POINT NORTH

17 September 2021

The first edition of the book *Que Sais-je ?* by Filip Reyntjens concerning the 1994 genocide against the Tutsi of Rwanda aroused from the moment of its publication the indignation of an impressive list of historians and experts, their concerns expressed in a letter published in *Le Monde* on September 25, 2017.¹

A second edition of the book was published on August 18 this year, and with only minor and superficial changes to the text, it was clear that the criticisms made of the first edition had no impact on the publisher.

We are surprised that a publisher whose aim is to bring knowledge to all chose to ignore the concerns of recognised historians and republish theories that ignore the fundamental characteristics of the genocide against the Tutsi.

In so doing, the French publishing house *Humensis* has not only contributed to popularising obsolete historical ideas but has provided much-needed validation to an author who defends revisionist theories about the last genocide of the 20th century.

An almost non-existent up-date

This new edition fails to account for the criticisms made in 2017. Filip Reyntjens, who is happy to remind us that history needs constant revision through debate, has clearly not applied this principle in his own work and has chosen to ignore anything he disagrees with.

Once again, he persists in reversing the order of responsibility for the genocide and supports -- against all intellectual and historical reasoning -- the absence of any genocide planning.

Denying the planning of genocide

Repeating the arguments popular with the perpetrators Filip Reyntjens denies any prior planning of the genocide of the Tutsi and supports the idea that it was the result of a process sparked by the assassination of President Juvénal Habyarimana and fuelled by the fear of the Tutsi population.

The denial of any planning of the genocide by Filip Reyntjens, substantiated with limited and selective sources, is even more shocking given the fact that in 1995 he had declared under oath to the Belgian judicial authorities:

“However, I do know from numerous and reliable sources that a genocidal project and political massacres existed for a long time and the first signs of this were evident from 1991”.²

¹ https://www.lemonde.fr/idees/article/2017/09/25/rwanda-le-que-sais-je-qui-fait-basculer-l-histoire_5190733_3232.html

² <http://www.francegenocidetutsi.org/doc56872.pdf>

Political Firebrand

Engaged in a media war against the Rwandan Patriotic Front³ (RPF) since 1990⁴ to the detriment of the objectivity of his work, Filip Reyntjens revives some nauseating theories, these assigning responsibility for the genocide against the Tutsi to the RPF from October 1990. The RPF “could not have been unaware that the attack would gravely imperil Tutsi inside the country”, he writes in efforts to excuse the executioners and blame the victims of the genocide for their own demise.

Not content with attributing the responsibility of the genocide to the RPF, Filip Reyntjens minimises in his analyse the dismissal by French justice in December 2018 in the case against the RPF for the assassination that cost the life of President Habyarimana.⁵

Despite this decision and the evidence provided by ballistic and acoustic experts that the missiles fired at the presidential jet came from the military camp at Kanombe controlled by Hutu extremists, Filip Reyntjens rejects this idea in favour of a “body of evidence pointing to the RPF as responsible for the assassination”.

The compass that refuses to point north

While we gave the benefit of the doubt when the first edition was published, believing that this faulty compass would be repaired it seems that a deliberate choice has been made not to do so. In choosing to ignore the impressive list of historians and experts and in republishing the theories of a “researcher-activist”⁶ who more than once has expressed ideas akin to negationism, the publisher of *Que Sais-je ?* cannot claim either ignorance or plead negligence.⁷ The compass really is unable to point north. While in France the recently published report of historian Vincent Duclert has put an end to 27 years of denial regarding the responsibility of France in the genocide of the Tutsi, it appears that the publishers of *Que Sais-je ?*, have decided to republish revisionist material.

Messieurs Frédéric Mériot et Julien Brocard⁸ -- the history of the genocide of the Tutsi, the million victims and the survivors are worth more than your contempt. And your readers deserve better.

Signed by:

1. **Guillaume Ancel**, ancien lieutenant-colonel, vétéran de l'opération Turquoise, témoin et auteur de « *Rwanda, la fin du silence* »
2. **Dr. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau**, historien, Directeur d'études, EHESS, Paris
3. **Medhi Ba**, journaliste à Jeune Afrique
4. **Prof. Annette Becker**, historienne, Paris-Nanterre
5. **Benjamin Beeckmans**, président Centre Communautaire Laïc Juif David Susskind (CCLJ)
6. **Hervé Berville**, député de la République française
7. **Dr. Diogène Bideri**, Dr. en droit, auteur, Conseiller Juridique Principal, Commission Nationale de Lutte contre le Génocide (CNLG)
8. **Juliette Bour**, doctorante en Histoire à l'EHESS (CESPRA) et au CNRS
9. **Marguerite Carbonare**, témoin privilégiée de l'histoire rwandaise depuis 1989
10. **Cloé Carbonare**, professeur agrégée d'arts plastiques
11. **Dr. Ayse Sila Cehreli**, maîtresse de conférences, Faculté de sciences politiques, Université de Marmara

³ Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a political and military movement created in 1987 by Rwandan refugees which had set itself as goals the return of refugees and the abolition of ethnic and regional discrimination established by the first two republics.

⁴ Filip Reyntjens, *Les risques du métier*, L'Harmattan, 2009, Paris. p.25. “In the discussions I associated myself with an initiative of the regime that was trying to gain the upper hand in a media war it was losing with the RPF. In early November I contacted Fabien Singaye who was a diplomat at the Rwandan embassy in Bern”.

⁵ Filip Reyntjens, “Que Sais-je, Le génocide des Tutsi au Rwanda”, Second edition, page 34

⁶ Filip Reyntjens (2009), *Les Risques du Métier*, Paris, Editions l'Harmattan.

⁷ <https://twitter.com/freyntje/status/977197186307055616> “#Rwanda I have long thought that @rpfinkotanyi committed crimes against humanity and war crimes in 1994, not #genocide. Book by @JudiRever shows irrefutably they did commit genocide. So, yes, double genocide happened.”

⁸ Frédéric Mériot is the CEO of groupe Humensis, Julien Brocard is the editorial director of the collection *Que Sais-je ?*

12. **Delphine Cerisuélo**, enseignante, chercheuse en histoire contemporaine
13. **Marie-France Collard**, cinéaste, co-auteur du spectacle « Rwanda 94 »
14. **Alain David**, délégué de la Licra à la CNCDH (commission nationale consultative des Droits de l'Homme), ancien Directeur de Programmes au Collège international de philosophie
15. **Thierry De Win**, professeur retraité, membre du Collectif et de la Commission Pédagogique de Mémoire d'Auschwitz
16. **Jacques Delcuvellerie**, directeur artistique du collectif Groupov, co-auteur du spectacle « Rwanda 94 »
17. **Jean-Loup Denblyden**, ingénieur civil /Lieutenant -Colonel de réserve honoraire, opération Silverback avril 1994 Rwanda
18. **Alain Destexhe**, sénateur honoraire, ancien secrétaire général de Médecins Sans Frontières
19. **Boubacar Boris Diop**, écrivain sénégalais, auteur de "Murambi, le livre des ossements" éditions Zulma 2011
20. **Raphaël Doridant et François Graner**, auteurs de "L'Etat français et le génocide des Tutsis au Rwanda"
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30. **Prof. Tharcisse Gatwa**, Research Professor of Ethics. Author among others: *Memory Work in Rwanda. 25 Years After the genocide against the Tutsi; Churches and Ethnic Ideology in Rwandan crises 1900-1994; Home Grown Solutions in Rwanda. A legacy to Generations in Africa.*
31. **Alain Gauthier**, président du CPR (Collectif des Parties Civiles pour le Rwanda)
32. **La Fondation pour l'étude des génocides**, Montreal, Canada. <https://gened.org>
33. **Denise Gere**, membre du Collectif belge pour la prévention des crimes de génocide et contre les négationnismes
34. **Jessica Géronald Mwiza**, vice-présidente Ibuka France
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74. **Romain Poncet**, membre du CA d'Ibuka France
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82. **Dr. Stéphanie Courouble Share**, historienne, expert en négationnisme de la Shoah, The Institute for the Study of Global Antisemitism and Policy (ISGAP), New York, USA.
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