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Libéerte, Egalité, and Fraternité: France, Rwanda, and the Road to Genocide

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LIBERTÉ, ÉGALITÉ, FRATERNITÉ: FRANCE, RWANDA, AND THE ROAD TO GENOCIDE

By

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Honors in the
Department of History and the
Department of Modern Languages and Literatures

UNION COLLEGE
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ABSTRACT

REFKIN, RACHEL

Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité: France, Rwanda,
and the Road to Genocide, June 2015

ADVISORS: Professor Charles Batson and Professor Brian J. Peterson

The following senior thesis examines France's political, economic, and military relationship with Rwanda from 1962-present. It analyzes the questionable success of the French humanitarian intervention, dubbed Operation Turquoise, during the Rwandan genocide. Moreover, it explores how the neocolonial relationship between the two countries, and the so-called *Françafrique* system, while demonstrating the ways in which this relationship juxtaposed certain French notions of liberté, égalité, and fraternité.

This paper explains how, before Belgian colonialism, the Hutu-Tutsi division was characterized by considerable ethnic fluidity but also social class differences. Yet, due to the fact that the Tutsi enjoyed a position of privilege during the colonial era, after independence the Hutu responded by reigning in a dictatorial manner over the Tutsi. This lasted until the genocide, and resulted in a large refugee population in Uganda.

This paper will explore how Rwanda and France did not begin their peculiar neocolonial relationship until the 1970s, when the two countries struck certain arms trade deals. This military support increased dramatically as the Rwandan Patriotic Front gained ground starting in 1990. As this thesis shows, the French military would

even train government militias, who developed into extremist organizations such as the *Interhamwe*. Then, during Operation Turquoise, the military was successful in establishing a “Safe Zone,” for the protection of hundreds of thousands of refugees. But through a lack of cultural understanding, the French were also responsible for thousands of deaths.

The primary resources for this research included Thierry Prugnaud’s first hand account of Operation Turquoise and NGO’s arms reports on Rwanda. Many secondary sources were used containing interviews of Rwandans who came across the French before and during the genocide. Specifically, journalist Andrew Wallis’s book contained interviews of both genocidaires and victims, used to fully comprehend the Rwandan’s point of view.

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PROLOGUE

The French military, in their jeeps with red berets and Kalashnikovs in hand drove steadily up the rolling hills of Rwanda's southeastern countryside with their guide directing them in June 1994. They had crossed bridges and traveled on dirt paths with journalists following their army vehicles. Then suddenly, soldiers spotted people in the midst of the brush. Their guide asserted that these were the Tutsi that had been hiding in the mountains of Bisesero. Soldiers looked through their binoculars only to see waves of starved figures in tattered clothing trickling down the mountain eventually revealing hundreds. French Lieutenant General Duval could not believe his eyes as more and more people revealed themselves to the French military. Tutsi who could speak French came up to the soldiers, explaining that they had been hiding from their killers in these mountains since the violence began in April. The military surveyed the area, where they witnessed countless bloodied bodies, old and new, which covered the hills, some with machete wounds all over their bodies. But another Tutsi recognized their guide, claiming he was one of their killers associated with Hutu extremist militias. Now that they had revealed their hiding spot, all of their hope brought with the French arrival had dissipated, and their two-month survival no longer had purpose; they knew they would die.

The General told the desperate Tutsi that he did not have enough supplies in his few military jeeps, so he would come back in three days to aid them. The Tutsi of

Bisesero were not ignorant, they warned the soldiers that they would not be alive in three days because they had revealed their place of hiding. Duval would not budge, so he and the French descended back down the mountain in their vehicles.

Three days later, the military found the hills covered in corpses.

INTRODUCTION

The French values of liberty, equality, and fraternity, ring hollow when confronted the Franco-Rwandan relationship. Despite Rwanda's independence, it remained under France's sphere of influence politically, economically, and especially militarily. Furthermore, the affairs between the two countries directly juxtapose the notorious French values of liberty, equality, and fraternity. This paper seeks to analyze this perplexing bond between the two countries, particularly during the rise of Hutu extremism and the implementation of Operation Turquoise.

The Franco-Rwandan relationship was always a peculiar one because Rwanda was never a French colony. When Rwanda gained its independence in 1962, France began to take interest in the minuscule central African country. Eventually, consecutive French presidents became very close with President Juvénal Habyarimana a Hutu. When heads of the Elysée, the French government, came to Rwanda they would go on exotic safaris, and when the Habyarimana traveled to Paris they would be treated to lavish shopping trips. But Habyarimana's people, the Hutu, were not always the upper crust of Rwandan society; in fact their livelihood was quite the opposite when Rwanda was a mere colony.

During the colonial era, Germany claimed "Ruanda-Urundi" during the Berlin Conference of 1884-1885. However, the colony was then given to Belgium after the First World War. The Belgians were notorious for their harsh and inhumane colonial rule, so when they discovered there were two 'ethnicities' in Rwanda, Hutu and Tutsi,

they saw an opportunity to divide the country. To affirm their power, they deepened the divide between Hutu and Tutsi. They perceived the Tutsi to be lighter-skinned, taller, with more delicate features, and thus, of a higher class than the shorter, darker-skinned Hutu, despite the fact that the two groups spoke the same language, inter-married, and did not hold animosities towards one another. After the two 'ethnicities' were turned against each other for years, the Belgian priests, whose authority led the colonial government, resolved that because of their Christian values the underprivileged Hutu should be given a chance. During the democratic transition the colonialists withdrew from the country due to post World War Two debt, leaving Hutu-Tutsi relations in tatters, and causing much violence on both sides. Primarily Tutsi were killed because the Hutu desired revenge over their former masters, which caused a refugee crisis spilling into neighboring countries, particularly in Uganda.

Rwanda was a fairly isolated and independent country until Habyarimana staged a coup in 1973, which opened up the country to foreign relations and began a Franco-Rwandan arms deal. Under his rule, Tutsi were not permitted to be in high-ranking positions, especially in government and the military. Furthermore, they were all subjected to pogroms frequently, causing even more people to flee.

Habyarimana cooperated with France under the *Françafrique* policy, which is regarded by some as France's 'special' relationship with its former African colonies, and by others as blatant neocolonialism. The framework of the strategy is the *Cellule Africaine*, or the Africa Cell, which outlines clandestine diplomacy, and developmental aid. The policy includes French advising in domestic affairs

inconspicuously, especially militarily. For example, at the start of the 1990s, the French had nine thousand troops stationed in seven African countries; additionally, a recent example is French intervention in Mali's Tuareg rebellion. France's Françafrique influence on African leaders has allowed them to keep a hegemonic role on the world stage, through influence in economics, politics and the military. Characteristically, French policy in Africa has been defined by presidential power and lack of parliamentary control with the Africa Cell separated from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs¹.

The Africa Cell is a branch of the government that exclusively works on African affairs, which is strangely not associated with Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but rather under the president. In Rwanda's case, Habyarimana worked closely with mainly President François Mitterrand, and his son Jean-Christophe Mitterrand, head of the Africa Cell. Through the Ministry of Cooperation, designed in 1961 after decolonization, the French could keep African politics out of foreign policy without the control of *l'Assemblée Nationale*, or the National Assembly². Furthermore, under Article 15 of the French Constitution, only the French President is authorized to send troops overseas. Nevertheless, the policy of the Franco-African special relationship was called *rayonnement*, or the projection of Francophone culture overseas. By keeping their influence alive abroad, through organizations such as *Francophonie*,

¹ Daniela Krosiak , *The French Betrayal of Rwanda* , (Bloomington, IN: Indiana

² The National Assembly is the lower house of the bicameral French Parliament.

they maintained their authority in the government and economy of Francophone countries.

L'Organisation internationale de la Francophonie, or Francophonie, is a linguistic, international organization founded in 1970 that represents countries that speak French and share a common culture³. Although its goals are usually deemed as innocent and a product of globalization, it is also seen as a way for France to maintain its global influence in its former colonies and other French-speaking developing countries, particularly Rwanda. Through economic influences such as La Francophonie, the French were able to instigate the *Compagnie Française de l'Afrique Occidentale*, a Franc Zone where the CFA is used, and the French treasury guarantees the currency. In fact, neocolonialist scholar, François-Xavier Verschave even went as far to say that Françafrique prospers because of its lies about its true economic, political, and military intentions, which he finds to be the case in Rwanda⁴. Therefore, one of the fundamental reasons Rwanda and France were cordial was because of money: France would give Rwanda aid while France invested in business and benefitted from their currency. Thus, the Franco-Rwandan neocolonialist relationship was born, but it would only get more intense as Rwanda swelled with extremism.

³ Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, "Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie." Accessed November 10, 2014. <http://www.francophonie.org/Welcome-to-the-International.html>.

⁴ François-Xavier Verschave, *Noir Silence*, (Paris: Les Arènes , 2000),

Over less than three decades, the Tutsi refugees in Uganda formed the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF), a political party and militia determined to gain the right of return for refugee Tutsi. But Habyarimana refused, causing the RPF to attack Rwanda in spurts, thus triggering more prejudice for Tutsi, and even killings. The RPF's most organized attack was in October 1990, which prompted Habyarimana had to ask the French for military aid. Without French assistance and military training, the Hutu government would have lost their capital, Kigali. Yet, many in the army were joining extremist militias who in turn were creating lists of Tutsi in preparation for genocide. The Arusha Accords were instigated in 1992 in order to halt the violence between Rwanda and the RPF, which attempted to merge the two together. The pact, which was agreed upon in 1993, only led to more violence within Rwanda, especially against Tutsi populations. In April 1994, President Habyarimana was killed, which threw the country into chaos: extremist militias hunted Tutsi and Hutu sympathizers, Hutu who did not agree with the militias' actions. The RPF saw this as an opportunity to take back their homeland.

During most of the genocide, the French, as well as the rest of the world, stood idly by and expected the underfunded United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) to maintain peace. In June, the Elysée decided to propose a humanitarian intervention to the United Nations, called Operation Turquoise to save lives. Their mission was to relieve refugees, particularly children and provide aid, which both of were successful. However, due to their historical ties with the Hutu regime, France tacitly encouraged the extremists. Besides helping out in refugee

camps, France's biggest tragedy in Rwanda was Bisesero, where the blood of thousands of Rwandans laid on their hands. They eventually established a safe zone, where refugees across the country could come to, but sometimes Hutu extremists were allowed in the zone as well, endangering lives. In August, the RPF took Kigali, which ended Operation Turquoise Furthermore, when the French abandoned their Safe Zone in September, refugees, including former Hutu extremists spilled over into Zaïre, now Democratic Republic of the Congo, causing the Great Lakes Refugee Crisis.

This paper will analyze the Franco-Rwandan relationship especially the success of Operation Turquoise. The most significant primary resource was Thierry Prugnaud's first hand account of Operation Turquoise, entitled *Silence Turquoise*, which revealed the beliefs of the French military that instructed him to have on the Rwandan situation and how his views transformed after witnessing the horrors of the genocide. Prugnaud also analyzed and tried to comprehend how the tragedy of Bisesero came to fruition and intricately depicted the horrors of the people in the mountains. Furthermore, articles from the *Kangura*, the Hutu extremist publication, were substantial in grasping the point of view of Hutu extremists, which included the Hutu Commandments and their positive perception of President Mitterrand. Also, the Human Rights Watch Arms Report, *Arming Rwanda – The Arms Trade and Human Rights Abuses in the Rwandan War* was critical for understanding the enormity of the arms deals between the two countries with accurate numbers of arms and descriptions of weaponry. Secondary sources of importance included the writings of François-

Xavier Verschave, a leftist critic who harshly disputed and sought to comprehend the Franco-Rwandan relationship with compelling evidence of interviews of Rwandans and French and sociological theorems. Additionally Gérard Prunier's renowned *The Rwanda Crisis* was significant for historical research considering France's tactical moves in approaching a humanitarian intervention eventually and Operation Turquoise. Moreover, journalist Andrew Wallis's *Silent Accomplice* was critical for its interviews of Rwandan witnesses, both victims and killers, in Operation Noroît, Operation Turquoise, and Bisesero.

First, the pre-colonial history of the Hutu-Tutsi divide is examined along with the entrance of the Western colonizer's perceptions of the 'ethnicities'. Then, the colonial Belgian lens is analyzed, especially when they overturned their preference of Tutsi over Hutu. Following, the early violent days of the Rwanda's independence are surveyed, including the formation of the Rwandan refugee population in Uganda. In the second chapter, the Franco-Rwanda neocolonial relationship is illustrated along with France's blind eye towards the rise of Hutu extremism and the failure of the Arusha Accords. Next in chapter three, the French public, government, and military's reactions to the start of the genocide is studied. Subsequently the initiation and duration of Operation Turquoise and the tragedy of Bisesero are explained and the consequences of foreign involvement for the Great Lakes Region. Finally, the current state of Franco-Rwandan relations and the effects of France's politics on the region are presented.

Overall, this senior thesis seeks to uncover if the Franco-Rwandan relationship was helpful or detrimental to the countries' security and prosperity. Moreover it pursues to determine the success of Operation Turquoise and the Safe Zone. By means of research and evaluation, the paper strives to access the implications of *Françafrique* policies and the concept of a foreign humanitarian intervention in international conflict. Furthermore, the contradictions of French morals and their practices in Rwanda up until the genocide are brought to light.

CHAPTER ONE

The Ever Deepening Hutu-Tutsi Divide and Belgian Colonialism

The ethnic tensions in Rwanda did not arise until European colonialism; in fact, Tutsi, Hutu and Twa all spoke the same language, Kinyarwanda, and practiced similar forms of animism, and then Catholicism after colonialism. But, the people of Rwanda eventually descended into this mythological ethnic divide, which were mostly historically brought on by outside pressures. It also must be taken into account that there are no reliable, written records of the pre-colonial state, Rwandan history was passed down by oral tradition, and thus it is malleable.

Deep in its history, the Twa settled the land that is currently Rwanda. The ancestors of the Hutu and Tutsi immigrated later, but their place of origin is not known. The chiefs of Rwanda, known as Mwamis, were both Hutu and Tutsi. The distinctions between the two ethnic groups plainly began in their trades: mostly Hutu were cultivators, and Tutsi were herdsman. Because cattle were viewed as more valuable, the Tutsi began to become synonymous with the elite. Thus the divisions were similar to a caste system⁵. Tutsi were known as the royalty, nobles, chiefs, and cattle herders, even though most Tutsi were poor and did not benefit from the caste

⁵ Catherine Watson, *Exile from Rwanda: Background to an Invasion*, (American Council for Nationalities Service , 1991).

system. The Hutu-Tutsi caste system was more of a system of class than ethnicity, social mobility and intermarriage blurred the caste distinctions. In fact, a rich Hutu could shed his Hutuness, or *kwi hutura*, and Tutsi could lose their cows, thus becoming Hutu. Furthermore, the Tutsi caste would assert their dominance through what resembled a feudal system based off cattle: Hutu were given protection by the affluent Tutsi in exchange for their labor with cattle.

The classification was deepened under Mwami Kigeri Rwabugiri, categorized as Tutsi, who greatly expanded Rwandan territory; along with more land came more social classifications of jobs. Because Mwamis were considered divine, other Tutsi were identified with the Mwami and were given better jobs. This essentially created a feudal society with Tutsi aristocrats and Hutu vassals. Nevertheless, there were still many other factors of identity, such as clans, so “ethnic” lines were still blurred.

Eventually, the Europeans began trading with Africa and started the triangle trade. Then, after the abolishment of the slave trade, they started to venture more deeply into Africa beyond their trading posts. One explorer of East Africa was John Hanning Speke, an officer in the British army. In 1863, he hypothesized one of the centerpieces of the Rwandan ethnic illusion, which became known as the Hamitic myth. Speke conceived an anthropological theory about light skinned Africans after his travels to the region. He sought to establish connections between biblical figures, specifically Ham of the Bible, therefore making them superior to the darker skinned. As Gourevitch researched:

...all culture and civilization in central Africa and been introduced by the taller, sharper-featured people, whom he considered to be a Caucasoid tribe of Ethiopian

*origin, descended from the biblical King David, and therefor a superior race to the native Negroids.*⁶

Speke's theory applied his anthropological research in Rwanda, where he found the Tutsi to be lighter skinner with more European features, which he perceived as bearing the blood of Abyssinia, thus being related to Ham. According to Speke's theory, the Tutsi were the lost Christians, hence they were superior to the Hutu. The Hamitic myth continued to carry historical weight up until the beginning of the genocide⁷. In the years following, more exploration throughout Africa continued with Western powers claiming the land as their own.

During the Berlin Conference from 1884-1885, Rwanda, known as "Ruanda-Urundi" during this time period, was first claimed by Germany⁸. The two countries, Ruanda and Urundi, which at the time of the conference were sovereign, were thought to be populated similarly with Hutu and Tutsi. When Germany arrived in Rwanda under Kaiser Wilhelm, they enforced indirect rule, known as "dual

⁶ Philip Gourevitch, *We wish to inform you that tomorrow we will be killed with our families: Stories from Rwanda*, (New York City: Picador, 1988), 51.

⁷ One of the indispensable speeches of the Hutu power movement, made by Léon Mugesera in 1992, directed the Hutu to send the Tutsi back to Ethiopia by the Nyabranogo River, which runs into the Nile River. As it happened, during the genocide the river was filled with tens of thousands of bodies washing up on the shores of Lake Victoria, one of the main sources of the Nile River.

⁸ Jacques Morel, *La France au Coeur du Génocide de Tutsi*, (Paris : Espirt Frappeur , 2014)<http://www.francerwandagenocide.org/documents/FranceCoeurGenocideTutsi-IP.pdf> (accessed October 30, 2014).

colonialism” because the “Tutsi elites exploited the protection and license extended by the German to pursue internal feuds to further their hegemony over the Hutu.”⁹

But at the end of World War I, on May 6, 1916, the League of Nations handed over Rwanda to Belgium as a part of the Treaty of Versailles¹⁰. At the start of their rule, Belgium practiced indirect rule, keeping Rwanda’s monarch, Mwami Musinga, in power, but he eventually grew to oppose imperialist rule. Thus he was eventually replaced with Mwami Mutara III, also known as Mwami W’abazungu, nicknamed the King of the Whites. The Belgians promptly converted him to Catholicism so he could be used as their governmental and social pawn. Indeed, one of Belgium’s many cruel imperialist tactics was the “divide and rule” technique, thus they split the Rwandans into different groups, because to the Belgians, the Hutu and the Tutsi physically appeared different. As Jacques Morel explained:

[Les Hutu sont] petits, trapus, ont la figure joviale, le nez largement épaté, les lèvres énormes... [Le Tutsi] de bonne race n’a, à part la couleur, rien de nègre. Sa taille est très haute. Ses traits, dans la jeunesse, sont d’une grande pureté: front droit, nez aquilin, lèvres fines s’ouvrant sur des dents éblouissantes. D’intelligence vive...¹¹

Hutu and Tutsi were further separated by the texture of their hair: if it was straighter and softer they were seen as Abyssinian, if it was frizzy or nappy they were seen as

⁹ Gourevitch, 54.

¹⁰ Daniela Krosiak, *The French Betrayal of Rwanda*, (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2008), 19.

¹¹ Jacques Morel, *La France au cœur du génocide des Tutsi*, (Paris: ESPRIT FRAPPEUR, 2014)
<http://www.francerwandagenocide.org/documents/FranceCoeurGenocideTutsi-IP.pdf>
 (accessed October 3, 2014).

Hutu. Also, the Belgians reclassified Rwandans, not allowing Hutu to have more than ten cows while Tutsi were allowed more, signifying their class. Whereas Tutsi were given a monopoly over political and administrative jobs, Hutu were pushed into forced labor in road construction, forestry, on plantations, etc. Meanwhile, the Tutsi were placed as their taskmasters in the draconian style of labor; they were told, “You whip the Hutu or we will whip you.”¹² Nevertheless, there was no intrinsic difference between these two groups before the arrival of the Europeans. In order to reinforce these subgroups and simply to tell the difference, in 1935 Belgium established an ethnic identification card system, which would eventually be used to determine one’s fate in the genocide at the end of the century.

The Tutsi were favored by the Catholic Church, which had a formidable presence in Rwanda. The head of the Rwandan church, Bishop Léon Classe, had his hand in propping up the Tutsi people. He believed that the Tutsi were more qualified to rule, and if Hutu were given too much power then the state would descend into anarchy. Thus, the Church and the government favored the Tutsi, which gave them many privileges: better education in the Catholic colonial education system, better jobs, and more economic and political power. As a result, until the 1940s, only Tutsi were educated. This would dramatically sharpen class differences. However, even with the colonial hierarchy, most Hutu and Tutsi were still cordial and continued to intermarry.

¹² Gourevitch, 57.

Following World War II, Flemish priests decided to challenge the ethnic classification status quo, stating that the Tutsi were exploiting the powerless Hutu. Back in Belgium, the social revolution began, finally giving rights to the oppressed Flemish majority under the Francophone Walloon minority, thus the Flemish priests empathized with the Hutu. Archbishop André Perraudin, the Vicaire Apostolique to Kabgayi in 1959 wrote how suppressing the Hutu was not Christian:

*L'Eglise est contre la lutte des classes entre elles, que l'origine de ces classes soit la richesse ou la race ou quelque autre facteur que ce soit, mais elle admet qu'une classe sociale lutte pour ses intérêts légitimes par des moyens honnêtes, par exemple en se groupant en associations. La haine, le mépris, l'esprit de division de désunion, le mensonge et la calomnie sont des moyens de lutte malhonnêtes et sévèrement condamnés par Dieu.*¹³

Nevertheless, the Church decided to give priority to Hutu. And the Belgian-run government, run by Governor Colonel Guy Logiest, followed the Church's lead in inspiring the Hutu to desire their Rwandan social revolution. Concurrently, during the 1950s, Western powers became anxious about the threat of a geographical section of Africa consisting of radical independent states across the central eastern part of the continent¹⁴. Along these lines, in order to thwart a communist revolution, the Belgians liberated the Hutu.

Many Tutsi felt that this extreme switch favoring one ethnicity over the other was done in order to turn the two ethnicities on each other. Aloysius Mugabo, a

¹³ *Lettre pastorale de Monseigneur Perraudin, Vicarie Apostolique de Kabgayi pour le carême de 1959*, (1959)
<http://www.francerwandagenocide.org/documents/Perraudin11fevrier1959.pdf>
 (accessed October 3, 2014), 71.

¹⁴ Morel, 172.

fifty-year-old refugee in Uganda said, “The Belgians offered educational opportunities only to us, they told the Hutu that priority was given to the Tutsi, Then in the end, they said to the Hutu: ‘You see what the Tutsi are doing? They’re getting the best jobs.’ They did this to create conflict between us.¹⁵” After the formal shift, many Tutsi, whether in Rwanda or refugee, felt betrayed by the Belgians. The Belgians gave them superior opportunities, but because the Tutsi trusted Belgium, they could easily bring them back down. The Hutu wanted to seize the opportunity to finally gain equal rights. Thus, in March 1957, nine Hutu intellectuals published the *Hutu Manifesto*, calling for democracy for the Hutu and all Rwandans. The text was critical of the social, political, and economic monopoly of the Tutsi and appealed for Hutu advancement; they even originally rejected the idea of the ethnic identity cards.

On August 29th, 1959, the Tutsi Mwami Mutara died in Burundi after being given an injection by a doctor. For some, it was presumed the Belgians or the Hutu had assassinated him; the Belgian government did not permit an autopsy. Then, on November 1, 1959, a Hutu political activist, Dominique Mbonyumutwa, was beaten up in the North and was said to have died. This was the first ever record of violence between the Hutu and the Tutsi, and with that the social revolution began. Hutu across the nation began attacking Tutsi authorities, committing arson, pillage and murder against Tutsi. The new Mwami, of Tutsi descent, asked permission from Colonel Logiest to deploy his army against the Hutu revolutionaries, but Logiest

¹⁵ Watson.

refused. The Colonel, who was in fact assisting the Hutu revolution, saw himself as a champion of democratization, finally releasing the Hutu from an oppressive state¹⁶.

In response to the death of the Mwami in September 1959, Rwanda's first political party, the Rwanda National Union (UNAR) was formed. The party strongly supported the new Mwami Kigeri V, was pro-Tutsi, and was anti-Belgian. Later, Grégoire Kayibanda, a Hutu, formed the PARMEHUTU or the Party of the Hutu Emancipation Movement, which emphasized Hutu supremacy, and were anti-monarchy. The two parties clashed almost instantly; and in the months that followed, a Hutu attacked a UNAR Tutsi, sparking violence between the two groups. Belgium's reaction was uninspiring and when they finally did react, they arrested 919 Tutsi compared to only 312 Hutu. In the following months, hundreds of more Tutsi would be killed, especially as Belgians replaced Tutsi chiefs and sub chiefs of villages with Hutu.

The violence only increased as the PARMEHUTU sought more power. In early 1960, Kayibanda organized a coup d'état, where Hutu replaced Tutsi in over 90% of government jobs. By April 1960, 20,000 Tutsi were internally displaced, and tens of thousands of Tutsi fled to neighboring countries, especially to Uganda. In October, Colonel Logiest announced the conclusion of the revolution and Kayibanda, who was one of the main writers of the *Hutu Manifesto* announced in his speech, "Democracy has vanquished feudalism"¹⁷.

¹⁶ Gourevitch, 60.

¹⁷ Ibid, 61.

The Belgians left at the end of 1959, and after so dramatically shifting their ethnic allegiance, they set the stage for great post-colonial violence. As Gourevitch explained: “The colonial state and the colonial church had made that almost inconceivable, and although the Belgians switched ethnic sides on the eve of independence, the new order they prepared was merely the old order stood on its head.¹⁸” In time, the ethnic tensions exacerbated by the dubiety brought on by the Belgians would cause a post-colonial civil war. The Hutu sought to settle scores with their former Tutsi masters, who had previously reaped benefits from the colonial system. Hundreds of thousands were killed, mainly Tutsi, but also Hutu that sympathized with Tutsi. Due to the violence, thousands fled to neighboring countries, including Tanzania, Zaïre, Burundi and especially Uganda.

In 1961, the monarchy was voted out and the Republic was voted in with 77% in favor, and Kayibanda of the PARAMEHUTU was elected President¹⁹. In the same year, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that 15,000 Rwandans fled, and 40-70% of Rwanda’s Tutsi fled the country from 1959-1961²⁰. Many of the UNAR militants were among these refugees, so they organized into guerilla bands to fight for their homeland. They called themselves the *Inyenzi*,

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ LA MISSION D'INFORMATION(1) DE LA COMMISSION DE LA DÉFENSE NATIONALE ET DES FORCES ARMÉES ET DE LA COMMISSION DES AFFAIRES ÉTRANGÈRES, . L'assemblée nationale, "L'assemblée nationale." Accessed October 31, 2014. <http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/11/dossiers/rwanda/r1271.asp>.

²⁰ Watson.

meaning 'cockroach' in Kinyarwanda. The term was a popular ethnic slur for Tutsi after Hutu had taken power, and in this sense the refugees were reclaiming the word. The refugee militants attacked from all neighboring countries, launching ten major attacks from March 1961-1965. Yet, their offensives were unsuccessful and only caused Tutsi prejudice in Rwanda to augment. This newfound Hutu domination would be mistaken for democracy up until the genocide in 1994. At the same time, the United Nations was deliberating statehood for Rwanda, brought to the floor by Belgium, which was not officially given until July 1, 1962.

Kayibanda was not the most effective leader. He demonstrated his power by rousing the Hutu masses to kill Tutsi, preserving the spirit of the revolution. Indeed, for Kayibanda, democracy was Hutu empowerment. For example, in December 1963, the first Tutsi refugees invaded from Burundi, so in turn, every Tutsi in Rwanda had to pay; tens of thousands of Tutsi were slaughtered in one month. When Kayibanda was more concerned about demonstrating the might of Hutu democracy, he was not successful in exercising power and kept Rwanda isolated from the rest of the world. The country was not successful economically and had a severe lack of trade. To keep the ethnic divides in line, he established an ethnic quota system, similar to the colonial quota system in favor of the Tutsi. Under Kayibanda, Tutsi were only allowed a certain number of jobs, especially in government. By the end of 1963, 120,000 more Tutsi had fled to other countries.

On July 5, 1973, the Minister of Defense, General Juvénal Habyarimana, led a coup d'état to usurp the power of President Kayibanda. The two had a close personal

relationship; Habyarimana was even Kayibanda's son's godfather. After seizing power, Habyarimana initially tried to treat Tutsi with more official respect, but other powerful Hutu rejected the idea. To reassert his own authority and to prevent another coup d'état, Habyarimana would make the methods of discrimination against the Tutsi even worse.

CHAPTER TWO

The Franco-Rwandan Neocolonial Relationship

France's allegiance to Rwanda, even during the genocide, can easily be reasoned as a force of neocolonial habit. Firstly, since decolonization across Africa, France wanted to continue to keep their military bases across the continent. French diplomats desired for stability to remain in their allied African States, particularly because they had an economic hold there. As Verschave has speculated, France wanted to keep its Catholic zone of influence, and the leaders of the Catholic churches were allies with the Hutu revolution²¹.

Secondly, France wanted to keep its own Francophone influence alive. There is a theory called 'Fashoda Syndrome', also known as the Fashoda complex, which is defined as fear against the imperialist interests of Anglophones, particularly in Africa²². The English and the French have been historic enemies: To the French, the English had burned Jeanne d'Arc, stole Canada, and have globalized their children into drinking Coca-Cola²³. Moreover, the two clashed and battled for imperialist hegemony during the Berlin Conference and in East Africa in 1898. It is highly

²¹ François-Xavier Verschave, *Complicité de genocide ?*, (Paris: Editions la découverte, 1994), 13.

²² Ibid, 63.

²³ Gérard Prunier, *The Rwanda Crisis: History of a Genocide*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), Chapter 3, 104-105.

contested among French political theorists, in particular Verschave, that the French fought so ardently to keep their zone of influence over Rwanda due to the Fashoda Syndrome because the Ugandan Tutsi refugees who made up the RPF were English speakers. In fact, Jean-Christophe Mitterrand's views even align with the Fashoda Syndrome. "La culture française correspond mieux à celle des Africains que la culture anglaise. C'est notre côté méditerranéen. Nous avons des liens beaucoup plus personnels²⁴." This would be one of the many factors that would lead to hostility between the RPF and the French, particularly Paul Kagame, the leader of the RPF. France justified their close relationship with Rwanda because of their shared language and culture, while the RPF spoke English. Moreover, Kagame thought the policy of the Françafrique system did nothing beneficial for Rwanda or for the French. Thus, the RPF and France were not amicable.

After decolonization, Jacques Foccart, under President Charles de Gaulle, was instructed to maintain the Franco-African political relationship. He created a network of personal friends of France within the government of these countries; one of them was Rwanda. Years later, Jean-Christophe Mitterrand became head of the Africa Cell, and besides working on diplomacy with France's African allies, he facilitated contacts to establish and maintain personal relationships with Francophone African leaders. For example, Jean-Christophe Mitterrand sustained a relationship with President Habyarimana, in addition to his son, Jean-Pierre Habyarimana. Through these relationships, President Mitterrand always had knowledge of the events in the

²⁴ Verschave, *Complicité de genocide ?*, 13.

country and had their hands in influencing the domestic policy, particularly militarily, “lors de ses déplacements, François Mitterrand se tient en permanence informé de la situation militaire rwandaise²⁵”.

Habyarimana knew very well the good that would come from his relationship with the French. In July 1975, he brought President Valéry Giscard d’Estaing on a safari when he came to visit the country. While on the tour, the two signed their first military accord, where France agreed to aid them militarily. President François Mitterrand would continue this agreement between the two countries. But after 1990, the French began to have a much heavier political influence over Rwanda. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, Western countries were pressured to enforce democracy worldwide. Thus in June 1990 at the watershed *La Baule*, an economic conference between France and all their allied Francophone African countries, President François Mitterrand announced that in order for them to remain an economic ally, the countries would need to enforce a multi-party democracy²⁶. In fact, the French president made this announcement while sitting next to President Habyarimana. But at the same time, Mitterrand affirmed that the government would help its allies ward off external threats and would refrain from interfering with internal conflicts²⁷. Therefore, on paper, *La Baule* was a monumental conference with a Western power trying to better

²⁵ Ibid, 60.

²⁶ Meimon, Marc, "Bilan sommet de la Baule," *Soir 3*, Web, <http://www.ina.fr/video/CAC93035166>.

²⁷ Elizabeth Schmidt, *Foreign Intervention in Africa: From the Cold War to the War on Terror*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

the developing world. Yet in reality, France maintained that they would not directly involve themselves domestically in their allies' countries. Thus, no democratic reforms were enforced but simply encouraged.

Particularly after *La Baule* France and Rwanda's relations became closer; even in the Organization of African Unity's 2000 report on the Rwandan genocide, it was stated, "In Kigali, Habyarimana had a strong, loyal ally in French ambassador Georges Martres, whose dedication to the interests of the regime led to the joke in local diplomatic circles that he was really the Rwandan ambassador to France."²⁸ Through this multitude of complexes, the Fashoda Syndrome, la Françafrique, the Francophonie and the Africa Cell, Rwandans believed that no matter what, the French would always be on their side, and they had no reason to believe otherwise²⁹.

Under Article I of the first Franco-Rwandan military agreement, signed mid-safari, it was guaranteed that French military personnel were at the disposal of the Rwandan government for organizing and instructing the gendarme. The command of their operations was to be in the hands of the French ambassador, yet the French were not permitted to execute war operations to maintain order. But as it will be seen, France would come to violate this agreement. Even after La Baule, where democratization was promoted, France continued and even increased its military aid even in light of the increasing national internal tensions and extremism. This could

²⁸ Organization of African Unity. Organization of African Unity, "Rwanda: The Preventable Genocide." Last modified 2000. Accessed January 8, 2015. <http://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4d1da8752.pdf>, 9.3.

²⁹ Prunier, 107.

easily translate to France's true opinions about the future of democracy in Africa: that it was a lost cause. In democratic terms, Mitterrand believed that Rwanda was already practicing democracy because Hutu were represented in government, and they were more than 80% of the population. Nevertheless, Mitterrand continued to encourage the development of more parties to compete with Habyarimana, despite Mitterrand's clear propping up of the presidency³⁰.

Right after a conference where France publically denounced human rights violations was a perfect time to commence the augmentation of illegal arms trade. Adding to the contradiction, Mitterrand stated at *La Baule*, "France will link its entire contribution effort to efforts made to move in the direction of greater freedom."³¹ That would explain why Colonel Cussac of the French Military, when interviewed by the Human Rights Watch Arms Project, did not think that military assistance, during an era of heightened extremism, was a human rights violation but rather helping Rwanda maintain its stability. According to the Human Rights Watch Arms Project, after October 1990, France supplied Rwanda 60mm, 81mm, and 120mm mortars, 105mm LG1 light artillery guns, Pan hard M3 Armored Personal Carriers, six French-made Gazelle helicopters, and spare parts and technical assistance. In the words of French Ambassador Marlaud, "When you are supposed to advise, you must advise

³⁰ Kroslak, 64.

³¹ Human Rights Watch Arms Project. Human Rights Watch, "Arming Rwanda – The Arms Trade and Human Rights Abuses in the Rwandan War." Last modified January 1994. Accessed January 8, 2015. <http://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/RWANDA941.PDF>, 32.

however it is necessary.³² This would only be the beginning of France's involvement with the ever-worsening Rwandan conflict. Moreover, it must be noted that other countries besides France gave military aid to Rwanda, including Egypt, South Africa, and the United States; the Rwandan government also purchased weapons from other nations, such as China³³.

These weapons were not exclusively used by the French, they were also used by Rwanda's army, which included the FAR, the national army of Rwanda; Pierre, a member of the FAR recounts on his experience with the French, "There were French there, they had 'support rifles' that they fixed and then let us handle. It sometimes happened they took part themselves...³⁴" There were thirty-one recorded direct transfers and nineteen free deliveries of arms from the French, in total \$24 million of arms were sent to Rwanda from 1990-1994. Transfers that were not registered ultimately ended with advanced weaponry being sold in the black market in Rwanda, so grenades were being sold alongside everyday fruits in the market for only two dollars³⁵. It was not until 1992 that the European Union established a directive to stop "ethical" deliveries of arms to a state of unrest, but the French continued to ignore this directive and transfer arms to Rwanda. And the illegal arms trade would continue until June 1994 during the genocide itself.

³² Ibid, 24.

³³ Ibid, 5.

³⁴ Andrew Wallis, *Silent Accomplice*, (New York: Tauris, 2006), 49.

³⁵ Ibid, 33.

The increase of arms trade was not coincidental, but in fact a direct response to the RPF gaining power just across the border in Uganda. Following the exit of the Belgians, tens of thousands of Rwandans, both Hutu and Tutsi, had fled to Uganda. In early 1991, about 81,000 Rwandan refugees were registered in Uganda. There were eight refugee settlements in western Uganda where the quality of life ranged dramatically: in three of them, refugees could keep and tend to cattle, but in the rest they could only be cultivators, and only some were solid and permanent camps as compared to portable tents. The majority of the Rwandan refugees did not have access to an education, although some second-generation refugees were funded by UNHCR to attend secondary school. For the most part, Rwandans were well integrated in Ugandan society, but many felt a feeling of rootlessness; some even lost their language and changed their names to sound more Ugandan. Furthermore, if they learned a Western language, it was English rather than French.

In the 1970s, there was a growing fear over Tutsi gaining too much power, especially after the formation of the Rwandese Alliance for National Unity in 1979. Many Tutsi, such as Paul Kagame³⁶, were highly ranked in the Ugandan army, the National Resistance Army (NRA), especially because they helped current President Yoweri Museveni successfully overthrow President Milton Obote. Educated Tutsi formed the group in order to discuss the possibility of returning to Rwanda. Thus, on the night of September 29th, 1979, Banyarwanda³⁷ in the NRA began to leave their

³⁶ Paul Kagame is the current president of Rwanda.

³⁷ 'Banyarwanda' is the term for all Rwandans, including Hutu and Tutsi.

posts, which led to the expulsion of Rwandan refugees from the Ugandan Army. From 1983-1986 the RPF successfully recruited so many refugees that in 1986 they changed their name to the Rwandan Patriotic Front. What was once a policy group was now transforming into a militia due to the response to Habyarimana's declaration that same year, which forbade the refugees' right to return. At this point, they established an eight-point program aimed at the Rwandan government, calling for national unity, democracy, a self-sustaining economy, ending the misuse of public office, the establishment of social services, democratization of the security forces, progressive foreign policy, and an end to the system that produced refugees³⁸. Furthermore, a twenty-six person executive committee was established, consisting of eleven Tutsi and fifteen Hutu, all refugees in Uganda. The RPF was very respected as an army; they were known to be strict and were always properly dressed in military attire and clean-shaven³⁹. Members were not allowed to marry or date and were punished if they broke the rules of war, such as commit rape or theft.

The RPF tried to invade Rwanda on several occasions, but with every attempt generated increased persecution for the Tutsi within Rwanda, which sent more refugees to flee across the border. Furthermore, the invasion reinforced France's vision of the English-speaking 'Tutsi invaders', causing the government to have even more negative views of the RPF. Yet, the militia's passionate drive led them to keep striving to salvage their homeland.

³⁸ Watson.

³⁹ Gourevitch, 219.

When the RPF invaded Northern Rwanda in October 1990, it was not a surprise to either Rwanda or France. President Habyarimana had been trying to infiltrate the RPF, then led by General Fred Rwigyema and Colonel Paul Kagame, for two years. Thus, when the RPF invaded across the Ugandan-Rwandan border, Habyarimana turned to France for security, and sought the help of Jean-Christophe Mitterrand. In response, the French conducted Operation *Noroît* in October 1990. The operation's name meant 'north wind', which alluded to the Ugandan refugees invading from the North. The operation was strategic for Mitterrand: First of all, he thought the operation would be quick and mutually beneficial for both Rwanda and France, and would accurately portray France's loyalty to their Francophone African counterparts. It can also be said that France wanted to prevent the foreign invader, the RPF, from taking Rwanda, which the French came to call the *Khmer Noir*. They saw the refugees residing in Rwanda as the aristocratic Anglophone émigré attempting to suppress the former underclass and current majority Hutu. Additionally, the word *Khmer Noir* invoked a triple negative connotation: the Cambodian genocide, Communism, and Nighttime assailants who came during the night to murder⁴⁰. Furthermore, this was prime evidence of France's Fashoda Complex because they did not want the Anglophone Ugandan Tutsi coming back to a French-speaking country and infiltrating the language and culture with English. Nevertheless, the Elysée's public aims of the operation were to protect the French embassy, French citizens and expatriates, all while clandestinely exercising *Françafrique* policies.

⁴⁰ Verschave, *Complicité de genocide ?*, 42.

The Elysée in actuality wanted to protect the Rwandan government from being overthrown by the outside army. Furthermore, it can be conjectured that the French military did not want Rwanda to be taken over by the RPF in order to protect their own economic and foreign business interests within the country. Additionally, at this point in time, Belgium officially halted military support, symbolizing their opinion of the Habyarimana regime, thus Rwanda now only had France, their only major Western ally.

Operation *Noroît* was successful in evacuating French expatriates, but it also increased efficiency for the FAR. During the operation, the French participated militarily by advising the leaders of the FAR and served in their posts. Throughout the early 1990s French officers and troops served as Rwandan auxiliaries, directing air traffic control, interrogating RPF prisoners, and even participated frontline combat. Furthermore, they took care of guard the airport and allowing arms to come into the country, and ensured radio communication, even the malicious RTLM⁴¹. Radio Télévision Libre des Mille Collines (RTLM), was a widely listened to propaganda station that projected discriminatory hatred towards Tutsi and Hutu sympathizers.

⁴¹ Prunier, 111.

There were several witness accounts of the French checking ethnic ID cards⁴² at roadblocks, something they were certainly not permitted to conduct. Both the interim Prime Minister Faustin Twagiramungu (July 1994 - August 1995) and members of Doctors Without Borders witnessed the French stopping vehicles and checking ID cards; moreover, there are accounts of French soldiers who threatened to confiscate cameras if they took pictures of them at checkpoints. Additionally, there were first hand accounts of French military interrogating prisoners of war, specifically RPF POWs. Major Jean-Bosco Nyirigira was an RPF soldier captured by the Rwandan army in during Operation Noroît and claims French military officials interrogated him, questioning him on RPF strategy. The French repudiated claims of their involvement checking ethnic IDs and questioning POWs; Colonel Cussac was the only French officer to admit that he interrogated POWs, but asserted he was the only soldier to do so⁴³. As reasoned by Verschave, the French got away with torture during the Algerian War without the knowledge of the public, so they could have easily been doing the same in Rwanda⁴⁴.

After the violence of the RPF invasion of October 1990 settled down, extremist ideas against Tutsi in Rwanda began to rise and swell. Different groups calling for the maintenance of the Hutu hierarchy arose, including several militias.

⁴² In 1991, the American ambassador to Rwanda suggested ridding the country of the ethnic ID cards, but the French ambassador got rid of the initiative.

⁴³ Kroslak, 150.

⁴⁴ Verschave, *Complicité de genocide ?*, 39.

Some militias branched off from the Rwandan army, the Rwandan government, and even Habyarimana's close friends and family.

Agathe Habyarimana, the first lady of Rwanda, was a founding member of the *akazu*, or "little house" in Kinyarwanda, an informal group of Hutu extremists whose goal was to retain power for the Hutu through violent means. The *akazu* was also associated with the *Réseau Zero*, or the Zero Network, in 1992, whose goal was to eliminate the Tutsi population to zero. The members consisted of elite nepotistic Hutu extremists who were either family members or close friends with the president. *Akazu* members did not wish to share power, especially governmental power, with Tutsi. They have been accused of being behind the disappearances of many Rwandans since its formation up until the genocide.

The phrase "Hutu power" first surfaced about thirty years after Rwandan Independence⁴⁵. The Hutu Power Movement was founded after the declaration of the "Ten Hutu Commandments," a decree published in December 1990 by *Kangura*, an extremist magazine whose goal was to incite hatred against the Tutsi. *Kangura* is Kinyarwanda for "wake up"⁴⁶, and there is evidence that the publication was financed by the *akazu* for a propaganda campaign, thus associated with the President himself. The Ten Hutu Commandments included forbidding: Hutu men to marry or

⁴⁵ Verschave, *Complicité de genocide ?*, 25.

⁴⁶ Rwanda File, "Kangura Articles." Accessed October 25, 2014. <http://www.rwandafile.com/Kangura/>.

even associate with Tutsi women, Hutu to make economic and/ or business deals with Tutsi, Tutsi in educational, governmental, or military posts, Tutsi propaganda, or Hutu to question Hutu Power ideology⁴⁷. The same month that the commandments were published, the *Kangura* also praised President Mitterrand. As pictured in “Image One⁴⁸”, a large, stoic, picture was published of him with the caption “Un veritable ami du Rwanda”⁴⁹. Thus an extremist magazine promoting Hutu Power also endorsed France, which almost highlighted their illegal aid to the country by calling him a ‘true friend’.

The Hutu Ten Commandments would serve as the umbrella ideology for several different organizations. In 1992, the political party Members of the National Republican Movement (MRND), founded by Habyarimana in 1974, formed the militia the *Interhamwe*, meaning “those who stay together”. Additionally, the *Impuzamugambi*, meaning “those who share the same name” was formed later, and are accountable for killing many Tutsi and Hutu moderates before and throughout the genocide. Moreover, there was a famous speech given by Léon Mugesera on November 22nd, 1992, where he incited the members of MRND to “take responsibility into our own hands and wipe out these hoodlums” and to dump them

⁴⁷ Rwanda File, "Kangura No. 6 Appeal to the Bahutu Conscience (With the Hutu Ten Commandments)." Accessed October 25, 2014.

⁴⁹ This photo can be seen in the Appendix.

into the river, evoking the hatred founded by the Hamitic Myth⁵⁰. Mugesera was the first public figure to publically call for genocide. By introducing anti-Tutsi dialogue, these groups allowed discrimination against the Tutsi to be commonplace in Rwandan society. Thus, they would contribute to the creation of the Hutu Power Movement and rise in other extremist ideologies. Both the Interhamwe and the Impuzamugambi used disadvantaged, vulnerable Hutu youth to promote terror. The militiamen for these groups trained in the forests of Nyungwe and Gashwati in camps that were originally used by the French military to train the FAR.

There is evidence that France did indeed train the FAR and the presidential guard at the Mount St. Louis army center, while also continuing illegal arms trade. The FAR eventually trickled down into these two extremist militia groups, thus the French were actually training future genocidaires⁵¹. Janvier Afrika, an ex-member of the Zero Network and an informant described his experiences with the French and militia training, “At the camp I saw the French show Interhamwe how to throw knives and how to assemble and disassemble guns. It was the French who showed us how to do that – a French major – during a total of four months training for weeks at a time between February 1991 and January 1992⁵².” Thus, because of their position training militia, the soldiers witnessed emergent illegal activity against the Tutsi and did not report it. Human rights investigator, Jean Carbonare, found that Hutu would

⁵⁰ Kroslak, 40.

⁵¹ French for “those who commit genocide”.

⁵² Wallis, 57.

take away Tutsi prisoners, mainly RPF prisoners, and torture and sometimes kill them, in the presence of French soldiers

Despite this apparent rise in tensions, violence, and prejudice, France's Ambassador to Rwanda never reported a series rise of extremism of Hutu Power from 1990-1993, so the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Paris was uninformed⁵³. Ambassador Georges Martres maintained that President Habyarimana was respectful of human rights and therefore thought the pogroms occurring were the Tutsi's fault due to the RPF attempting to invade. Nevertheless, there were undeniably other sources informing the Africa Cell of the French government of the current situation in Rwanda, including the secret service (DGSE), military and media reports⁵⁴.

There was concrete evidence of radicalization, especially as pogroms became frequent against the Tutsi in 1990. Nevertheless, the French did not take a strong stance against them. Then, in March 1992, the RTLM broadcasted that they "discovered" a Tutsi plan to kill all the Hutu, which was a fabricated story⁵⁵. Nevertheless, in the southern Bugesera region, 300 Tutsi were killed in two days; there were similar events in Gisenyi as well. These horrific events would come to be known as "The Dress Rehearsal" for the genocide⁵⁶. Even when militias started to

⁵⁴ Ibid, 77.

⁵⁵ Gourevitch, 92.

⁵⁶ Wallis, 38.

make lists of Tutsi and Hutu sympathizers, the French knew what was occurring, but they did not make a stand despite their values for liberty, equality and fraternity. Still, the French blamed gangsters and ethnic tensions on account of the RPF invasion, and continued to believe that Habyarimana was a moderate democrat. In October 1993, Ambassador Martres eventually admitted that genocide was foreseeable, but his successor Ambassador Jean-Michel Marlaud came into office and promptly denied that genocide was too exaggerated to be possible⁵⁷.

The surprising advance and strength of the RPF led to the Arusha Accords in order to halt any further violence in the tense area. The Arusha Accords were a set of five protocols, signed in Arusha, Tanzania, between the Rwandan government and the RPF from July 12, 1992 - August 4, 1993. President Habyarimana was hesitant to even get involved in peace agreements, but was pushed by the United States and France. The Elysée's goals in the Arusha Accords were: negotiations between the government and the RPF, rejection of a military solution, and political evolution of the parties⁵⁸. On the other hand, the French's actions at Arusha could be seen as indifferent and/ or insensitive to current events. They were mostly ignorant to the pogroms occurring against the Tutsi prior to the Arusha Accords, which could be explained by the inadequacy of the French embassy in Rwanda to communicate the gravity of the current events. Historian Jean-Pierre Chrétien came to understand the

⁵⁷ Kroslak, 86.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 115.

French ignorance during Arusha and pre-massacres after the genocide. “...un exotisme persistant nous rend aveugles aux fascismes ethnismes qui prennent un air de banalité en Afrique...”⁵⁹”

The formal Arusha talks lasted thirteen months. The first round called for a joint political-military commission to be established, the second round, the protocol on the Rule of Law, was signed on August 18, 1992⁶⁰. Arusha III, signed on October 30, 1992, was agreements on power sharing, unification and political cooperation, and established the Broad-Based Transitional Government (BBTG) and the Transitional National Assembly (TNA). It was agreed that the BBTG, consisting of the current Rwandan government and Rwandan refugees from Uganda, would last more than twenty-two months, and would be followed by free elections; furthermore, the powers of the president were to be diminished to those of a ceremonial head of state. The TNA molded the Rwandan government into what was similar to a majority parliament relationship. Arusha V set to tackle the joining of the RPF and the Rwandan government, in which the French lobbied that it was better to include the CDR, a Rwandan far-right political party associated with the Impuzamugambi, in the new government. In the end, the CDR was completely excluded from the BBTG, and the following political parties were given eleven seats: MDR, RPF, MRND, PSD and more. The MDR (the Republican Democratic Movement party) and the PSD (the

⁵⁹ Verschave, *Complicité de genocide ?*, 74.

⁶⁰ Bruce Jones, *Peacemaking in Rwanda: The Dynamics of Failure*, (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2001), chap. 4 The Arusha Negotiations.

Social Democratic Party) were political parties that were created after *La Baule* when Mitterrand ordered Habyarimana to create a multiparty democracy, thus they did not have much legitimate power.

Within days of the signing of Arusha V, the MRND and CDR began to protest the Arusha Accords in Rwanda, and these demonstrations even led to violence. For example, in late January 1993, more than 300 Tutsi in the North of Rwanda were killed. This would renew a war between the RPF and Rwanda starting February 8, 1993, when the RPF launched a major attack. In response, the Elysée again came to the aid of Habyarimana. At first, they conducted Operation Volcano, which evacuated sixty-seven foreigners, but they continued to aid the Rwandans in Operation Chimera, starting February 28, where 300 French troops entered Rwanda with helicopters and paratroopers, halting the RPF. The RPF threatened to take Kigali, but the French prevented this; eventually, the Arusha negotiations continued.

The final round of negotiations covered two main issues: refugees and security, and neutral military forces. The refugee question was settled quickly through the Protocol on the Repatriation of Rwandese Refugees and Resettlement of Displaced Persons, calling for Rwandan refugees in Rwanda to return to their homeland; this was announced on June 9, 1993. The Rwandan government started off negotiating that 15% of armed commandment should be represented by the RPF because that was their percentage of the population. The RPF completely rejected this offer, insisting they have a fifty-fifty split of RPF and Rwandan representation in

order to be democratic. After a long bout of negotiations, a fifty-fifty representation was agreed upon, thus both armies would be integrated⁶¹. As for the security issues, Rwanda agreed to ask the United Nations to compose a Neutral International Force to oversee their final agreements. In response, UNAMIR was created and Lieutenant General Roméo Dallaire was sent to Rwanda to spearhead the arrangement. This would end the Arusha Accords, signed on August 4, 1993.

There were many problems with the Arusha Accords, and most importantly Habyarimana and the Rwandan government did not take the agreements seriously. At the same time, by signing the Accords, it was essentially a political suicide note, because his allies in the Hutu Power world, particularly in the akazu, were chagrined with the idea of integrating foreign Tutsi into Rwandan society. This is in fact one of the theories as to why President Habyarimana would be assassinated. On the other hand, the RPF did not necessarily find the documents legitimate either, they never expected to gain visceral rights through the accords, and they simply wanted a political statement⁶². Furthermore, the negotiations overstepped their boundaries with what was acceptable to dictate to the Rwandan government, in other words, they were not ready for the drastic changes that Arusha called for, including merging their government with an estranged population. If Arusha incited the violence in February

⁶¹ "Peace Agreement between the Government of the Republic of Rwanda and the Rwandese Patriotic Front." (manuscript., Ulster University), <http://www.incore.ulst.ac.uk/services/cds/agreements/pdf/rwan1.pdf>.

⁶² Gourevitch, 99.

1993, only more violence could follow. Because Arusha called for too much change too quickly, it easily could have planted the seeds for social unrest, and even genocide.

France became even more heavily involved in Rwanda economically, politically and militarily, at this point in time, which was justified by Jean-Christophe Mitterrand as due to external aggression from the RPF. Furthermore, having a French presence there was a strong public relations move by President Habyarimana because it portrayed Rwanda's might because of its alignments with Western powers. The two countries had many ties: for example, Thénoaste Bagosora, the organizer of the Genocide, went to the *École de Guerre* in Paris.

Yet after the accords were signed, President Mitterrand told President Habyarimana that France would not increase their already large aid package to Rwanda in order to encourage democracy⁶³. After the agreements, the French officially withdrew from Rwanda, or so they said. Publicly, twenty-five *coopérants*⁶⁴ stayed for technical assistance, but other sources say the number of *coopérants* was actually between forty to seventy people, who were affiliated with the DGSE. Patrick de Saint-Exupéry of *Libération*, son of the famed author of *Le Petit Prince*, published his investigative report in 1998, uncovering that two French officers who stayed in

⁶³ Kroslak, 103.

⁶⁴ Someone who works abroad in lieu of military service.

Kigali tapped the city's phone network, which included all of the foreign embassies⁶⁵. Nevertheless the French military remained in Rwanda, justified by the excuse that they brought increased stability to the country; Habyarimana could always count on the African militant lobby to support him. Paris and Kigali remained in constant communication about the status of the RPF.

⁶⁵ Krosiak, 151.

CHAPTER THREE

Genocide and Operation Turquoise

On April 6, 1994, a plane that was taking off from the airport in Kigali, with President Habyarimana on board, was shot down, and all the passengers were killed. The culprit is still unknown today; nevertheless, this event marks the beginning of the genocide. The French were rightly concerned because the plane, a Falcon-50, was a French-made plane that was piloted by three French crewmembers. All three crewmembers, Jacky Héraud, Jean-Pierre Minaberry, Jean-Michel Perrine, all died in the crash and were awarded France's Legion of Honor in June 1994, strangely just as the genocide was going on. Some suspected these crewmembers were working for the DGSE. In fact, Ambassador Martres eventually admitted the crew had passed information onto him about Habyarimana's movements onto him during previous trips, but this was commonplace in Francophone African countries under Françafrique policies⁶⁶.

Due to the rising Hutu extremism, Rwandans, and mostly likely the Elysée knew that if the president were to die, some form of chaos would ensue. In fact, just in a March issue of *Kangura*, the banner headline was "Habyarimana Will Die in March", which depicted the president as an RPF accomplice, and said he would be killed by a Hutu sympathizer. The growing hatred against Habyarimana is likely due

⁶⁶ Wallis, 82.

to his willingness to sign the Arusha Accords, despite that many sources state he was indifferent to the agreements.

Within thirty-six hours of Habyarimana's death, 400 French troops were sent in to evacuate French expatriates⁶⁷. Yet, UNAMIR and Lieutenant General Dallaire were not informed of this mission, conducted from April 8 – April 14; this would become known as Operation Amaryllis. Because the mission was not associated with the United Nations, they were able to move freely around Kigali thus gathering firsthand information on the current situation. Despite their sovereignty, this was only the start of many bad encounters French forces had with UNAMIR. Dallaire commented on the operation, "...the French commander showed no interest in cooperating with us. This unhappy exchange was an indication of how the French evacuation task force, Operation Amaryllis, would continue to behave with UNAMIR..."⁶⁸

Yet, the Elysée did not exclusively evacuate citizens, they also evacuated their allies, particularly nationals and akazu members, transporting them to neighboring countries, in particular Zaïre, because of France's close ties with their dictator, Mobutu. Joseph Ngarambe, 40-year-old member of the opposition PSD, witnessed two hundred Rwandans in the French embassy, including members of the akazu, the founder of RTLM, Ferdinand Nahimana, members of the MRND, and their families,

⁶⁷ Krosiak, 176.

⁶⁸ Wallis, 86.

who were all being evacuated to Burundi⁶⁹. Additionally, before he escaped the French embassy, he watched the soldiers destroy archives of business between France and Rwanda.

Based on evidence, scholars such as Verschave believe that Operation Amaryllis was conducted to hide the evidence of the French collaboration with Hutu Power by evacuating French officials and destroying documents at the French embassy. Along with Ngarambe's witness account, Operation Amaryllis no longer seemed like an innocent effort to save French citizens in Rwanda. Adding on to this theory, François de Goussouvre, a French politician who oversaw French overseas security, was found dead by suicide only hours after President Habyarimana's plane was shot down, which is indeed a curious coincidence.

While the operation was conducted, the military witnessed many being murdered and the commencement of genocide, but chose to stay idle. They could have warned the many fleeing that the Interhamwe was sealing the roads and/or checking ethnic ID cards, but the French had important lines of communication within the military and what would become the interim government. In fact, most of the criticism of the military's apathy came from French sources. One of the bigger advocates to change France's involvement in Rwanda into that of a less political one, Doctors Without Borders, who actively campaigned with the phrase, "On n'arrête pas un genocide avec des medecins". The group was highly critical of the genocide,

⁶⁹ Ibid, 92-93.

despite being created by Bernard Kouchner, the former Minister for Humanitarian Action.

The government was ultimately confused and misinformed about the real motives for the conflict in Rwanda in the first place. In most reports, the French called the genocide a ‘civil war’; in May, Alain Juppé, an outspoken French conservative politician, said that both sides are guilty of killing one another. This theory would continue even after the genocide had ended, arguing that the RPF also engaged in genocide against the Hutu. Granted, many Hutu in Rwanda were killed, but the UN Commission of Experts stated France’s claims were indeed false⁷⁰. In a report on May 13, Ambassador Marlaud told the French that they must refuse the logic of war but rather emphasize a negotiated political solution, and that they must support the interim government. The government also believed a ceasefire would end the clashes, which was a policy that was suggested before the nature of the killings was known⁷¹.

Nevertheless, the French government itself was very divided on what their stance was in Rwanda and what their possible moves could be; Verschave stated, “il existe deux écoles en France, expliquait-on veulent toujours qu’on réarme les forces armées rwandaises ; de l’autre, il y a tous ceux qui pensent que rien ne peut être réglé sans le FPR.”⁷² For example, Jean-François Bayart did not want to give arms to

⁷⁰ Kroslak, 196.

⁷¹ Ibid, 194.

⁷² Verschave, *Complicité de genocide ?*, 119.

people that could have shot down the plane of President Habyarimana. But, on the other hand, taking into account Fashoda syndrome, the French did not believe that Rwanda should fall into the hands of the RPF, and wanted to help the Rwandans with humanitarian and military aid. Additionally, Juppé wanted to intervene to maintain French political power in the region. On May 10, President Mitterrand announced “Nous sommes à la disposition, nous voulons bien être les bons soldats de la paix pour les Nations unies ; il faut qu’on nous demande, il que cela s’organise, qu’il y en ait d’autres à nos côtes,⁷³”. Thus, the government wanted to do good there, or make it seem like that was there ultimate goal.

However, it was questionable whether the Elysée really sympathized with the situation in Rwanda, especially considering President Mitterrand’s notorious quote, “In countries like that genocide is not very important.⁷⁴” For example, in April, the French did not even consider using the word ‘genocide’ to describe the current events. Verschave stated that if the RPF had not taken hold of Rwanda, that the genocide in Rwanda would have been seen as a normal African occurrence⁷⁵. It is evident that France was mostly invested in the situation due to their Françafrique policies and monetary interests, and not necessarily because of humanitarian concerns.

⁷³ Ibid, 121.

⁷⁴ Kroslak, 193.

⁷⁵ Verschave, *Complicité de genocide ?*, 171.

As for the French media, they remained for the most part impartial, but there were some exceptions in publications' opinion sections. *Le Monde* ran some very critical articles near the start of Operation Turquoise. Journalist Marie Pierre explained to her audience that both neither the RPF nor the Rwandans desired French intervention, and that grand international intervention had not been successful in France's past. Also, she claimed that because all of the Tutsi were killed or were being killed, that the murderers would openly host the French soldiers⁷⁶. Pierre's predictions proved to be true. Moreover, during Operation Turquoise, Mitterrand encouraged that images from the operation should not be shown on television. For that reason, it is debatable whether French society knew of the gravity of the genocide until Patrick de Saint-Exupéry's investigative report.

Meanwhile, French society was not particularly concerned with the current events in Rwanda. Dr. Charles Batson, who resided in France from 1993-1995, explained that at the time, President Mitterrand was perceived as a kingly figure, thus French people were more concerned with his overbearing domestic policy rather than his foreign policy⁷⁷. When troops were generally sent into Africa for humanitarian intervention, no one usually questioned the Elysée's motives because it had been a

⁷⁶ Pierre, Marie. "Dans l'attente d'une decision des Naitons unies Le projet d'intervention française au Rwanda suscie de plus en plus critiques." *Le Monde*, June 23, 1994. <http://abonnes.lemonde.fr/cgi-bin/ACHATS/ARCHIVES/archives.cgi?ID=b80d73d88f2a9b63d3bdf3dfc17c39dfa11335f41c77bcc7> (accessed January 19, 2015).

⁷⁷ Charles Batson, interview by Rachel Refkin, Schenectady, NY, November 20, 2014.

force of habit since their colonial days. Batson, unlike Verschave, as a civilian never found any evidence of the French being suspicious of the RPF because they were Anglophones. Furthermore, the majority of society did not notice the buildup in Rwanda to Operation Turquoise. Yet, after images began to circulate after Habyarimana's plane crash and the genocide commenced, Dr. Batson said that the French public's interest started to increase, but not significantly. Before the images were shown on television, news networks were required to post a warning about the gore in the imagery, which was a result of Mitterrand. When it was announced that the government was planning a humanitarian intervention in the country, Dr. Batson recalls a French friend commenting, "C'est notre problème, nous avons été là," thus society believed that because their military was already on the ground in Rwanda, it was their problem to fix.

Before Turquoise was mandated, one of the most debated topics of the Security Council was how to approach the situation in Rwanda. Meanwhile, Kouchner visited the country for France to investigate the situation on the ground. The desire of the French to save orphans became a frequent joke amongst those who would oppose Operation Turquoise. Lt. General Roméo Dallaire met with Kouchner, and disagreed so much with him that when the humanitarian intervention was pitched to him, Dallaire cursed and yelled at him. Dallaire commented, "As far as I was concerned they were using a humanitarian cloak to intervene in Rwanda...⁷⁸" Dallaire

⁷⁸ Roméo Dallaire, *Shake Hands with the Devil*, (New York: Carroll & Graff Publishers, 2005), 425.

did not understand why the French could not simply fund and support UNAMIR in order to aid Rwanda. Nevertheless, Dallaire would come to formally support the French, even though he believed their attempts to try to negotiate with the RPF were ludicrous. On May 10, President Mitterrand announced his intentions to conduct a humanitarian intervention; it must be noted that the President, not a foreign minister was announcing the country's plan to intervene in an a foreign country, particularly in Africa. This most certainly reflected *Françafrique* policy.

France had its own internal debates about Mitterrand's call for humanitarian intervention. Some representatives, especially Mitterrand's conservative political rivals did not wish to get dragged in to yet another foreign conflict and accept his Machiavellian announcement. Prime Minister Édouard Balladur was more skeptical of the plans, and encouraged Mitterrand to seek a Security Council Mandate for the operation; he added they had a window between UNAMIR and UNAMIR II, which would result a limited operation, but it must be proposed quickly. Military hawks debated that they should have never left after Operation *Noroît* in order to intimidate the RPF. Nevertheless, the intervention needed to be planned swiftly and rapidly if France wanted time to conduct humanitarian work: the RPF was advancing in the northern Hutu stronghold, and predication said that Kagame had the power to take the entire country within a month's time. Moreover, historian Prunier noted that the popular President Nelson Mandela of South Africa made a statement on June 13, alluding that Africans must come together to halt the genocide⁷⁹. Prunier believes that

⁷⁹ Prunier, 281.

Mitterrand saw this announcement as a threat to a possible French intervention: South Africa was an Anglophone country and Mandela was a particularly well-liked leader ever since the end of Apartheid just that April.

The French pitched their proposal to the Security Council on June 14, and much criticism followed. Most, especially Rwandans, found this proposition peculiar because France had done nothing during the past two months of the genocide even though they were the closest Rwandan ally and the most informed member sitting on the Security Council. Both New Zealand and the Czech Republic already proposed humanitarian interventions to the United Nations, but they were denied. Tutsi priests, who were still alive, wrote letters to superiors saying that this would not be a humanitarian intervention but a cynical enterprise⁸⁰. Likewise, the Organization for African Unity (OAU) opposed the intervention because they considered it just another way a European power could use humanitarianism as a medium to manipulate neocolonial regional power in Africa. Furthermore, in their 2000 report, it was stated that, “France had long been deeply involved with the Hutu and therefore was far from ideal for this role.”⁸¹ The Prime Minister Designate Twagiramungu, from refuge in Belgium, condemned the French intervention, and the Belgian government agreed⁸². Within France, politicians used the humanitarian intervention to benefit their popularity ratings; what was France without its strong advocacy for human rights.

⁸⁰ Wallis, 129.

⁸¹ Organization of African Unity, 15.65.

⁸² Dallaire, 436.

Juppé strongly supported involvement in Rwanda in order to make his political party appear to be more humane. Juppé went as far as writing an article for the notoriously leftist magazine, *Libération*, promoting the French operation, despite his conservative politics.

Even the former President Giscard d'Estaing publically stated that the operation was only an attempt to protect those who massacred others, being that their former allies were in the Hutu Power government. But, the French did have their ties within the Security Council in order to gain votes. Before and during the genocide, France had a heavy influence on the Security Council concerning the fate of Rwanda. In particular, the Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, was trained as a lawyer at the prestigious Université Sorbonne in Paris and was a personal friend of President Mitterrand.

The first draft of Operation Turquoise proposed that forces enter from the North through Gisenyi. Yet, the North was the center of Hutu extremism and the CDR. This would not be a productive public relations move because Hutu Power militants would welcome the French with open arms. Furthermore, the North was historically Hutu; it was the homeland of President Habyarimana, so all of the Tutsi to potentially be saved had already been slaughtered. For example, a Hutu trader from the region told a French journalist, "We never had many Tutsi here and we killed them all at the beginning without much of a fuss⁸³." Yet, the RPF's advancements continued in the North, and the military needed to avoid a full-on clash with them if

⁸³ Prunier, 284.

they were to remain neutral as the UN would mandate them to be. So, the military needed to enter Rwanda from a different entry point, especially one where there would be Tutsi to save; it was still indeed a humanitarian intervention.

The plans were changed so the forces entered Rwanda from Goma, Zaire, northwest of Rwanda, which would be an easy feat because of Zaire and France's amicable relationship. The military would enter Rwanda from the southwest before heading north. On this route, they would hit the Nyarushi Camp, where many Tutsi had fled. At this time, France sought to get some other countries to sign onto participating in the operation with them, those of who were mainly Francophone allies. In reality, only Senegal and Chad would send very few troops, Senegal 243 and Chad 44⁸⁴. On June 20, Secretary General Boutros-Ghali wrote a letter to the head of the Security Council, personally recommending France's operation, mentioning its multinational angle, and that it would ensure security before UNAMIR II was deployed.

Thus on June 22, 1994, Resolution 929 was passed, giving France the United Nations' permission to provide a humanitarian operation, called Operation Turquoise, in Rwanda lasting maximum two months; there were ten votes in favor, five abstentions, and zero voted against. The operation would end when UNAMIR II was established, and the French Secretariat had to agree to do everything in their power to get that mission arranged. This would prove to be difficult considering Dallaire's already negative view of the French command.

⁸⁴ Krosiak, 216n.

Meanwhile, the operation would not fall under the command of UNAMIR or its head, Dallaire. Operation Turquoise was passed as a Chapter VII UN mandate, which in other words is action with respect to threats to peace, breaches of the peace, and acts of aggression, and directed at the determination of threat to peace and action to restore peace. Yet UNAMIR I and II were only Chapter VI mandates, which is simply the conciliatory settlement of disputes, and orders negotiation and mediation; they have to request permission from the Security Council if further action is need. Thus, it can be said that Operation Turquoise had more agency than UNAMIR⁸⁵. Dallaire believed that UNAMIR would have to be the peacekeeper between the French and the RPF during France's supposed peacekeeping mission; the two groups had already formed negative views of each other during Operation Noroît. At the time, Dallaire communicated with Kagame, assuring him that he would try to control the French from entering Kigali, then Kagame retorted "Tell France that Kigali can handle more body bags than Paris."⁸⁶ Needless to say, the RPF continued to view Operation Turquoise as negative and in favor of Hutu power. However, when the Elysée contacted the RPF the day after deployment, they responded that they were not opposed, which softened the OAU's opinion of the operation.

Yet, it was debatable whether or not the Rwandans, even those in favor of Hutu Power, wanted French presence on the ground. In depictions of Operation

⁸⁵ United Nations, "Mandates and the legal basis for peacekeeping." Accessed February 2, 2015. <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/operations/pkmandates.shtml>.

⁸⁶ Dallaire, 432.

Turquoise made years after the genocide, especially in *Operation Turquoise*, a film directed by Alain Tasma, both the Hutu and Tutsi regard the French negatively, often saying they were too late⁸⁷. When news broke in Rwanda that the French were coming, Francophone-African soldiers, from Senegal, Togo, Mali and Congo, working for UNAMIR began to be harassed by Rwandans because they were French-speaking; it got so bad that they had to be confined to a camp⁸⁸. The Francophone-African UNAMIR soldiers saw the most action because they could communicate in French with civilians, which meant they had the toughest and most imperative jobs. For their own safety, these soldiers had to be sent home, thus UNAMIR lost most of its important men due to the perception of the France's intervention.

For Operation Turquoise, the French military's main base was in Goma, Zaire, where large cargo planes were sent with supplies. France had asked the Americans if they could use their planes, but their request was denied. The government decided that the soldiers of the operation would not wear the United Nations' signature blue helmet, but would proudly wear the French red beret, which were normally only meant for elite paratroopers. After all the supplies were delivered to Zaire, they were moved to the French base in Rwanda in Bukavu. Most of the troops there had been involved in previous operations in Rwanda in the past three years, so they knew the territory, the current situation, and all had the same French perception of the conflict, which was strongly anti-RPF. 2,500 members of elite French units, such as the French

⁸⁷ Tasma, Alain, "Opération Turquoise," DVD.

⁸⁸ Dallaire, 434.

Foreign Legion came to Rwanda; it must be noted that only soldiers were sent, not humanitarian workers. The operation had more than one hundred armored vehicles, four Jaguar fighter-bombers, Gazelle helicopters, 120mm battery, four Mirage FICT ground attack planes, and more⁸⁹.

On June 24, the French were greeted just as they had tried to avoid being welcomed in Rwanda: when they extremist communities and militants received them congenially. Journalist Scott Peterson recounted:

The French...were met as liberators. They were heroes to the Hutu. The welcome party was outrageous, because it was clear that these European soldiers were saving the killers from all the demons that their violence and murder against the Tutsi had stored within their psyches. Freshly made tricolors waved from every hand; men chanted and danced with their machetes and bottle of beer. The crime had been committed, and now it was being absolved; they would be safe⁹⁰.

On the radios of RTL, announcers encouraged Hutu to welcome the soldiers. In particular, they encouraged Hutu women to chat them up and entertain them, which can be assumed to have a sexual connotation, “Vous, les filles hutu, lavez-vous et mettez une belle robe pour accueillir nos alliés français. Toutes les filles tutsi sont mortes, vous avez vos chances.⁹¹” The Rwandans’ happiness can be explained by the misconception that Hutu extremists believed the France was there to help them defeat, what they believed, the Tutsi enemy. French military came to their aid with

⁸⁹ Wallis, 135.

⁹⁰ Ibid, 131.

⁹¹ François-Xavier Verschave, *La Françafrique*, (Paris: Editions Stock, 1999), 31.

Operation Noroît when the RPF invaded just four years ago, so this could have been viewed as a second Noroît.

During their first few days there, the military was mainly searching for and caring for refugees. Within one week, the military occupied nearly a quarter of the country, amassing southwestern Rwanda, and directly opposing RPF territory, which would become known as the Humanitarian Zone, or the Safe Zone, in July. In the beginning of their operation, the soldiers would go on missions looking for Tutsi in hiding in order to offer them aid. Yet, their Rwandan allies, even the Interhamwe, would accompany them on their missions. There are accounts of French encountering Tutsi, conversing with them, and then firing their guns in the air in order to signal for the Interhamwe to go in⁹². Due to the military's idea that the Tutsi were invading the country, and that all Tutsi were supporters of the RPF, the French viewed them as enemies and allowed their allies to kill them.

The best examples of this were accounts of the French military at the Nyarushishi Camp. When the army arrived, the conditions of the camp were horrendous, and the French did not help matters. There are accounts of the soldiering treating the refugees very poorly, throwing food at them and denying them access to water. Furthermore, accounts even say that women who disobeyed the rules of the soldiers were raped. Those in the camp would also see the Interhamwe enter the area and seize Tutsi property and even took people away to be killed. Aloys Mutabingwa, a former member of the Interhamwe, and now in prison, said that two days after the

⁹² Wallis, 141.

French arrived in Rwanda, the Interhamwe received orders to get people to kill from the Nyarushishi Camp. The orders could not have been coincidental. On top of that, Aloys testified that when he and his fellow militiamen were throwing bodies into Lake Kivu; French soldiers taught them how to properly slit their bodies so they sink in the water, thus go unseen⁹³.

While in Rwanda, French command had very little contact with UNAMIR despite their knowledge of the current situation in the country. General Dallaire even tried to get in contact with the United Nations in New York to correspond with the French, because they were unsuccessful communicating within the country itself. Eventually General Dallaire came in contact with General Lfourcade, who led Turquoise; they told Dallaire that they were shocked at the advancement of the RPF, but still wanted to remain loyal to their allies. Because of their past loyalties to the Habyarimana regime, the French still believed that they and UNAMIR should help prevent the RPF from defeating the Rwandan government. Dallaire warned General Lfourcade that the extremist government was desperate for victims, but French forces argued that UNAMIR had not properly handled what they considered to be a civil war. Dallaire commented: “They refused to accept the reality of the genocide and the fact that the extremist leaders, the perpetrators and some of their old colleagues were all the same people. They showed overt signs of wishing to fight the RPF.”⁹⁴ Indeed, most of the officers came from the colonial tradition of military

⁹³ Ibid, 145-146.

⁹⁴ Dallaire, 451.

intervention in domestic affairs of former colonial states, or in this case a Francophone developing country, so they viewed Rwanda as just another insignificant inter-ethnic squabble. Thus, Dallaire, did not believe that the troops involved Operation Turquoise had an idea of the scale of the massacre and the degree of complicity by the Habyarimana regime in the genocide of Tutsi.

Military officers had overheard that there were Tutsi hiding in Bisesero, in Western Rwanda from many different oral sources: most claimed there was a rebel army of up to 500⁹⁵. French forces had heard that the area used to be the home of many Tutsi altogether 30,000 people. Tutsi had fled to the mountains of Bisesero after attacks began proceeding Habyarimana's plane crash, and due to their strength in numbers and some weapons, they were able to defend themselves. By June, because of insufficient supplies and food, the Tutsi in the hills were beginning to be in great need of help. From April to May this resilient group of people fought off the Interhamwe, while barely even surviving. When the French command discovered there was an opportunity to save these people, the goal of Turquoise, they took advantage of the opportunity. After much investigation in the late 1990s by Saint-Exupéry, it was discovered that Lieutenant General Duval asked Jean-Baptiste Twagirayezu, one of the main figureheads of the Interhamwe, to direct him to the supposed area in the mountains of the Bisesero region.

⁹⁵ Laure de Vulpian, and Thierry Prunghaud, *Silence Turquoise*, (Paris: Don Quichotte éditions, 2012), 137.

The military traveled to there on June 27 with their army jeeps. The Tutsi, in hiding, saw French flags, and revealed themselves after the military made an announcement on megaphones promising food and safety. As described by Sergeant Major Thierry Prungnaud, a witness in the prestigious a special-operations unit, “Petit à petit, d’autres zombis s’approchent en silence, légers comme un souffle de vent. Rapidement, ils sont près d’une centaine, tous dans le même état de dénuement absolu.”⁹⁶ Bisesero ended up being a refuge for more than 60,000 in hiding who took the risk to reveal themselves.

Anastaste, a survivor from Bisesero said on the French: “The first time I saw the French soldiers, I felt at last some hope, as if I was not dead after all and that there could still be a new life.”⁹⁷ But, a few of the revealed Tutsi recognized Twagirayezu and other militiamen, who knew they were now exposed.

After the French saw the extensive number of people hiding and in desperate need, Lt. General Duval made the decision that they had to go back to their base in Kibuye because they did not have enough resources. So, Duval instructed the Tutsi to hide for three days, and then they would return with aid. The Rwandans replied, saying that they would no longer be alive in three days because the Lt. Gen. had just uncovered their hiding place to the Interhamwe, but Duval continued insisting. There is still mystery surrounding why the French left. It is possible that General Lafourcade had knowledge that people were being killed in Bisesero, but the

⁹⁶ Ibid, 261.

⁹⁷ Wallis, 148.

situation was too political to get involved: The French military wanted to remain loyal to their allies, the Rwandan government, but the United Nations mandated they stay neutral⁹⁸. So the French instructed them to continue hiding.

Three days later, General Marin Gillier came with his forces to discover exactly what the military had been warned about: 1,000-2,000 Tutsi were slaughtered within the short time period, and many believed their blood to be on the hands of the French. Anastase survived this massacre, and agrees the French military was responsible: “Because of the French many came out and were killed. I’m sure more would have survived if they had not come. I think of the French like I do the Interhamwe – that is together... The French have a great responsibility for what happened here⁹⁹.” Witnesses say the Interhamwe came right after the French left, and others say they came the next day. As reported by Saint-Exupéry, Lt. Gen. Duval returned to his base on June 27 and made calls to Paris speaking of the people of Bisesero’s danger; he waited for three days waiting for orders that would never come. Whether the Africa Cell or Lt. Gen. Duval is to blame for this tragedy is still open to question. Nevertheless, this group of desperate survivors was not the military’s priority. This could be explained some soldiers’ belief that the people were kept alive with the help of the RPF. The operation was intended to be neutral, so the French did not wish to come head to head with them.

⁹⁸ Krosiak, 238-239.

⁹⁹ Wallis, 156.

In Prungnaud's first hand account, he described the people as "zombies," illustrating an old man with bare feet, staring at the French soldiers until they gave him protein biscuits, and after he ate he begged the French to help them and protect them. The people of Bisesero were unsure of what reaction they should have to the soldiers' presence, because last time they came they incited an Interhamwe massacre. Among the victims were babies who were starving to death, living with machete wounds, even skull wounds, and more. But at the same time, the people were desperate for medical aid and food. The military continued to give out protein biscuits and tried their best to relieve the victims medically. While rescuing the victims, the military scouted the area, finding countless dead bodies, some decomposing or half-eaten by dogs; they found no trace of the RPF.

For many French soldiers, this was the moment when they discovered what was really occurring in Rwanda. Many, including Prungnaud were horrified that their forces forgot about these people and left them to be killed. For example, when Gen. Gillier arrived, he buried his face and his hands, and all he could say was "Merde. Merde. Merde."¹⁰⁰ The other soldiers could not comprehend how they could have made such a blunder with people's lives. Furthermore, Prungnaud believed this to be the moment when Operation Turquoise truly became a humanitarian intervention. "Durant l'opération Turquoise, l'horreur des massacres de Tutsi aura ouvert les yeux à un certain nombre de militaires. Mais ils demeurent minoritaires"¹⁰¹. At this

¹⁰⁰ de Vulpian and Prungnaud, 154.

¹⁰¹ Verschave, *Complicité de genocide ?*, 66.

point, some of the military became disenchanted with their humanitarian cause. As Prugnaud stated, the military was told that both sides were responsible for killing each other, they believed that Tutsi were also killing Hutu, and thought the Hutu were the good guys¹⁰². To say the least, the events at Bisesero revealed to the French soldiers the truth behind the genocide.

Bisesero would not gain its notorious reputation until the late 1990s after French journalists who had been on the ground exposed many of the miscalculations the military made in their decision-making in light of France's previous ties to Rwanda. In particular, Saint-Exupéry interviewed the RPF, investigated Operation Turquoise, and especially revealed that the events that went on in Bisesero was partially, if not almost all France's fault. After these allegations, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Africa Cell were at risk and under enormous pressure to make a statement. Shortly after the findings were published in 1998, most likely not coincidentally, Gillier wrote a six page letter to the French embassy in Cairo, Egypt entitled « Turquoise : intervention à Bisesero », where he explained his experiences there and commands in 1994. Furthermore, it was Saint-Exupéry who exposed Duval for bringing along Twagirayezu to Bisesero and that the Tutsi present there knew they were going to die. Eventually, Duval and Gillier were blamed for the mistake, even though Bisesero was not entirely their culpability, but the Africa Cell and Jean-Christophe Mitterrand's.

¹⁰² Gourevitch, 160.

Operation Turquoise would continue onwards and the Safe Zone was established. Kigali was taken by the RPF on July 4, and after negotiation with Dallaire and Kagame, the French limited their safe zone to seventy square kilometers in southwestern Rwanda. Throughout Operation Turquoise, French forces had only two incidents between them and the RPF, despite their shared animosity toward one another. The first was when the RPF ambushed a French convoy that was returning from Butare. The RPF wished to inspect the convoys, but French soldiers claimed that they were simply filled with orphans. Nevertheless, the RPF examined the convoys, and found a few Hutu extremists hidden among the children. They took the Hutu extremists out of the trucks, killed them there, and allowed the French to continue along their way. The second time they clashed was because Colonel Thibault, a long-time military advisor to the Rwandan army, stated that if the RPF came near the newly limited Safe Zone, the French would fight them and defeat them. However, General Laffont would rein Colonel Thibault in, sending Paul Kagame a letter of explanation and apology. This situation was extremely damaging to the operation's goals, putting their neutrality in jeopardy. Yet, Prunier, who was on the ground at the time, recounted that some soldiers were in agreement with Thibault, and believed that the RPF would continue in Zaïre and France would lose their influence in the entire Great Lake region¹⁰³.

After the creation of the humanitarian zone, on July 2, the survivors of Bisesero were given the choice of being brought there to be protected as internally

¹⁰³ Wallis, 164.

displaced peoples or to go to RPF territory. It was not surprising that many survivors chose to go to RPF territory, especially when the killers of their families came in and out of the zone as they pleased. The location of the zone was in the southwest of Rwanda, and some French sources claim that the zone was placed there to halt the advancements of the RPF¹⁰⁴. Some French soldiers, reflecting back on their time in Rwanda, did not see the zone as positive and even went as far to compare it to when the Germans took over half of France during World War II. Nevertheless, many Tutsi, even Tutsi in Uganda, migrated to the Safe Zone for legitimate help and safety. Millions came to the zone in order to find aid, but many were killed along the way¹⁰⁵. Also, cholera broke loose in the refugee camps within the Safe Zone, and the soldiers were not properly equipped to handle aiding the sick, despite the fact that it was a humanitarian intervention. The epidemic was so unscrupulous that the military was digging graves instead of caring for people within the zone¹⁰⁶. Yet, images of French soldiers aiding refugees were positive public relations for the Elysée. By mid-July, some Hutu, including members of the interim government, who were allies with the French, used the safe zone in order to easily cross into Zaire to reconvene and reform their government. It can be conjectured that these individuals, and those the military had previously saved during Operation Amaryllis, contributed to what is the ongoing conflict in modern-day Democratic Republic of the Congo with Hutu rebels.

¹⁰⁴ de Vulpian and Prungnaud, 177.

¹⁰⁵ Prunier, 298.

¹⁰⁶ Wallis, 178.

The French command was disjoined after Kigali was taken. General Lafortune even offered the members of the former interim government asylum in France, which caused an unfavorable public reaction. On July 15, due to the state of Rwanda, the Ambassador sent a memo to General Lafortune stating that they were required to put the Hutu Power members in the zone on house arrest because they were partly responsible for the genocide. In the end, the French would only arrest nine genocidaires; the military used the excuse that they did not have a mandate to prevent FAR soldiers from seeking refuge in Zaïre¹⁰⁷.

Turquoise did have its set of failures. First of all, the French military failed to collect all of their weapons when leaving Rwanda, which meant they stayed in the Safe Zone and with the FAR. Furthermore, they failed to shut down the RTLM, which had been ordering Hutu to kill anyone who did not comply with Hutu Power. The heads of the operation claimed that destroying the radio station was not under their UN mandate and they should not intercede free speech¹⁰⁸. They also contended they could not find the RTLM's transmitters, despite their advanced military technology and satellites brought over for Operation Turquoise. Moreover, after the RPF victory, the French had to manage a number of refugees in their Safe Zone.

¹⁰⁷ Howard Adelman, *The Role of Non-African States in the Rwandan Genocide*. (article). York University Centre for Refugee Studies, 2009), [http://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10315/2662/H A The Role of Non-African States in Rwandan Genocide.PDF?sequence=1](http://yorkspace.library.yorku.ca/xmlui/bitstream/handle/10315/2662/H_A_The_Role_of_Non-African_States_in_Rwandan_Genocide.PDF?sequence=1), 14.

¹⁰⁸ Wallis, 173.

The Elysée published a communiqué on August 19, ordering the French military to leave Rwandan territory by August 21. But they did not depart officially from the region until September.

CONCLUSION

Operation Turquoise finally retreated in August and was replaced with UNAMIR II soldiers, but the French military did not leave their bases in Goma until September 30. It is estimated that 15,000 people who were in the Safe Zone migrated to Zaïre, which would cause one of the largest refugee crises of the modern era, the Great Lakes Refugee Crisis; among those who migrated were civilians, soldiers and Hutu militants¹⁰⁹. On top of that, throughout Operation Turquoise and up until mid-May 1995, the FAR continued to receive weaponry through Goma, which Amnesty International confirmed to transpire every Tuesday at eleven pm¹¹⁰.

The OAU's 2000 report asserts that one of the tasks of the French in Rwanda was to support the interim government, and letting members of the Hutu Power movement escape into Zaïre was a failure that was on their watch, thus they have a hand in the destabilization of the entire Great Lakes Region¹¹¹. In 1994, the Rwandan army entered Zaïre to seek out the escaped Hutu fighters, which escalated into the First Congo War. The conflict officially ended in 2003, but Hutu and Tutsi militias

¹⁰⁹ Monique Mas, *Paris-Kigali 1990-1995: Lunettes coloniales, politique du sabre et onction humanitaire pour un génocide en Afrique*, (Paris: L'Harmattan,), chap. Turquoise française et « support hope » américain, 19 août.

¹¹⁰ Verschave, *La Françafrique*, 246.

¹¹¹ Organization for African Unity, 15.68.

continued to clash in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo¹¹². In February 2015, the Congolese army launched an offensive against the Hutu rebels, since 2000 known as the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR). The FDLR has been responsible for acts of terrorism in the region, uprooting over 250,000 people, as of 2009, in the Northern Kivu region, close to the border of Rwanda¹¹³. The conflict still continues today.

Operation Turquoise's legacy as a humanitarian operation is mixed. The French military evacuated about 10,000 people from western Rwanda in the first few days of their operation, they also established the Safe Zone, which saved thousands of refugees, and they did not clash too drastically with the RPF. But, the French soldiers did nothing to halt the FAR's genocidal attack on civilians. Turquoise saved about 10,000-17,000 people in the long run, but UNAMIR's forces, which were half the size, saved double that amount. Nevertheless, the Rwandan genocide took what is estimated to one million lives in about three months. The International Criminal Court took fifty-eight cases from Rwanda; none tried French officials.

After the media's exposure of the horrors that occurred in Rwanda on France's watch, the country questioned itself, its foreign policy and the future of foreign interventions. In an editorial in *Le Monde* on December 17, 1998, it was

¹¹² "DR Congo launches strikes against FDLR Hutu rebels." *BBC News Africa*, February 25, 2015. <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-31617135> (accessed March 1, 2015).

¹¹³ United Nations News Centre. "DR Congo: UN mission condemns 'terror tactics' used by Rwandan Hutu rebels." *United Nations News Centre*, February 18, 2009. <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=29941>.

called for a reorganization of French foreign policy concerning the Africa Unit, comparing their current practice of a preoccupation with Africa to that of a monarchy, which connotes to evil amongst the French values of la Révolution: liberté, égalité and fraternité. Furthermore, Dr. Batson stated in his interview that during the present day when France is considering a humanitarian intervention, Operation Turquoise is always brought up in the debate¹¹⁴. Specifically, Dr. Batson recalls Turquoise being alluded to amongst arguments of his French colleagues when France's humanitarian intervention in Mali was being considered.

But, the government at the time was not nearly as remorseful; Prunier would even call them unrepentant. Prunier noted that the former Minister for Cooperation, Michel Roussin, when accused of having a hand in the genocide, particularly in the training of the FAR, he commented, "Me! Accuse me of having got people to train death squads! Let's be serious! In all these crises, some people always find an excuse to attack France."¹¹⁵ Franco-Rwandan relations would never recover from the genocide. In November 1994, France hosted a Franco-African summit in Biarritz in the Pyrénées Atlantiques region of France, which Rwanda was not invited to. The conference even opened with a moment of silence to honor the death of President Habyarimana; there was no mention of the genocide. Furthermore, for most of 1994, France blocked the European Union's aid to Rwanda. Even in a rare 1995 BBC interview, Jean-Christophe Mitterrand denied that French held responsibility for the

¹¹⁴ Batson.

¹¹⁵ Prunier, 338.

genocide. The interviewer told Jean-Christophe that he and his father encouraged the government, and Jean-Christophe got so enraged that he replied in English “Bullshit!”¹¹⁶. In 2010, President Nicolas Sarkozy briefly visited Kigali and acknowledged that France and the international community had made mistakes concerning the handling of the genocide; however, there was no formal apology¹¹⁷.

As for Rwanda, after the RPF’s liberation of Kigali, there was a mass repatriation of Rwandans in exile, coming from all over the world, including the United States and Europe. Nine months after Rwanda was freed by the RPF, more than 750,000 former Tutsi exiles came back to their homeland, and they brought over a million cows with them¹¹⁸. In 1996, more than 70% of people in Kigali were said to have newly immigrated to country. There was and still is some conflict over newcomers being more successful than those who endured the hardships of the genocide. Overall, Rwanda has recovered quite well since the genocide just twenty years ago. Life expectancy has doubled, millions are no longer impoverished, the majority of legislators are women, and 95% of the population has healthcare¹¹⁹. Yet, President Paul Kagame continues to face criticism, especially for trying to reassert

¹¹⁶ Wallis, 237.

¹¹⁷ Karen E. Smith, *Genocide and the Europeans*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 174.

¹¹⁸ Gourevitch, 230.

¹¹⁹ Ensign, Margee M. "Rwanda 20 years later: A model for progress and reconciliation." *The Christian Science Monitor*, April 7, 2014. <http://www.csmonitor.com/Commentary/Opinion/2014/0407/Rwanda-20-years-later-A-model-for-progress-and-reconciliation> (accessed March 1, 2015).

Tutsi dominance. Nevertheless, after just two decades the country is seen as a model for reconciliation and progress.

The Franco-Rwandan neocolonial relationship was always peculiar because the two never had colonial ties. But, in the 1970s, they created a connection based off common language, religion, culture, and political goals. Nevertheless, their bonds emulated the juxtaposition of the core French values: *liberté, égalité, fraternité*, liberty, equality and fraternity. When Rwanda began to be apart of the international playing field, it was a mere colony under German and then Belgian rule. But within the country, unrest stirred amongst the Hutu and Tutsi, two fictitious ethnic groups created to enforce colonial rule. The Tutsi were given an education and higher paying jobs because they had lighter skin and therefore were thought to be the original Christians of Ethiopia. Yet, towards the end of the Belgian colonial era, they flipped the ethnic system on its head, declaring the Hutu should have rights as well. But because this was stated at the end of the colonial era, when the Belgians left, Rwanda descended into chaos with Hutu seeking revenge on their Tutsi colonial masters. Due to the violence, many Rwandans, but Hutu and Tutsi, fled to Uganda causing a large refugee population, which would come back to haunt Rwanda.

After a few decades of asserted Hutu authority in government, President Habyarimana signed into France's *Françafrique* policy, benefitting both countries economically. The Africa Cell succeeded in business investments and economic strongholds while Rwanda gained a strong, Western ally. Over the years, violence against Tutsi continued, especially as the RPF gained power just across the border

and began attacking Rwanda. French aid would continue to help Habyarimana fend off the invaders as extremism among Hutu inside the country augmented. The Arusha Accords transpired from 1992-1993 to attempt to halt the violence, but it only increased, especially amid the Interhamwe. Then, when President Habyarimana was assassinated, the genocide began. But Rwanda's closest ally did not offer their brotherhood until after three months of genocide.

Before and during the genocide, France went beyond what was legal aid by transporting weapons, training militia, and even serving alongside the Rwandan army at their posts. During Operation Turquoise, the military tried to maintain an innocent face whilst assisting their former Hutu power allies. Most soldiers were instructed that the Hutu were the good guys and the Tutsi were the evil enemy, but after the tragedy of Bisesero, they would come to see that their previously perceived notions were incorrect, and it was not a civil war that was occurring, but rather, genocide of the Tutsi. After, France established the Safe Zone, which did nobly attend to many refugees, but also lacked in supplies to aid people, even though they came to Rwanda to perform a humanitarian intervention. Despite their exposure to the truth of the genocide, French military continued to allow Hutu militia members to escape across the border into Zaïre. Hutu rebels are a large domestic issue in Democratic Republic of the Congo, so in turn, the French lack of care has cause the Great Lakes Region to be unstable even today.

Furthermore, Operation Turquoise raises the question of when a humanitarian intervention is legitimate, which particularly pertains to today in the age of the Syrian

Civil War and the rise of ISIS in Syria and Iraq. It can be concluded that the Elysée had noble intentions to enforce the freedom of Rwanda with their involvement. Yet, due to their intimate past with Hutu supremacy, they were too biased to conduct a neutral intervention. The soldiers should not have had the epiphany that Rwanda was not undergoing a civil war in the midst of Operation Turquoise. While the French desire to enforce liberty, equality and fraternity globally, Rwanda should not have been their battle to fight. Because of their cultural ignorance, they were careless in their care of Tutsi, particularly during Bisesero. Additionally, they allowed murderers and genocidaires to walk freely into other countries, which creates crisis in the region today. The French government could have easily funded UNAMIR, increasing its legitimacy, but they had to show the rest of Françafrique and the world that they were the guardians of freedom. Ultimately, a humanitarian intervention led by a single country should not be conducted unless the country is entirely neutral on what is happening within the country they are entering.

After research and analysis, it can be concluded that the policies of Françafrique are suspicious and cause former colonies to continue to be dependent on Western countries, causing corruption within their own government. President Habyarimana was a minion to Françafrique politics, which allowed the ridiculous Belgian ethnic practices to continue even post-Independence. Habyarimana preferred alliances with France rather than uniting his own people equally and preventing a refugee crisis. Thus, Françafrique policies are detrimental to the African countries that participate, allowing themselves to be brainwashed.

APPENDIX



“Image One”

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