

misguided. On the contrary, these are the problems that arise when religious begin to get their priorities right—and, as I have said, nobody can do better than read Fr Murphy O'Connor on the subject.

Black Racism in Burundi

by Jeremy J. Greenland

Burundi is very small by African standards, almost the same size as Belgium, its former colonial master. Situated at the northern end of Lake Tanganyika, Burundi's neighbours are Tanzania, Rwanda and Zaire. Hills like vast sandcastles rise from a narrow plain along the lake to heights of over 2000m on the Nile-Congo watershed. Burundi's population is estimated at 3.7 million. Because the density of population is so high, and because there are no minerals or other natural resources worth exploiting commercially, all except the educated élite are poor subsistence farmers and herdsman. The sale of coffee—nearly all of which is bought by the United States, supposedly for political reasons—accounts for some 80 per cent of all foreign exchange earnings, though attempts are now being made to diversify agricultural production with tea, cotton and rice as secondary cash-crops.

Three ethnic groups make up the population: the pygmoid Twa, only 1 per cent of the total and politically of no account, the agriculturist Hutu, a Bantu tribe who make up 85 per cent, and the cattle-herding Tutsi (14 per cent). Legend and some facts assert that the Tutsi are of Nilotic-Hamitic origins, that they came late to Burundi and reduced the Hutu to client status by leasing them cows in return for personal service and food. 'Tutsi' is somewhat of a simplification: there appear to have been two separate invasions, first the Abanyaruguru clans, literally 'those from the north', and then later the Hima clans who entered and now occupy mainly the south-east part of the country.

Spokesmen for the present government claim that it is the colonialist who is to blame for the very existence of tribal conflict in Burundi:

'Even those historians and ethnologists who most defended the colonial regime had never heard of nor taken account of the conflict or opposition between the Hutu and the Tutsi before colonization.' (*Livre Blanc*, Bujumbura, 1972, p. 2. translated JJG.)

Perhaps the ethnologist Meyer foresaw the need to deal with such allegations when he wrote (1916):

'As long as the Batussi (sic) are masters in the country, spiritual and cultural progress is impossible for the Burundi people, for it is only

the present low position of the Bahutu, kept in seclusion for centuries, that ensures the Batutsi their dominance.' (*Die Barundi*, Leigzig, 1916, translated JJG.)

Oskar Baumann, the first European to travel extensively within Burundi, was greeted ecstatically on his arrival in 1892, only to discover later that his enthusiasts were Hutu who saw in this strange white phenomenon a means of challenging the Tutsi yoke.

The Germans in their brief stay as colonial masters (1899-1916) were barely successful in underpinning the central authority of the Tutsi king or *mwami* over his princely relatives, officially his provincial governors, but in fact his rivals. Burundi was entrusted to Belgium by League of Nations mandate in 1919 and again later by order of the United Nations. While the Belgian colonial administration maintained strict political control through use of the traditional local hierarchy, it was left to Christian missions, mainly Roman Catholic, to implement Belgium's much vaunted 'oeuvre civilisatrice'. By the mere act of educating and healing Hutu as well as Tutsi, the white man created an appetite for some measure of equality in other spheres — notably that of political opportunity.

Although it was the Congo which took Belgium by surprise in 1960 by demanding instant independence, Burundi and Rwanda were shouting in the wings. Rwanda has practically the same geographical and ethnic characteristics as Burundi, but the domination of Hutu by Tutsi was even fiercer. The Hutu revolted in 1959 and succeeded in establishing a tribal, Hutu, state by 1962 with the Tutsi either dead, in exile, or deprived of all status and wealth. Because the majority of Belgians in both administration and missions regarded this revolt and the subsequent transfer of power as inevitable, the transfer—and the terrible violence that accompanied it—took place with tacit Belgian approval and support. The fear that Belgium and her agents in Burundi have been and are always ready to act as midwife at the birth of a Hutu state in Burundi explains why Burundi government spokesmen vociferously accuse Belgium of fomenting tribalism in their own country.

Since independence in 1962 the Hutu in Burundi have been trying to emulate the success of their Rwandese brothers. Until 1972 the score of fatalities in this struggle had been relatively small. King Mwambutsa manipulated parliamentary democracy as a means of playing off Tutsi and Hutu rivals. Shortly after Mwambutsa abdicated in 1966, Colonel Micombero, the Burundi army leader, threw out the new king and declared a republic. Since the Hutu had used violent means the previous year to gain the ascendancy, the now mainly Tutsi republican government felt justified in pruning back all Hutu advance. They dealt ruthlessly with the 1969 Hutu rebellion attempt and summarily executed the leaders. The sad fact is that every effort made by foreigners in Burundi to maintain some equality

of opportunity or to compensate for the discrimination shown by the government towards its own tribe is in the eyes of the government a 'tribal' provocative act.

From a brief consideration of the history of Hutu frustration and Tutsi severity, we now turn to their most pronounced expression so far, the rebellion of April 29, 1972, and the repression which followed.

In March 1972 ex-king Ntare returned as a private citizen, President Amin having demanded and received guarantees of safe conduct on his behalf. Ntare was promptly taken to Gitega in central Burundi and placed under house-arrest. On April 29 the rebellion started. The attacks on the eastern border and in the south mounted from Tanzania and the unsuccessful attempt to seize the radio station in Bujumbura were clearly parts of a co-ordinated plan. Only in the south did the rebels meet with any real success. They captured the lakeside towns of Nyanza Lac and Rumonge and overran large tracts of the hilly interior over to the Tanzanian border. They made their policy clear by killing every Tutsi in their path, even disembowelling pregnant women—an atrocity which understandably incensed the Tutsi. Children were not excepted from the slaughter, nor Hutu who refused to join the revolution.

The government radio, in a later report of these attacks, claimed that on the same night of April 29, Ntare had been killed at Gitega in one such attack. Eye-witnesses there report no such general fighting, only that several shots were fired at the king's house some 2 km outside the town. On June 8, David Martin of the BBC, safely back in Nairobi, quoted the President as having told him that Ntare had been executed for his part in the plot.

The initial attacks of April 29 apart, fighting between rebels and government troops was confined to the far south of Burundi. Arrests of prominent Hutu, however, began all over the country during the early days of May. On Saturday, May 6, 'war councils' met in the provincial centres, and the 'guilty' were executed the same evening. A Congolese driver, working in Burundi for an Italian firm, was ordered out that night to excavate two large holes outside Gitega. He dumped 100 fresh corpses in them and swears that the victims were mainly Tutsi. This is unique evidence of *Tutsi* being killed in the repression.

In autumn 1971 three Tutsi ex-ministers were tried and condemned to death for alleged plotting. The trial brought into the open a struggle among the Tutsi themselves over power and policies. The accused represented those Tutsi from the centre and north of Burundi who favoured some measure of power-sharing with the Hutu, whereas the prosecution symbolized the overbearing influence of a southern clique comprising the President himself, Simbananiye, the Foreign Minister, Shibura, Minister of both Justice and the Interior, Gisamare,

Minister of Education, and Ndabemeye, chief commander of the armed forces. When it transpired that the only serious accusations had come from Ndabemeye himself, the joint force of international pressure and local disunity resulted in the sentences being quashed. Although these three released ministers were not among the 100 Tutsi killed and buried on May 6, on balance it does seem that the Hutu attack gave Republican Tutsi a chance to render impossible any eventual return to the monarchy by eliminating both the ex-king and his potential Tutsi supporters.

However obscure the facts surrounding Ntare's return and subsequent death may be, what is clear is that once Tutsi all over the country realized that they were threatened as a tribe with total massacre by the Hutu rebels, they shelved their own wranglings until this threat was effectively put aside.

Also unresolved, and of greater importance, is the allegation that certain powerful Tutsi had advance knowledge of the rebellion and allowed it to unfold so that a drastic elimination of all educated Hutu would appear justified. In various interviews given to the foreign press Micombero admitted having received reports of men undergoing para-military training in the far south. While it is true that he dismissed his cabinet on April 27, certain other facts make the allegation very improbable. The whole Tutsi administration of Bururi province in the south accepted an invitation to a party at Rumonge on April 29 — a successful ruse to assassinate them. Only Shibusca escaped. Furthermore, the provincial military commander returned that same night from the capital unescorted. On balance it seems that the brutality and extent of the repression were the spontaneous and uncontrolled reaction to the rebels' threat to kill all Tutsi, men, women and children.

There are as many unresolved questions of fact as there are questions of intent. How many educated Hutu organised or even knew of the rebellion plan? The diplomatic corps in Bujumbura was told of lists found on the rebels giving names of Hutu contributors to secret funds; of a map with the Tutsi homeland area shaded in found at the home of the Minister for Post and Telecommunications; of 4,000 machettes discovered at the home of the Minister of Public Building and Works. No evidence was ever produced to confirm these charges. Ndayiziga, the very successful Minister of Works, was the leading Hutu member of Micombero's cabinet. He had been in Europe over the week-end of April 29 and was warned by his hosts of the dangers of returning. He returned to prove his innocence and was, of course, killed, as were his father, all his brothers and two sisters.

The only identifiable rebels were those who actually rebelled—those in the south. Two European missionaries who were near Nyanza Lac on April 29 and were held for ten days under house-arrest by the rebels confirm that Congolese mulélistes accompanied

the invasion. While the local Hutu were glad to think that Tutsi dominance was at an end, there was no evidence of highly educated or even well-trained Hutu in charge of the rebels. When Europeans and exceptional Tutsi dared ask the authorities why Hutu were being hauled away to their death all over the country, the only answer given was to allege unconvincingly that their names figured on lists of contributors to the invasion funds.

The form the repression took was distressingly similar everywhere. Local Tutsi, sometimes soldiers, sometimes civil servants, arrived and motioned Hutu teachers, churchleaders, nurses, traders, civil servants into Landrovers with their guns. Bands of Tutsi combed the suburbs of Bujumbura and carted away Hutu by the lorryload. Throughout May and half June 1972, the excavators were busy every night in Gitega and Bujumbura burying the dead in mass graves. In secondary schools teachers stood helpless as many of their Hutu pupils were removed. At the university some Tutsi students had their Hutu colleagues arrested. Warrants were only produced for the top names, but these often turned out to be forged by vindictive local Tutsi. Those arrested were usually dead the same night, stripped and practically clubbed to death in covered lorries on the way to prison, then finished off there with clubs at nightfall. Using bullets would have been wasteful. At three main prisons there were alleged 'breakouts', as a result of which grenades were thrown in and all surviving inmates shot. At Gitega prison on May 22, 16 prisoners escaped. One, a schoolboy, said that there had been sixty in his cell measuring only 2m by 2m, piled in layers on top of each other. They had broken down the door by brute force. Instead of fleeing, this boy went back to his school nearby and told his story. The same day he was re-arrested and killed. The headmaster said that this was a release because he was already mentally deranged by his experience.

Apart from four men raised to ministerial rank for public relations purposes there are practically no Hutu left in government or the civil service—not even at chauffeur or office-cleaner level. The army is 100 per cent Tutsi. Practically all Hutu have gone from the staff of secondary schools. Half the qualified teachers at primary level were killed. All the Hutu university students and many at secondary level are dead. All wealthy Hutu are dead, hence the widespread fear that the mere possession of a corrugated-iron roof rather than a grass roof meant that one was a potential candidate for extermination. The Protestant churches appear to have suffered proportionally more severe losses than the Roman Catholic Church. The Anglicans lost 15 of their 35 ordained men. Of 138 Catholic abbés, 18 were killed. As a Catholic spokesman has pointed out, more Burundi priests were killed during the summer of 1972 than have died from natural causes since the first ordination in 1925. Of only 18 Burundi doctors, one was killed by the rebels and seven were killed in the repression. Hutu

students at Catholic seminaries were in general untouched by the repression, but over recent months every single Hutu candidate for the priesthood at the Grand Seminary has fled the country because their bishop, a Tutsi, would not guarantee to protect them if a new wave of persecution broke out. There will be an almost tribal priesthood to match a tribal army.

As for the present, official spokesmen solidly reiterate that 'only the guilty were punished'. A White Book has been published by the Government and is available at Burundi embassies abroad, purporting to show that it has been the white man whose calculated interference in Burundi's affairs fomented the present tribal confrontation. A few Tutsi privately express regret and, with missionaries, quietly help Hutu widows and orphans. All such action is strictly illegal. Since the Hutu killed were 'traitors', their cars, bank balances and even household furniture and clothes are justified plunder to any Tutsi quick enough to appropriate them. One Hutu widow got to the bank early in the morning following the night of her husband's arrest, only to find that the account was already blocked.

The few hundred Hutu students fortunate enough to be abroad in 1972 have wisely refused requests from the authorities to return to Burundi. A particular effort was made to induce the Hutu trainee officers at Belgian military academies to come home. The host countries have extended the bursaries of such students for the time being, but their long-term future is uncertain. Many are doubtless trying to co-ordinate the attempts of frustrated bands of Hutu refugees in Tanzania, Rwanda and Zaire who want to launch fresh attacks. As and when such attacks take place, the cycle of repression begins again. The Burundi armed forces have made at least two preemptive strikes at Hutu settlements across the border in Tanzania, killing both Burundi refugees and Tanzanians. 85 per cent of Burundi's external trade passes through Tanzania by rail to the port of Kigoma, and from there up Lake Tanganyika to Bujumbura by boat. The refusal of dockers at Kigoma to handle goods bound for Burundi has elicited from President Micombero an apology for these invasions of Tanzanian territory.

Since Presidents Nyerere and Mobutu are reported as having had six hours of talks with Micombero at Dar-es-Salaam on July 22 (*The Times*, July 23 1973), it can be reasonably inferred that they tried to impress on him the need to moderate his internal policies. Until now African heads of state have respected the letter of the OAU charter and avoided direct criticism of Burundi's handling of the Hutu rebellion, preferring to class it as an internal problem. The continuing gravity of the situation is compelling them to change their ground: Zaire, Rwanda, and, most of all, Tanzania, are dealing with over 100,000 Hutu refugees, with new batches arriving every day, and if the Hutu ever make a successful attack on the Tutsi inside Burundi,

up to half a million Tutsi refugees would head for the borders. Leading newspapers in both east and west Africa have concluded articles on Burundi by warning Micombero that minority régimes are doomed to eventual defeat, in black Africa just as much as south of the Zambezi.

A comparison between the régimes controlling Burundi and South Africa is valid on several counts. Ironically, some Barundi are aware of it themselves. In both countries national resources are used unashamedly to perpetuate the supremacy of a minority, membership of which is decided on purely racial criteria. Whereas South Africa is spending her own money, Burundi is for the most part using foreign aid. European staff and funds maintain a university and teachers' training college that have hardly a Hutu student; French and Belgian technical assistance teachers work in government schools where the Hutu staff are dead and where one has to look hard to find a Hutu schoolboy; France and Belgium send experts to advise an army which is exclusively Tutsi (soldiers unfortunate enough to have one Hutu grandparent were eliminated); western embassies are discouraged from financing development and self-help projects except in predominantly Tutsi areas; Hutu nurses have been removed from government hospitals and the medical training schools because no Tutsi would now entrust himself to their care; a typical civil-servant wants his chauffeur, messenger-boy, typist, houseboy and baby-sitter to be Tutsi to avoid possible betrayal. South Africa legally enforces separate development. Many Barundi now voluntarily practise it.

The White Book giving the government's version of events, claims in the preamble that 'the very terms Hutu and Tutsi had lost their ethnic connotation in that mixed marriages were so numerous' (p. 2). Other authorities pretend that most children do not know to which tribe they belong. A brief stay anywhere in Burundi will soon explode this myth. Perhaps 10 per cent of the population are of mixed descent, and many of these were classed as Hutu for the purposes of the repression. The Belgians are berated for having insisted during the colonial era that a man's tribe be noted in his identity-book, yet when soldiers came into school classrooms in May 1972, they called out from prepared lists the names of children to be executed. Widows and orphans of this disaster in Burundi are—like non-whites in South Africa—fully aware of the importance of tribal membership.

The attitude of resigned acquiescence in the face of discrimination seems to characterize both blacks in South Africa and Hutu in Burundi. Although permitted to compete for admittance to the civil service, many Hutu decline through fear of future trouble. Many parents are refusing to send their children to school, and in some areas recruitment to the first grade in September 1972 was down by 50 per cent. The parents say 'education equals a good job equals death at the next sign of trouble'.

Just as the Dutch Reformed Church puts the seal of religious approval on secular government policy in South Africa, powerful leading clergy in Burundi seem open to the charge of being Tutsi first and Christians second. Although the government makes much of the fact that of five Roman Catholic bishops, two are Tutsi, two are Hutu and one is Belgian, it is clear who drafts episcopal statements. These commentaries on recent events emphasize the need for national reconciliation, and their failure to name government forces as perpetrators of atrocities drew a highly critical letter of protest from representatives of missionary orders working in Burundi. This reply unfortunately fell into government hands, thereby confirming what the government wants to believe, namely that the foreign priests are pro-Hutu and potentially subversive.

Cynical observers are not surprised to find China and North Korea ardently endorsing Micombero's repression and present policies. What surprises them is the muted reaction of the Western powers and of the United Nations. The French reportedly sabotaged Belgian efforts to ensure non-discrimination in Burundi's schools during the aid negotiations of summer 1972 by offering to replace themselves whatever aid Belgium withdrew. The Belgian stance is weakened by the powerful lobby of Belgian businessmen in Burundi who tolerate any brutality to Africans rather than find themselves repatriated at a moment's notice, and who therefore urge their ambassador to tone down his censure. French pilots, supplied under a programme of French military assistance, keep Burundi's planes on a steady course while Burundi soldiers machine-gun Hutu rebels out of the side windows. This contribution was probably decisive in ensuring the rebels' defeat. The United Nations say little even when their own vehicles are requisitioned and used to take Hutu to their death. It was ironic to see Landrovers marked UNICEF being used for this purpose. When pressed to justify such docility, western and UN diplomats advance the following argument: if all western and UN aid and military assistance were withdrawn as an expression of disgust, the Tutsi would be overthrown at the next Hutu revolt. With the Hutu élite of this generation dead, a new Hutu régime would be an even more unpredictable proposition than the present Tutsi government, however merciless. There would be a vengeful massacre of Burundi's 600,000 Tutsi, a complete breakdown of law and order, and the Chinese would seize their chance to extend their area of influence westwards from Tanzania. They would have secured an open backdoor into Zaire, where the economic and political interests of the West would immediately be at risk. To back up this argument, reference is made to the astonishingly large staff at the Chinese embassy in Burundi in 1964 and to the alleged subversive activity which resulted in their expulsion. The Chinese were also accused of infiltrating the eastern part of Zaire and of supporting

anti-government groups of rebels. If then the western countries now decided to withdraw all their aid because the Tutsi withhold it from the Hutu, which would happen sooner, the arrival in force of the red peril, or a dramatic change in Tutsi policy? In view of Mobutu's recent visit to Peking and the improvement in relations between Zaire and China, the western powers might well conclude that now was the moment to test their assumption in Burundi about the dangers of China's expansionist designs.

Irenaeus Leonard Alexander 1932 - 1972

by Ian Hislop, O.P.

It is trite to say that anniversaries stir the memory but it is true enough. As I write this down I am remembering a young Dominican who died a year ago this July. His death was not only a deeply felt personal loss, for it was something more in that it challenged us with the problem of his unfinished work and involved us directly and intimately in a conflict of which we had previously only been spectators. It was—and is—a whole situation we had not understood till he came to live our life with us.

It might at first seem odd to select this one man's history out of so much that has happened to the Province in the last few years. Disasters and desolation, unparalleled since the period of the French Revolution, that laid us waste with a real death of God: this has been met with courage and constancy by the old and in a spirit of dutiful endurance by many of the elderly. The turmoil of renewal and the tensions created by change conflicting with ancient customs has led to a new experience of the role—not always pleasant—of discussion, a development that has associated itself with or sprung from the generous energy of the young determined to recreate the common life and rediscover a style of worship suited to the needs of today. After a spasm of rejection, almost anarchic in character, there has been in the studium a return to the tradition, even the text of St Thomas, purged of the trivialities of the manualists. All in embryo, all signs of hope and all associated with men loyal to their vocation as preachers. Why, then, pick on this one man when there obviously are so many others? Why this particular one, when we live with all our dead, having them in constant and loving memory—some well known to the public, others known only to their brethren? It would