Rwanda genocide notes

the idea of genocide, although never officially recognized, became a part of life"

aftermath of the conflict.

The terms "Hutu" and "Tutsi" were first given significance by the early white explorers. As both

Hutu and Tutsi spoke the same language, practiced the same religion, and participated in the

same government, ethnographers claim that the two groups "cannot be called distinct ethnic

groups" (Gourevitch, 48). Rather, the two terms referred to a caste system in which the Hutu

were primarily farmers and the Tutsi were primarily herdsmen.

typical specimen of a "primitive race," "the true curly

headed,

flab- nosed, pouched- mouthed Negro" while the Tutsi were "descended from the best

blood of Abyssinia" and therefore far superior (Speke, Journal of the Discovery of the Source of

the Nile).

the Belgian colonialists issued out identity

cards in 1933, "arbitrarily [classifying] the whole population as Hutu, Tutsi or

Twa

During Belgian rule, Tutsis

were favored for all administrative positions and Hutus were actively discriminated against.

In 1957, the Hutu Manifesto was published, calling for majority rule and blaming Rwandan

problems on Tutsi superiority.

Thousands of Tutsi were killed and thousands more families

had to flee the country.

racism that 'bordered on Nazism against Tutsi minorities'"

Kayibanda

encouraged violence against Tutsi and spread

When the RPF (Rwandan Patriotic Front), a small army comprised

of Rwandan refugees, attacked the Rwandan border in 1990, Habyarimana reacted with panic.

Within hours of the plane crash, Tutsi massacres began. In Kigali, the

international peacekeeping forces were badly organized and not united.

and began to urge people to

"do their work," and kill the Tutsi men, women, and children. By this point, it was clear that the

UN and international forces were powerless or unwilling to stop the current events unfolding.

While at first glance, this conflict is often dismissed as an ethnic issue, involving only the Hutu

and Tutsi, there are clearly many more parties involved. The primary parties involved in this

conflict were the Hutu Power party and their supporters and Rwandan Tutsi and other Rwandan

citizens of the time. Many secondary parties further fueled the conflict. To the South, Burundi

was made up of both Hutu and Tutsi, both groups that would sympathize with groups in Rwanda.

West of Rwanda, Zaire, the current Democratic Republic of Congo, was ruled by the dictator

Mobutu, a close personal friend of Habyarimana, who blatantly sympathized with the Hutu.

Mobutu, infamous for pocketing European and American aid, would encourage the conflict as a

means of bringing in money for refuge camps and programs. Mobutu was also closely allied with

France and, with French help, would support Hutu forces during the genocide and take a strong

position against the RPF and Tutsi after the genocide. The Anglophone and Francophone conflict

throughout Africa would play an important role in Rwanda, as Francophone countries and

supporters would provide help and support for the Hutu. Currently, France's position against the

current Rwandan president, Paul Kagame, has only served to further delay reconciliation.

Tertiary parties, intended as international monitors and peacekeepers, had an important, and not

always positive, role in the outcome of the conflict. The United Nations, despite admirable

efforts by General Dallaire, did not have the necessary support, troops, and supplies to stop the

genocide. In addition, NGOs and the UN funded refugee camps in Zaire, allowing thousands of

genocidaires to escape justice and regroup for attacks. The belated intervention and

peacekeeping attempts escalated the conflict and increased the death toll.

Rwandan conflict

is mostly seen through identity frames.

These countries feared that any change of government in Rwanda

would bring in a group of people that were not willing to maintain the cultural and financial ties

with France.

maintaining the status quo

support the "old boy's network" in Africa. Finally, the primary

groups involved also saw this as an identity conflict, using characterization and identity frames

to view the conflict.

described as "cockroaches"

1994 were at least indirectly either involved in

genocide or knew victims of genocide. A UNICEF survey estimated that 5 out of 6 children in

Rwanda at that time had witnessed bloodshed (

Gourevitch

, 224)

"people come to Rwanda and

talk of reconciliation... imagine talking to the Jews of reconciliation in 1946"

(Gourevitch

, 240).

Understandably, Rwanda remains in a stage of post conflict peace- building.

Rwanda has adopted

the policy of trying to teach and redeem people who committed war crimes. Even today, villages

have weekly trials or meetings to try to promote reconciliation and deal with past crimes of

village members.

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